

GRAND ROUNDS

Wednesday, November 8th

HSC, LH 2 ([directions](#))

4:30-6:00pm

REDISCOVERING PERFORMANCE IN HEALING:

What can we learn from Shamans and Medicine Men?

While the achievements of modern medical science are many, healing also involves confidence and trust in healers. The field of medical anthropology is replete with study of shamans and medicine men who engage in healing practices in indigenous cultures. Healing rituals consist of drumming, chanting, dancing, and role playing while in trance – all performed publicly in symbolic costumes. Herbal or animal-based preparations are administered only as part of a ritual performance, which from a Western perspective can be understood principally as inducing patients' faith in the performer's supernatural powers. Faith leads to an expectation of a successful outcome, which supposedly triggers a self-healing mechanism in the patient, as in the placebo effect. Studies have demonstrated that a substantial percentage of patients in Western-style drug trials responds positively to placebo treatment, and that the positive response is based on patients' expectation to recover. Studies have also shown that this expectation can be enhanced by an effective doctor's performance. This lecture will present performance aspects of traditional healing that may be applied with necessary modifications to science-based medicine. It will also discuss innovative programs, such as Northwestern University's Medical Improv and Clod Ensemble's Performing Medicine, which are designed to raise physicians' awareness of performance and train them in specific performance techniques.

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Dr. Atay Citron

*Atay Citron is a theatre director, performance scholar, and associate professor at the University of Haifa, Israel. As chair of the Theatre Department (2004-2009), he created the first full-time academic training program for medical clowns. He studied the work of medical clowns in Israel and abroad, and the work of shamans and ritual clowns in the U.S., Korea, Bali and Papua New Guinea. He lectures and leads workshops in hospitals, conferences, and universities around the world. Currently, he studies the effects of therapeutic clowning on children with developmental disabilities. The results of his study on the manipulation of the placebo response by theatrical tools were published in *Frontiers in Psychology* (2016). Citron is the co-editor of *Performance Studies in Motion* (Bloomsbury, 2014). He holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Performance Studies, New York University. He served as artistic director of the Bat-Yam International Street Theatre Festival, the Acco Festival of Alternative Theatre, and the School of Visual Theatre. Currently, he leads the Ebisu Sign Language Theatre Laboratory, which is part of the Grammar of the Body Research Project (gramby.haifa.ac.il). He is a Schusterman Visiting Artist at Stony Brook University's Theatre Department for the fall of 2017.*



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