

HIS 531 OX STUDIES IN EUROPEAN HISTORY: MADNESS AND CIVILIZATION FROM  
THE GREEKS TO THE BIRTH OF THE ASYLUM

T 9:30-12:00

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### Course Description

Over the last three decades, few topics have attracted greater scholarly interest or have stimulated more innovative work than the history of “madness.” In this course, we will examine how historians have written about the history of madness from the time of the ancient Greeks until about the middle of the eighteenth century. We will read a series of works (both secondary and primary materials) dealing with how different European societies at different times defined, understood, treated, and indeed even “constructed” insanity. This is not a history of psychiatry (although we will certainly discuss “mad-doctors”), but rather a far more comprehensive look at madness, often through the eyes of the insane themselves. Class periods will be devoted to intense, probing discussion of the readings.

**Undergraduates:** There will be three written assignments, each about six pages in length. The topics are listed below.

| Paper 1 [Due 28 September] perhaps something on internal/external causes? mind-body?

| Paper 2 [Due 2 November] perhaps something on gender?

| Paper 3 [Due 30 November] perhaps be more specific; i.e. specify which healers or schools they should consider – Napier? Greeks? Burton? etc? Foucault?

Definitions of madness and the terms used to describe various forms of madness or mental distress changed significantly over the course of time we have studied in this class. Changes in terminology mirrored changes perceptions of what caused mental illness, how it was to be treated, and how the mad were best brought back to sanity. Read the handout of cases I have selected from Munro’s casebook of 1766 and discuss how others would have described the conditions and cases he handles here. For example, how would Napier have analyzed, described, and treated these cases?

**Graduate Students:** You are expected to write on *one* paper topic, either Paper 1 or Paper 2, of the three paper topics listed above and to prepare a historiographical essay (roughly fifteen pages in length) on a specific subject. The following list suggests some feasible topics, but you are

free to choose another topic or to truncate an especially large topic (although in this instance you will have to make a case for your decision). You may also want to limit some topics chronologically or geographically. You are expected to have selected a topic by the fourth week of class (week beginning September 21) and to make an appointment with the instructor during the course of that week to discuss details. You should come to this meeting prepared with a preliminary list of works.

Your essay should do more than merely list or even annotate books, articles, and printed sources. Rather, you are asked to determine the major historiographic trends and then explain how particular works fit into particular historiographic and interpretive frameworks. You should also pay close attention to the types of sources on which various authors rely and comment on, for example, how well those sources do (or do not) support the claims the authors make. While you will obviously need to read a number of works in their entirety, other works can be fruitfully scanned. In no case will it be possible for you to discuss “everything” relevant. Part of *your* task is to identify the major works and comment on them while perhaps only mentioning works of lesser importance. For a brief example, see the section, “Historiographical Background,” in Andrews and Scull, *Customers and Patrons of the Mad-Trade*, pp. 23-27.

Possible Topics: insanity defense; civil competency; possession; hysteria; epilepsy; suicide; idiocy; imagination; senility; moral therapy; masturbation; mind/body problem; madness and sin; visions, hallucinations, and auditory delusions/hallucinations; dreams and prophecies; astrology; physiognomy; madhouses (chronologically or geographically limited); political implications of madness; madness and literature (chronologically or geographically limited); representations of madness in art (chronologically or geographically limited).

Another alternative: If any graduate student is interested in doing primary research on a related topic instead of the above assignments, s/he should speak to me immediately and we can work out a program linked to the course.

### **Books** [Available for purchase at the Bookstore]

Robert Burton, *The Essential Anatomy of Melancholy* (New York: Dover, 2002) ISBN: 0-486-42116-3

Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage, 1973) ISBN: 0-679-72110-X

H.C. Erik Midelfort, *The Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999) ISBN: 0-8139-1501-5

Harlan Lane, *The Wild Boy of Aveyron* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979) ISBN: 0-674-95300-2

Roy Porter, *Madness: A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) ISBN: 0-192-80267-4

**Books** [Available on Reserve/Richter Library]

Jonathan Andrews and Andrew Scull, *Customers and Patrons of the Mad-Trade: The Management of Lunacy in Eighteenth-Century London, with the Complete Test of John Monro's 1766 Case Book* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003) ISBN: 0-520-22660-7

John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) ISBN: 0-19-503378-7

Allan Ingram, ed., *Voices of Madness* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing Company, 1997) ISBN: 0-780750-912105

Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) ISBN: 0-531-27382-X

Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter, *George III and the Mad-Business* (London: Pimlico, 1991) ISBN: 0-7126-5279-5

George Trosse, *The Life of the Reverend Mr. Geo. Trosse*, ed. by A.W. Brink (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974) ISBN: 0-7735-0153-3

### Class Meetings

[Readings designated with an “R” are on Reserve at Richter Library. Those designated with an “E” are on electronic reserve.]

- Aug. 31 Introduction: Madness and Civilization from the Greeks to the Birth of the Asylum
- Sept. 7 Writing the History of Madness: Major Themes  
Reading: Porter, *Madness: A Brief History*
- Sept. 14 Madness in the Ancient World  
Readings: Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, pp. 97-109. [E] [Describes the humoral system; read this selection first]  
 Bennett Simon, *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece*, pp. 215-27, 238-68. [E]  
Something else on hysteria; Veith?
- Sept. 21 Madness in the Medieval and Renaissance Worlds  
Readings:\*Hunter and Macalpine, *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860*, pp. 1-11, 13-15, 17-21, 24-31, 42-46, 50-52.  
 Penelope B. R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children*, pp. 1-53. [E]  
 Sabina Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen: A Visionary Life*, pp. 1-15, 193-213. [E]
- Sept. 28 Women and Madness  
Readings: Roy Porter, *A Social History of Madness*, 103-124. [R]  
 Hunter and Macalpine, *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860*, 68-75, 130-32, 221-24, 506-07. [R]  
*The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. by B.A. Windeatt, pp. 1-98, 122-130, 176-177. [Or, Chapters 1-26, 35-38, 56] [R]  
 T. Drucker, “The Malaise of Margery Kempe,” *New York State Journal of Medicine* 72 (1972): 2911-17. [E]
- Paper 1 due**

- Oct. 5 Religion and Madness  
Readings: Maurice Lipsedge, "Religion and Madness in History" [E]  
 M.A.Screch, "Are Christians Mad?" [E]  
 Ingram, *Voices of Madness*, 3-21 [Hannah Allen][R]  
*The Life of the Reverend Mr. Geo. Trosse*, pp. 1-4, 15-32, 47-134. [R]
- Oct. 12 When Rulers Rage  
Reading: Midelfort, *The Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany*.
- Oct. 19 Melancholics and Suicides  
Reading: Burton, *The Essential Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), pp. 15-103.  
 Michael MacDonald, "The Secularisation of Suicide in England, 1660-1800," *Past and Present* 111 (1986): 50-100. [E]  
 Hunter and Macalpine, *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860*, 36-40, 113-15, 528-31. [R]
- Oct. 26 Astrological Healing and Mental Illness  
Reading: MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* [R]
- Nov. 2 Witchcraft and Madness  
Readings: Hunter and Macalpine, *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860*, pp. 32-35, 47-49, 66-67, 76-77, 357. [R]  
 Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, 3-210. [R]  
**Paper 2 due**
- Nov. 9 Madness in an Age of Reason: Foucault and the Great Confinement  
Reading: Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, pp. ix-84, 199-278.  
 Ingram, *Voices of Madness*, pp. 23-74 [Alexander Cruden] [R]  
 Chapter XX, "He Visits Bedlam," Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (1771). [E]

- Nov. 16                   Madness in an Age of Reason: Foucault and his Critics  
Readings: Patricia Allderidge, "Bedlam: Fact or Fantasy?" [E]  
 Andrews and Scull, *Customers and Patrons of the Mad-Trade*, pp. 5-116.  
 [R]
- Nov. 23                   When Kings Go Mad  
Reading: Macalpine and Hunter, *George III and the Mad-Business*, pp.  
 xi-107, 172-191, 267-363. [R]  
 Hunter and Macalpine, *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860*,  
 pp. 509-514. [R]  
 Movie: *The Madness of King George*
- Nov. 30                   Madness, Idiocy, and Physical Disabilities: The Wild Boy of Aveyron  
Readings: Lane, *The Wild Boy*, pp. 1-182.  
 Hunter and Macalpine, *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860*,  
 236-39 [John Locke, "Mind without Consciousness. Distinction  
 between Idiots and Madmen."], 373-75, 521. [R]  
**Paper 3 due.**

**[Graduate students only.** Bibliographic essays are due by 5 p.m. on 8 December.]