Women and Mental Illness
SOC 426/526 & WS 426/526, WEB
Fall Quarter 2014

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“A serious historical study of the female malady should not romanticize madness as one of women’s wrongs any more than it should accept an essentialist equation between femininity and madness. Rather, it must investigate how, in a particular cultural context, notions of gender influence the definition and, consequently, the treatment of mental disorder.” – Elaine Showalter

COURSE DESCRIPTION
For feminist scholars, mental illness is both a significant and a very complicated issue. On the one hand, psychological theories about what makes a woman mentally “healthy” are often deeply embedded in traditional, patriarchal assumptions about proper feminine behavior and social roles. This fact has led some feminists to argue that women labeled as mentally ill may simply be rebelling, in covert and confused ways, against the unreasonable demands of society. On the other hand, the idea that our society is “toxic” for girls and women, encouraging self-destructive behaviors and mental distress, has played a prominent role in the women’s movement. Thus, feminist scholars often draw on psychological theories and models in their own explanations of what is wrong with current society and how it should be fixed.

This course will examine the multiple meanings of women’s mental illness in the United States both historically and today. We will draw on a broad range of psychological, historical, sociological, and literary writings on mental illness. Although the primary focus of the course is on sociological explanations for mental illness, the course is not intended to be anti-psychiatric or anti-medical. We will take seriously current theories that much mental illness is the result of organic problems and can be treated with medications. However, we will also aim for a more complicated understanding of what mental disease means and how it functions within particular, gendered social contexts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
- To think critically and communicate effectively in written form
- To develop and practice critical discussion with peers
- To develop the ability to identify and construct academic arguments, including thesis statements, claims, and evidence
- To understand and apply sociological perspectives related to gender and mental illness
- To understand the political nature of psychological and psychiatric knowledge
- To learn the historical relationship between psychiatric practice and the control of women’s lives
- To understand the gendered nature of mental illness and mental illness labeling
- To develop understanding of the effect of social structures and social interaction on gendered forms of mental illness
- To comprehend the consequences of gendered psychiatric labeling on the social control of men and women
REQUIRED TEXTS
1. Readings and reading links will be available on D2L.
2. In addition to the readings on D2L, the following book is available at the PSU bookstore:

COURSE WEBSITE
THIS IS A COMPLETELY ON-LINE COURSE. In order to succeed, you must have reliable internet access that will allow you to navigate/search the web, use email, attach and upload documents, and download and save files.

- All course materials and grades will be available on D2L (https://d2l.pdx.edu). I will also use D2L to communicate with the class.
- If you are having trouble accessing your D2L account or do not have an ODIN account please contact the OIT help desk (Smith Memorial Student Union (SMSU) 18) at 503-725-HELP (4357) or help@pdx.edu.
- It is your responsibility to check D2L and your email regularly for important announcements and any changes to course requirements.

COURSE STRUCTURE
Each week throughout the quarter, I will post weekly modules on Monday, which will include the following:
- Weekly Instructions: A brief statement of the week’s theme(s); questions to guide your reading; helpful reminders about due dates and course requirements.
- Weekly PowerPoints: Lectures in the form of PowerPoint slides.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Total Possible Points for 426 (undergraduate) students: 420
Total Possible Points for 526 (graduate) students: 520

Requirements for 426 and 526 students

- Weekly Discussion Participation (100 points): There will be ten online discussions under “Discussions” on D2L. Everyone is expected to review the posted materials and participate in the discussions. More instructions about discussions will be provided in the weekly instructions.

- Quizzes (70 points): There will be eight quizzes throughout the term that you will complete via D2L. Quizzes will be based on the required readings for that week. Each quiz will be worth 10 points. You will be able to drop your lowest quiz score (I will only count the 7 highest of the 8 scores). You will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz once you begin. You will have an available window of 5 days to complete the quizzes.

- Academic Analysis Paper (50 points): You will be required to write an academic analysis of Willow Weep for Me. This academic analysis will go beyond discussing the book by connecting with course reading and course material presented via the PowerPoint slides. Your response paper is described in more detail on page 7 of this syllabus. You will be required to post your response paper in a discussion forum on D2L that your classmates will be able to view.
• **Exams (200 points):** We will have two exams (a mid-term and a final, worth 100 points each) via D2L. Each exam will consist of multiple choice, T/F, or short essay questions and will be based on required readings and PowerPoint material from the first five weeks (mid-term exam) and from weeks 6 through 10 (final exam). You will have 2 hours to complete each exam once you begin. You will have an available window of 7 days to complete the exam. There will be no make-up exams except in extreme circumstances (e.g. death in the family, serious illness) accompanied by written documentation. If you do need to make up an exam, contact me as soon as possible. If you do not contact me before the exam, you will have to provide a documented reason why you could not contact me.

➢ **Requirements for 526 students only**

• **Presentation (100 points):** Review the course topics in the “Course Schedule” (below) and identify a topic related to gender and mental illness that is NOT covered in the course (or that is covered somewhat superficially). You will need to present the details of your research to the class using PowerPoint or a similar medium -- about 15-20 slides but no more than 30 slides. Please email me with your topic by October 24 (Friday by 11:59 pm) so I can approve your topic. These presentations must be posted on D2L by Sunday, November 23 at 11:59 pm.

**Grading Scale:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 – 100% (Excellent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88 – 89% (Good)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78 – 79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 77% (Satisfactory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68 – 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-67% (Inferior)</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤ 59 (Failure, no credit)</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>≥ 70%</td>
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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Net Etiquette:** In all of your course communications, whether formal or informal, you are required to observe the rules of netiquette. These include the following:

**General Net Etiquette Rules from Portland State:**

- Avoid using all CAPS as it can give the impression that you are shouting. If you want to emphasize a point, use *asterisks* around a word.
- Avoid personal attacks, otherwise known as "flaming." If you read a message that you suspect might be a personal attack, resist the temptation to fire off a response. Instead, let your response sit before sending or request that your instructor resolve the situation.
- If you disagree with a fellow student, describe your perspective clearly and politely rather than primarily criticizing her/his comments. Avoid any personal criticism or potentially offensive language.

**Additional Net Etiquette Rules:**

- Be respectful when making a comment or responding to others’ comments. This rule is the same as for face-to-face classroom behavior. However, as we are not going to have body language and tone of voice in our online communications, please use formal English appropriately.
- Be extra polite, careful, and kind about how you express yourself while posting to a discussion board or emailing me.
- Avoid that thousands-word lengthy post, and avoid posting dozens of messages a week. In the interest of time only, which I know none of you have enough of, please work on being succinct.
- Avoid the twitter and text message abbreviations. Not everyone knows them.
- Finally, if you run into any netiquette-related problems—if something has offended or hurt your feelings, for instance—please e-mail me directly about it. I would like to be aware of any problems.

**Requirements for Papers**: Papers should be double-spaced and typed using 12-pt font and 1-inch margins. All papers should include your name and the name of the assignment (e.g., Academic Analysis Paper) at the top of the page. All papers should be checked and corrected for spelling and grammatical errors. You may be marked down if you have multiple spelling and/or grammar errors. The PSU Writing Center is a great resource. Please take advantage of it: (http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu; 188F Cramer Hall, Phone: 725.3570).

**Plagiarism**: Plagiarism is a serious offense than can result in a failing grade and other serious consequences, including expulsion. Plagiarism occurs when you utilize the ideas, expressions, phrases or words of another person without correctly citing that person or source. Make sure you understand how to correctly cite sources, including when and how to paraphrase and quote. I expect you to cite all sources used in all assignments assigned for this course. I am not picky about which format you use to cite sources; however, I do require that you choose one (e.g., MLA, APA) and use it correctly and consistently, integrating both internal and external (e.g., works cited/reference list) citations. There are many on-line sources that document proper citation format. (http://www.library.pdx.edu/tutorials/citation/9).

**Academic Accommodations**: If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, or learning disability that may impact your ability to carry out assigned course work, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and arrange appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with disability. The DRC is located in 116 SMSU and can be contacted at 725-4150 or by email at drc@pdx.edu. Visit their site at http://www.drc.pdx.edu/. If you are a student with a documented disability and registered with the Disability Resource Center, please contact me immediately to facilitate arranging academic accommodations.

**Recommended Materials**:  
Here are some helpful on-line grammar and writing resources:  
The OWL at Purdue University  
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/679/01/  
The Emory Writing Center  
http://writingcenter.emory.edu/students/resources/index.html

**Resources to Help You Succeed at PSU**:  
**Writing Center** (http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu)  
One-on-one help with writing, on a drop-in or appointment basis  
188F Cramer Hall, 725.3570  
**Millar Library** (http://www.library.pdx.edu)  
**Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC)** (http://www.pdx.edu/shac/)  
Counseling, psychological evaluation and intervention, testing services, and all health-related concerns. 1880 SW 6th Ave., 725-2800
### COURSE SCHEDULE

Course schedule subject to change with reasonable notice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
<th>Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introduction to course</strong></td>
<td>Spanos (1978)</td>
<td>Quiz #1 Opens 9/29; Closes 10/3 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 29-October 5</td>
<td><strong>Historical Approaches to Gender &amp; Mental Illness</strong></td>
<td>Theriot (1993)</td>
<td>Discussion #1 Opens 9/29; Closes 10/5 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theoretical Explanations for Mental Illness and Gender Differences</strong></td>
<td>Kessler and McLeod (1984)</td>
<td>Quiz #2 Opens 10/6; Closes 10/10 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6-October 12</td>
<td><strong>Mental Illness as a Social Product: Positivist Theories</strong></td>
<td>Ussher (2003)</td>
<td>Discussion #2 Opens 10/6; Closes 10/12 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td><strong>Mental Illness as a Social Construct: Social Constructionist Theories</strong></td>
<td>Busfield (1988)</td>
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<td><strong>Gender &amp; Current Psychiatric Labeling</strong></td>
<td>Danquah “Willow Weep for Me” Pp. 11-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 13-October 19</td>
<td><strong>Defining and Measuring Mental Disorder</strong></td>
<td>Kessler (2003)</td>
<td>Quiz #3 Opens 10/13; Closes 10/17 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td><strong>Types of Mental Illness</strong></td>
<td>Seedat et al. (2009)</td>
<td>Discussion #3 Opens 10/13; Closes 10/19 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Stress, Roles, and Role Strain as Factors in Mental Illness</strong></td>
<td>McLean et al. (2011)</td>
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<td>October 20-October 26</td>
<td><strong>Poverty, Socioeconomic Status, and Employment</strong></td>
<td>Danquah “Willow Weep for Me” Pp. 25-48</td>
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<td><strong>Significant Others, Employment, and Household Labor</strong></td>
<td>Van de Velde et al. (2010)</td>
<td>Quiz #4 Opens 10/20; Closes 10/24 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Belle (1990)</td>
<td>Discussion #4 Opens 10/20; Closes 10/26 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Hartley et al. (1992)</td>
<td>(526 students only): Presentation topic email due to Prof. Thompson</td>
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<td>10/24 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Stress, Roles, and Role Strain as Factors in Mental Illness</strong></td>
<td>Jackson (2006)</td>
<td>Exam #1 Opens 10/27; Closes 11/2 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td>October 27-November 2</td>
<td><strong>Race, Class, and Sexuality Issues in Mental Illness and Treatment Access</strong></td>
<td>Alvidrez (1999)</td>
<td>Discussion #5 Opens 10/27; Closes 11/2 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Meyer (2003)</td>
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<td>Danquah “Willow Weep for Me” Pp. 97-168</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td><strong>Stress, Roles, and Role Strain as Factors in Mental Illness</strong></td>
<td>Bird (1999)</td>
<td>Quiz #5 Opens 11/3; Closes 11/7 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 3-November 9</td>
<td><strong>Significant Others, Employment, and Household Labor</strong></td>
<td>Rosenfield (1992)</td>
<td>Discussion #6 Opens 11/3; Closes 11/9 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Simon and Barrett (2010)</td>
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<td>Danquah “Willow Weep for Me” Pp. 169-248</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Required Readings</td>
<td>Deadlines</td>
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| **Week 7**  
November 10-November 16 | **Stress, Roles, and Role Strain as Factors in Mental Illness**  
Horwitz et al. (2001)  
Council of State Governments (2005)  
Danquah “Willow Weep for Me” Pp. 249-269 | Quiz #6 Opens  
11/10; Closes 11/14 at 11:59pm  
Discussion #7 Opens  
11/10; Closes 11/16 at 11:59pm |
| **Week 8**  
November 17-November 23 | **Institutionalized Responses to Mental Illness**  
Stigma and differential labeling | Wirth and Bodenhausen (2009)  
Rosenfield (1982)  
Baskin et al. (1989) | Quiz #7 Opens  
11/17; Closes 11/21 at 11:59pm  
Discussion #8 Opens  
11/17; Closes 11/23 at 11:59pm  
Academic analysis of Willow Weep for Me papers due 11/23 at 11:59pm |
| **Week 9**  
November 24-November 30 | **Institutionalized Responses to Mental Illness**  
Pharmaceutical Advertising and Perceptions of Mental Illness | Chananie (2005)  
Metz, Jonathan M. (2003) | Quiz #8 Opens  
11/24; Closes 11/28 at 11:59pm  
Discussion #9 Opens  
11/24; Closes 11/30 at 11:59pm  
(526 students only): Presentations due 11/30 at 11:59pm |
| **Week 10**  
December 1-December 7 | **Institutionalized Responses to Mental Illness**  
Criminal Justice System and Legal Responses to Mental Illness | Drapalski et al. (2009)  
West and Lichtenstein (2006) | Exam #2 Opens 12/1; Closes 12/7 at 11:59pm  
Discussion #10 Opens 12/1; Closes 12/7 at 11:59pm |
Academic Analysis Paper (50 points): You will be required to write an academic analysis of Willow Weep for Me. This academic analysis will go beyond discussing the book by connecting with course reading and course material presented via the PowerPoint slides. You will be required to post your response paper in a discussion forum on D2L that your classmates will be able to view.

This academic analysis paper focuses on the book by Meri Nana-Ama Danquah, Willow Weep for Me. This book recounts the author’s experiences with depression and the mental health system. Her experiences raise questions about the causes of mental illness and how to best respond to mental illness once it occurs.

Your goal in this paper is to relate Danquah’s experiences to the course material on gender and mental illness. The paper assignment asks that you write descriptively about Danquah’s experiences, but that you also go beyond mere description to discuss the ways in which her experiences relate to more general questions about the causes of mental illness, the effects of mental illness labeling, and the best means for reacting to and/or preventing mental illness from occurring in the first place.

Specifically, you should consider the following questions and write a 5-7 page paper that addresses them. You do not need to answer the questions in their given order. In fact, the best papers will integrate the answers to the questions into a coherent paper. To receive full credit, each of the following questions must be addressed in your paper:

1. In your opinion, was Danquah’s depression caused by social factors or was it a social construction? You may also discuss biological and psychological causes, but your focus must be on either the social causation or the social construction perspective (or both). Provide evidence from the book and from class (readings and/or PowerPoint slides) to support your response.

2. How did race, culture, gender, and social class affect Danquah’s self-concept and the reaction of others to her and her illness?
   - How do stigma and stereotypes of mental illness (and those who are typically labeled “mentally ill”) affect reactions to labeled mental illness? How do these stereotypes and stigma affect the self-concept of people who are labeled mentally ill?

3. By the end of the book was Danquah “cured?” If so, what factor(s) contributed to her “cure?” If not, explain what factor(s) indicate that she is still mentally ill.
   - What effect did the mental health system have on Danquah?

4. What (if anything) could have been done to prevent Danquah’s illness (or her mental illness labeling if you believe she’s not “really” mentally ill)?

5. Why do you think Danquah chose to write this book? What is her main point?

The paper that you write for this assignment should be 5-7 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced. You will be graded on the technical quality of your writing, the clarity and accuracy of your arguments, and the coherence of your paper. The primary consideration in grading will be your ability to successfully tie class material to the book. Thus, as an example, a discussion of the cause(s) of Danquah’s depression would be incomplete without a discussion of whether mental illness is a social product or a social construction. When you refer to the Danquah book or to PowerPoint slides and readings, be sure to provide a citation [e.g., (Jackson 2006), or (PowerPoint slides, week 2), or (Danquah 1998, p. 105)]. You are not required to use any outside references (i.e., books/articles that are not read/discussed in class), but are welcome to do so.