

Reflection/Reaction Paper Guide

S324
Soc of Mental Illness
Summer 2010

Due August 2, 6:30 p.m. on Oncourse

Introduction

In the seventh week of class (Monday, August 2 by 6:30 p.m. loaded into the Drop-Box on Oncourse), you will be required to turn in a four page paper that will be a reaction and review of a book or movie that features a real or fictional portrayal person with mental illness *as a central character*. You will be expected to address all relevant themes from the class in this essay.

I will also ask you to append a one-page argument for or against the inclusion of this book or film into a future class on the sociology of mental illness.

Below is a list of suggested titles - **it is your responsibility to pick one and make sure you have access to it for the class**. Most of the items on my list are available at the library, but you should secure your book or movie as soon as possible. If you would like to suggest a title not included in my list, you should talk to me as soon as possible (at latest by July 28) so that I can review it and approve it.

Expectations

You are expected to have read the book or watched the film carefully and to have thought about every one of the nine themes for the class. Omitting clear connections to themes will count against you. You are also welcome to pull in other class topics that weren't of the official nine themes, but you should not neglect the themes in order to do this.

The subject of **the first part of the paper** (four pages long at minimum) will be to discuss the book or film's portrayal (fictional or not) of a person with mental illness in light of the nine themes we have been discussing in this class. **At a minimum, I expect you to cover four themes, but if the work clearly intersects with more than that, you should also mention those.** Talk about the mental illness being portrayed and how the person who is living with talks about the illness and how others deal with and understand it. Give examples of the connections to your theme. For instance, if the character with a mental illness is being stigmatized, tell me by whom and how, and what the individual's reaction is. If you find that the portrayal isn't a very realistic one, please talk about that.

The subject of the second part of the paper, which should start on a new page, have a new header and be about one page minimum, will be an argument for the inclusion of this film or movie in a future class on the sociology of mental illness. You should state why you think it is appropriate, what lecture topic it should be paired with or where in the syllabus it would work well, and what you would want future students to learn from it as a work portraying people with mental illness. If you actually are unconvinced that this work would be appropriate for a future class, you are also allowed to take this side - but you should clearly state why it is not appropriate, given that the work should have been addressing common themes in the class. Please be specific and detailed with your objection.

Citations in this assignment can be in any format you wish, but please stay consistent. If you are referencing certain scenes in a book, please give page numbers in parentheses. If you are talking about a movie, give me some idea of where in the movie the scene occurred (if you are watching this online or on a DVD, you could give a minute mark as a citation).

If you wish to write a draft of the paper and get feedback from me, or bring an outline and discuss your paper, let me know ahead of time that you plan to talk about this and what your book or film is (so I can refresh my memory on the book or film), and come to me by July 28. You are welcome to email me your draft so that I can look at it and I will give you feedback in person - in office hours or by appointment - but I will not send you detailed written feedback.

The paper should be written in 12 point Times New Roman with one-inch margins and double-spaced. Your paper will be graded for structure, use of evidence to support your point, analysis of the material, logic in argumentation, and mechanics of writing. I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Tutorial Services down the hall from our classroom in Ballantine 206. See below an description and their summer hours from WTS:

"If you would like help in any phase of the writing process--from brainstorming to polishing the final draft--call 855-6738 for an appointment with a tutor at Writing Tutorial Services (WTS, pronounced "wits"). When you visit WTS in Ballantine 206, you'll find a tutor who knows something about your subject and is a sympathetic and helpful reader of your prose. Feel free to bring drafts in on paper or disk. During this second summer session, WTS is open from noon to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Tutors will do their best to accommodate students who drop in, but to be assured of an appointment, it's best to call in advance."

Suggested Titles

It is important to note that I have left off a few films and books that might be of interest to you because I have found that they do not result in very good papers, such as Silence of the Lambs, Psycho, American Psycho, Shutter Island. I discourage you from using books or films that focus on psychopaths and sociopaths or just use mental institutions as backdrops.

Films

A Beautiful Mind (2001)	Adam (2009)
As Good as it Gets (1997)	Benny and Joon (1993)
Clean, Shaven (1995)	Dirty Filthy Love (2004)
Donnie Darko (2001)	Girl, Interrupted (1999)
Mad Love (1995)	Ordinary People (1980)
Prozac Nation (2001)	Punch-Drunk Love (2002)
Rain Man (1988)	Shine (1996)
Snow Cake (2006)	Temple Grandin (2010)
The Aviator (2005)	The Hours (2002)
The Soloist (2008)	

Books

- An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness, Kay Redfield Jameson
- Divided Minds: Twin Sisters and Their Journey Through Schizophrenia, Pamela Spiro Wagner and Carolyn Spiro
- Electroboy: A Memoir of Mania, Andy Behrman
- Girl Interrupted, Sussanna Kaysen
- Ordinary People, Judith Guest
- Passing for Normal: A Memoir of Compulsion, Amy Wilensky
- Prozac Nation, Elizabeth Wurtzel
- She's Come Undone, Wally Lamb
- The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath
- The Best Awful: A Novel, Carrie Fisher
- The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey through Madness, Elyn Saks
- The Outsider: A Journey into My Father's Struggle with Madness, Nathaniel Lachenmeyer
- The Secret Scripture, Sebastian Barry
- Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia, Marya Hornbacher