

# The Beautiful Mind: Global Perceptions of Mental Health



SYLLABUS

VU Amsterdam Summer School

July 2024



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Any general questions for the Summer School support team? Contact [amsterdamsummerschool@vu.nl](mailto:amsterdamsummerschool@vu.nl).

## Course Details

Title	The Beautiful Mind: Global Perceptions of Mental Health
Coordinator(s)	Drs. Aniek Woodward
Other lecturers	Dr. Elena Syurina, Denise Flaherty-Roussilhon, Lara Clauss
Study credits	3 ECTS
Form(s) of tuition	On campus
Approximate contact hours	45
Approximate self-study hours	39

## Teaching staff (in order of appearance)

- Drs. Aniek Woodward
- Lara Clauss
- Denise Flaherty-Roussilhon
- Dr. Elena Syurina
- Dr. Mitzi Waltz
- Dr. Sarju Sing Rai
- Dr. Brittney Mengistu and others

## Course description

How do Chile and Egypt compare in terms of their treatment options for anxiety? How do refugees access mental health systems in host countries? What is normal in relation to mental health, and does normal even exist? We invite students to explore questions such as these and travel with us “down the rabbit hole” of global mental health. This course will offer a broad perspective on mental health through discussions of the most prevalent and impactful mental health disorders around the world and the complexity of mental health as a public health issue.

This course will begin with an introduction to global mental health followed by in-depth lectures and workshops on history and trends in global mental health, including the importance of cultural sensitivity and systems thinking. Students will work together in groups to use this newly acquired knowledge to debate the ambiguity of mental health and to compare treatment options of a specific mental health issue in two different countries.

Special attention will be paid to the development of students' critical thinking and reflexivity. Lectures and workshops will focus on issues such as the ethics of mental health, disability, burnout, trauma, gut-brain axis, stigma, cultural and environmental influences.

## Learning objectives

- Describe the history and current trends in global mental health
- Explore the contextual, structural, and individual factors and inherent ambiguity that influences mental health status and service provision
- Critically assess and debate the complexity and ambiguity of mental health problems
- Take an interdisciplinary approach to the issues of mental health and gain insight into how mental health is connected to other health-related problems
- Critically contrast and compare approaches to a specific mental health topic in different countries
- Meet and work together with peers from various countries and backgrounds

## Assignments and Assessment

- Debate – Group assignment (20%)
- Personal reflection – Individual assignment (20%)
- Presentation (poster) on the comparison of two countries' approaches to a selected global mental health issue – Group assignment (20%)
- Portfolio on country comparison – Group assignment (40%)
- 75% attendance required and active participation will be taken into consideration

## Provisional reading list

Patel, V., Saxena, S., Lund, C. & et al (2018). The Lancet Commission on global mental health and sustainable development. *Lancet*, 392, 1553-1598.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31612-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31612-X)

World Health Organization (2022). World mental health report: Transforming mental health for all. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240049338>

Thornicroft, G., Sunkel, C., Alikhon Aliev, & et al (2022). The Lancet Commission on ending stigma and discrimination in mental health. *Lancet*, 400, 1438-1480.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(22\)01470-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(22)01470-2)

## Course Schedule

Our core programme makes up 60% of this Summer School. Sessions focus on topics such as refugee mental health, stigma, and burnout. You will select additional sessions to complete the minimum requirement (60 % core + 15 % selection = 75 % minimum attendance). These additional sessions are more creative and interactive, e.g. art therapy. This timetable shows when core sessions and assessments are expected to take place, as well as the general VU Summer School events. Please find below a preliminary timetable (be aware that some of the timings and topics may change). A more definitive table will be made available closer to the start date.

	08/07/2024 Monday	09/07/2024 Tuesday	10/07/2024 Wednesday	11/07/2024 Thursday	12/07/2024 Friday	
09:15 - 09:45	Summer School event	Mental health news	Debate preparation	Debate preparation	Debate preparation	
09:45 - 10:00						
10:00 - 10:45	Introduction & global trends	Culture	Mental health stigma	Law, ethics & human rights	Debate - group assessment	Optional session
10:45 - 11:00		Mental health systems				
11:00 - 11:45	University student counselling		Summer School event	Excursion to Amsterdam City Rights		
11:45 - 12:00		Mental health in the media				
12:00 - 12:30	History of mental health		Neurodiversity			
12:30 - 13:15	Lunch break					
13:15 - 14:00	Summer School event	Mental health as communities				
14:00 - 14:15						
14:15 - 15:00						
15:00 - 15:15						
15:15 - 15:45						
15:45 - 16:00						
16:00 - 17:00						
	15/07/2024 Monday	16/07/2024 Tuesday	17/07/2024 Wednesday	18/07/2024 Thursday	19/07/2024 Friday	
09:15 - 09:45	My weekend	Poster preparation	Portfolio preparation	Portfolio preparation	Poster preparation	
09:45 - 10:00						
10:00 - 10:45	Workshop on poster presentation & country comparison	Microbes and mental health	Mental health in the workplace	Art therapy and participatory action	Poster presentation - group assessment	Core: assessment
10:45 - 11:00		Mental health in Ethiopia	Burnout			
11:00 - 11:45	Poster preparation		Summer School event	Personal reflection - individual assessment (15 min per student) + Parallel: optional programme		
11:45 - 12:00		Refugee mental health				
12:00 - 12:30	Poster preparation		Summer School event			
12:30 - 13:15	Lunch break					
13:15 - 14:00						
14:00 - 14:15						
14:15 - 15:00						
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