

From Cuckoo's Nest to Black Swan: Normality and Madness in the Films

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Course Number:
Semester: Fall 2017
Class Time:
Class Location:

Office Hours: By Appointment
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Course Description

A vast amount of recent psychological research is focused on the deviant and the abnormal mental life. However, understanding the gist of normality has received much less attention and thought. What does it mean to be normal? And where should we draw the line between normality and abnormality? In this class we will try to address these questions by using the medium of film. Throughout the semester we will analyze a series of films and cinematic representations to examine the boundaries of normality from the perspective of psychopathology. By discussing various aspects of psychopathology—psychotic, neurotic and personality disorders, perversions and more—we will portray the complex and unstable relationships between psychopathology and its supposedly complementary notion: the normal. Cinematic representations of sanity, madness and psychopathological conditions will be examined within contemporary psychological frameworks, as well as in relation to social issues, such as stigma, power relations, gender and discrimination.