

The Psychological & Medical Anthropology Seminar Series Presents:

"Of Other Realms, Entities and Meanings: Studying Mental Health in an Outpatient Clinic in Southern Brazil"

**Wednesday April 4, 2018,
10:00am-12:00pm
Social Sciences Building
Room 107**



This presentation discusses my fieldwork in a psychiatric day clinic in southern Brazil. It examines how religious and psychotherapeutic interpretations of self and healing are constantly being evoked and interwoven into therapeutic conceptions and practices. What I take as religious interpretations are not discrete or static conceptions but, in fact, heterogeneous statements that refer to spirits, lights, energies, colors, seeing and talking to other entities. Similarly, when I talk about psychotherapeutic interpretations, I call attention to a diversity of psychological and therapeutic schools that are practiced within the day clinic program, including psychoanalysis, transpersonal psychology, and psychodrama. Both groups of practices/discourses should not be seen as opposed or contradictory but, rather, as crucial in shaping important psychiatric artifacts in that context. Mental health, here, is experienced from the perspective of a world populated with different entities – that include the powers of biomedicine and medication, but also deal with the unknown, the energetic and the spiritual. As a result, instead of describing the clinical practices as expressing a discrete and well-defined conceptual orientation – either that of the religious or mental health perspective – I choose to think about both realms as intertwined.

Fernando Ciello

Fernando graduated in Social Sciences (2009) and has a Master's degree in Social Anthropology (2013). Currently he is a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology of Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC, Brazil) and is a Visiting Scholar at UC San Diego in the Fulbright Program. His work has focused in the ethnographic study of mental health field in Brazil from the perspective of Anthropology of Health.