

Prospectus

Anthropology 2329 – Psychoanalytic and Anthropological Perspectives on Childhood

This course will address questions such as: How do our childhoods influence who we are? How does culture influence childhood? How do we develop emotionally, as individuals and as members of cultural groups? How does culture, as an influence seemingly external to the individual, shape internal psychic experience, and how do internal psychic processes affect culture? What features of development, child rearing, and family structure and function are and are not universal for our species? What is and is not known about these questions?

It has recently been observed that most psychological data and theory are “WEIRD,” that is, derived from populations that are Western (and White), Educated, Industrial, Rich, and Democratic. We will be particularly interested in what cross-cultural data bring to how we understand childhood, selfhood, developmental phases, developmental conflicts, ourselves and others.

The instructors are both psychoanalytic psychiatrists. One (LDB) is a psychoanalyst with a private practice of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis for adolescents and adults. One (AW) is a psychoanalytically sophisticated child psychiatrist who has a private practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy for children, adolescents, and adults. When relevant, they will add a clinical perspective to the discussion of topics covered in class.