

Anthropology
Self Reflection Reality



This seminar explores conceptions of self and selfhood comparatively and cross-culturally in ethnography, popular culture and psychoanalysis. In many cultural contexts, from Asian religious traditions to psychoanalytic approaches and anthropology in the West, the “self” is an important object of speculation, analysis, and a source of power. The course examines three questions: **How is a self formed? Under what conditions can a self transform? What is the self’s relationship to the person, the phantasmatic and the virtual?** The class explores these questions through an analysis of ontological conceptions, ritual practices (e.g. initiation rites), in written and visual materials: ethnography, psychoanalysis, literature, philosophy, and film. Significantly, the seminar will engage diverse materials on Asia, Melanesia, South East Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia and South Asia. The goal of the seminar will be to arrive at a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the self as an object of study traversing times and geographies, and of the ethical and social implications of this understanding. The class will be taught synchronous remote. **Mo/Thurs 11-12:20.**

