This class focuses on the experience of madness (schizophrenia, depression, bipolar illness, and borderline personality disorder); its expression in the form of the memoir; and the role of autobiographical discourse in changing minds. Trauma Warning: the material in these course texts and topics of class discussion could be traumatizing. Do not take this class if you have concerns about your ability to tolerate unhappy and sometimes outrageous subjects.

M March 28 Introduction, Organization
F April 1 D. P. Schreber’s Memoirs of My Nervous Illness, pp. 3-68. Daniel Paul Schreber was the son of a famous pediatrician and later became a prominent attorney and judge in 19th-century Germany. The Memoirs of his mental illness became the topic of an important case study by Sigmund Freud.

M April 4 Schreber’s Memoirs, pp. 69-140
F April 8 Schreber’s Memoirs, pp. 140-206

M April 11 Schreber’s Memoirs, pp. 206-59
F April 15 Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar, chapters 1-6. Sylvia Plath is one of the USA’s best 20th-century poets; Ariel is perhaps her best-known book of poems. The Bell Jar is a somewhat fictionalized memoir that tells the story of Esther Greenwood’s first episode of major depressive disorder.

M April 18 Plath, Bell Jar, chapters 7-14
F April 22 Plath, Bell Jar, chapters 15-20; 2-3 PAGE PAPER DUE
Susanna Kaysen, *Girl, Interrupted*. Susanna Kaysen was the daughter of one of John F. Kennedy’s economic advisors and is now a novelist. Her memoir of her institutionalization for borderline personality disorder became the film *Girl, Interrupted*, starring Winona Ryder and Angelina Jolie.

Kay Jamison, *An Unquiet Mind*, Prologue + Part 1. Kay Jamison is a clinical psychologist, Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University, and Honorary Professor of English at St. Andrews University. Her book *An Unquiet Mind* explores the experience of bipolar illness.

Elyn Saks, *The Center Cannot Hold*, chapters 1-6. Elyn Saks is Associate Dean and Orrin B. Evans Professor of Law, Psychology, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. She is also a MacArthur Fellow. *The Center Cannot Hold* tells the story of the onset of her schizophrenia.

Elyn Saks, *The Center Cannot Hold*, chapters 14-19

PAPER DUE

NO CLASS

CONCLUSION; PAPER PRESENTATIONS

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Course Requirements: class participation (20% of final grade); one seminar presentation (20% of final grade); one 2-3 page paper (20% of final grade); one 7-10 page paper (40% of final grade).

Class Policies:
--I reserve the right to fail or downgrade you if you indulge in lengthy absences from class without written excuse from court of law, hospital or funeral director, regardless of whether you turn in assignments or not. It is your responsibility to monitor your own attendance and to contact me if you have concerns about whether you have crossed the line.
--No tolerance on plagiarism and no use of outside critical sources of any kind (critical articles, Sparknotes, etc.) in preparing papers. No tolerance means a “D” in the class and I report you to the Dean of Students.
--You must bring your books to class.