The Psychological & Medical Anthropology Seminar Series Presents:

"No hay drama": Precarity, Medicine, and Gender among mental health and HIV-AIDS patients in Northern Santiago, Chile

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During the last decade, there has been an increase in the diagnosis of mental health illnesses and HIV-AIDS in the rural, semi-rural and mostly underserved communities of the Northern metropolitan area of Santiago, Chile. At the same time, the local mental health care center in Lampa and the National Network of Original Peoples (RENPO) reported to the Ministry of Public Health their concerns about the interaction between mental health diagnoses, HIV-AIDS, and ethnicity. According to RENPO, indigenous peoples and Haitian migrants are most vulnerable and at risk of suffering from mental illness and HIV-AIDS. However, despite their efforts, the request for an urgent public health strategy has gone unanswered. What are these very alarming statistics and the government silence about this problem showing about the experience to live and be ill in rural and semi-rural Santiago? What are the meanings behind the narratives of precaritization, alcoholism, and abandonment expressed by mental health and HIV-AIDS patients in Lampa? In this presentation I discuss the epidemiological information in relation to the experience of mental health and HIV-AIDS patients who are receiving treatment in the public health care system in Lampa.