



The Center for Global Health Lecture Series

Transforming Therapy: Mental Health Practice and Cultural Change in Mexico

Public Lecture by Whitney L. Duncan
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Thursday, October 18, 2018 | 4:00 pm
Knight Library Browsing Room



Recent debates in medicine, the social sciences, and the field of global mental health (GMH) have centered on how to provide mental healthcare in resource-scarce settings and reduce the global burden of mental illness without medicalizing distress and marginalizing culturally salient illness categories, treatments, and understandings of self and psyche. In this talk, I discuss my new book, *Transforming Therapy*, which directly addresses these debates by investigating how non-native forms of mental and emotional health care are implemented and transformed in Oaxaca, Mexico. Exploring both the risks and possibilities of global mental health provision, I will discuss how psy-globalization—the transnational spread of psychological and psychiatric ways of knowing and working upon the self—articulates with political economic projects, on the one hand, and simultaneously creates therapeutic “sites of psy-sociality” for commenting upon and contesting such projects and their failures, on the other. In these sites, Oaxacans grapple with and seek to recover from the emotional consequences of social problems and breakdowns, such as familial conflict and loss, poverty, violence, and migration, which themselves are often intimately tied to the broader political economy and cultural changes in the context of globalization and modernization.



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