

INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: 10am-12pm Tuesdays

Course Information

Schermerhorn 608
Mondays & Wednesdays
1:00 - 4:10pm

Brief Course Description

This course will provide a comprehensive introduction to general theories and methods related to culture and diversity. In the first half of the course, we will survey a broad range of topics in cultural psychology, emphasizing psychological research that links culture to mental processes. In this portion of the course, we will focus on how diverse aspects of humans' day-to-day lives—including social relationships, cognitive processes, basic visual perception, art, judgments of morality, and mental illness—both differ and are constant across cultures. In the second half of the course, we will focus on specific topics that bridge cultural psychology and identity, including group and identity formation, stereotyping, prejudice, stigma, intergroup contact, and multiculturalism. Special emphasis will be placed on critically examining research methods and analyzing real-world treatments of culture based on topics covered in the course.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will:

- Have a strong knowledge base in fundamental theories, findings, and methodology in cultural psychology
- Be able to understand and critically evaluate research conducted by cultural psychologists as well as the generalizability (or not!) of psychological research in other fields
- Be able to apply your knowledge of cultural psychology and diversity science to real-world contexts (e.g., art exhibits, psychiatric treatment, company diversity initiatives, and more!), and talk about your analysis with others

Course Readings

Cultural psychology in its modern form is a relatively new and active field in psychology, with many different approaches and angles. To capture this range of perspectives, I will assemble readings from seminal papers in the field and portions of recently published books. These readings will serve to illuminate one interesting issue related to the topics we will be discussing in class. All readings are available on Courseworks.

Course Requirements

Grading Breakdown

Research Methods Critique	10%
Cultural Analysis	30%
Exams	
Midterm	25%
Final	25%
Class Attendance & Participation	10%

Research Methods Critique (Due May 31)

You will read one article of your choice from several options posted on Courseworks and complete a structured writing assignment based on this article. The assignment will entail summarizing the research design of your chosen article and critiquing its methodology using material covered in class. The assignment sheet is posted on Courseworks and will be discussed further in class.

Cultural Analysis

The goal of this project is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of a specific cultural or diversity program, exhibit, or initiative in the "real world." Such programs are prolific in our society, including kindergarten tolerance programs, corporate diversity mentoring or outreach programs, museum exhibits of works from a specific culture, police department racial profiling prevention programs, cultural center programs, and more. In this project you will have the opportunity to identify one of these programs, exhibits, or initiatives of your choice to analyze in depth using relevant research we have examined throughout the course. You may select an event or site in New York City to visit in person (e.g., a cultural center, art exhibit or performance, museum, etc.), or you may conduct a "virtual visit" of an organization, program, or initiative with a comprehensive online presence (as long as there are enough details online to allow for a deep analysis).

This project has three graded components, which will be discussed further in class:

1. **Proposal (5% of course grade; due June 12):** A document no more than 2 pages double spaced detailing the program you have chosen to analyze, an explanation of how the program relates to culture or diversity, and a justification of why a cultural analysis of this program would be interesting or important.
2. **Paper (20% of course grade; due June 26):** A double spaced paper of 6-8 pages that (1) explains connections between the program you chose and material learned in class (at least 3 different concepts), and (2) critiques the program's approach and makes

recommendations for improvement based on research discussed in the course plus 3 research articles of your choice.

Optional: I will read and comment on a draft of your paper if you turn it in by Wednesday, June 21. Submitted drafts will not be graded, but will give you a chance to make your paper stronger before the final version is due. Drafts with comments will be returned by Friday, June 23, so that you have the weekend to make edits.

3. **Presentation (5% of course grade; in class June 26):** A casual powerpoint presentation explaining your selected program and analysis to the class (i.e., a presentation of what you wrote in your proposal and paper). Your presentation should include some documentation of the program or event (e.g., photographs, screenshots).

Exams

The midterm and final will be a mix of multiple choice and free response questions. You will be given several options for the free response questions and will be able to choose the ones you want to answer. Each exam will be worth 25% of your grade. More information will be provided about each test closer to the exam date.

Attendance & Participation

You are expected to attend each class for its entirety and participate actively when asked.

Course Support

Office Hours

I am available for extra help during office hours every week. Come stop by, whether it's to talk about an assignment, clarify part of a lecture that didn't make sense, discuss careers in psychology or academia, or just to say hi. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, email me and we can set up a different time to meet.

An important note for the summer: As with all summer courses, we will be progressing through the course material very quickly since we only have six weeks (the standard course offered during the spring semester is 14 weeks long!). **This means that it is critical that you get in touch with me right away if you find that you are having difficulty with the course material.** I want you to succeed, and will do everything I can to facilitate your success, but the only ways I will know that you are having trouble are if you tell me or if you don't do well on an assignment (and I think we would both strongly prefer the former!).

Disability Services

If you require classroom accommodations, please get in touch with me as soon as possible. In addition, please stop by the [Office of Disability Services](#) (ODS; 108A Wien Hall) to register for support services and apply for accommodations such as extra exam time. It may take at least two weeks for ODS to process these applications, so please plan ahead.

Additional Resources

Please note the following excellent additional resources for students:

- [Columbia Writing Center](#) (excellent for help with writing for this course or any other!)
- [Health Services](#), [Go Ask Alice!](#), and [Counseling & Psychological Services](#) (health comes first!)

Course Policies

Attendance

With a course this compressed, it is imperative that you come to class. Attendance will be factored into your course grade. **You should not take this course if you know from the start that you will need to miss a scheduled class.**

That said, I understand that unforeseeable circumstances may come up during the session that may prevent you from attending class. If this is the case, please contact me as soon as you know that you will need to miss class. You will need to get a note from your doctor or advising dean in order for your absence to be excused (i.e., not hurt your participation grade). Remember that any time you miss class, you will be responsible for all of the material from that day.

Late Assignments

Grades for late assignments (i.e., research methods critique, cultural analysis) will be reduced by 10% for each day they are late. Assignment extensions and make up exams will be granted only in the case of exceptional circumstances and emergencies, with a note from your advising dean.

Class Etiquette

- **Timeliness:** Please arrive on time for class!
- **Laptops:** Please realize that your classmates can see your laptop screen and may be distracted by your Facebook feed, email inbox, cat videos, or whatever it is that you might want to look at instead of paying attention in class. You are welcome to use your laptop to take notes, but please do not distract your fellow classmates with off-task laptop use.
- **Cell phones:** All phones should be silenced. That means actually silent—not just on vibrate.
- **Ask questions:** If you have questions, stop me to ask them. It's likely that several of your classmates have the same question!

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to do their own work. Academic dishonesty—cheating on exams, plagiarizing, having someone do your work for you, etc.—will not be tolerated. Anyone caught engaging in these behaviors will be reported to the University. If you have questions about what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, or other violations of academic integrity, please reference [Columbia's Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity](#). "I didn't know" will not constitute an acceptable defense. It is important to note that in psychology and science in

general, we always build off others' work and ideas; these contributions **must** be appropriately cited. Come talk to me if you have any questions about how to do this.

Course Schedule

PART 1: CULTURE & PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES		
Class 1	M, May 22	<p>I. Introduction: What is culture? What is cultural psychology? II. Research Methods: How do we study culture?</p> <p>Readings: Tomasello (1999), pp. 1-12 Cohen (2010), pp. 196-223</p>
Class 2	W, May 24	<p>I. Culture & Self: How does culture impact the way we define ourselves? II. Culture & Social Behavior: How does culture impact the way we view and interact with others?</p> <p>Reading: Adams (2005), pp. 948-968 Realo (2015), pp. 193-204</p>
<p>No class on May 29 (Memorial Day) Make up class on Friday, June 2, instead!</p>		
Class 3	W, May 31	<p>I. Culture & Cognition: How does culture impact our attention, sensation, perception, and even aesthetics? II. Culture & Morality: How does culture impact what we think is moral?</p> <p>DUE: RESEARCH METHODS CRITIQUE (no readings)</p>
Class 4	F, June 2* *make up class due to Memorial Day	<p>I. Enculturation: How do we develop culture? II. Acculturation: What happens when we move to a new culture?</p> <p>Readings: Gelfand et al. (2011), pp. 1100-1104 Ferguson et al. (2016), pp. 166-171</p>
Class 5	M, June 5	<p>I. Culture & Emotion: How does culture impact how we experience, express, and perceive emotion? II. Culture & Mental Health: How does culture impact how we define and treat mental illness?</p> <p>Reading: Watters (2011), pp. 187-248</p>
Class 6	W, June 7	<p>MIDTERM EXAM Waste Land film (2010)</p>

PART 2: FROM CULTURE TO IDENTITY		
Class 7	M, June 12	I. Ethnic Identity: What does it mean to have an ethnic identity? II. Colorblindness Vs. Multiculturalism: How do we conceptualize racial and ethnic diversity?
		DUE: CULTURAL ANALYSIS PROPOSAL Reading: Plaut (2010), pp. 77-99
Class 8	W, June 14	I. Stereotypes & Bias: How do divisions based on identity arise and what are the consequences of these divisions? II. Individual Meetings
		Readings: Fryberg et al. (2008), pp. 208-218
Class 9	M, June 19	I. Stigma & Stereotype Threat: What is stigma and how does it affect us? II. Intergroup Relations: How do people of different groups relate? Does contact between groups reduce prejudice?
		Readings: Steele & Aronson (1995), pp. 797-811 Islam & Hewstone (1993), pp. 700-710
Class 10	W, June 21	I. Biculturalism & Intersectionality: How do all of our different identities contribute to our lived experience? II. The Political Divide: Are there cultural differences between liberals and conservatives?
		Readings: Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach (2008), pp. 377-391 Haidt (2013), pp. 155-186 Due: Cultural Analysis Draft (optional)
Class 11	M, June 26	PRESENTATION DAY
		DUE: CULTURAL ANALYSIS PAPER
Class 12	W, June 28	FINAL EXAM

Course syllabus, schedule, and readings are subject to revision.

Readings

- Adams, G. (2005). The cultural grounding of personal relationship: Enemyship in North American and West African worlds. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 88*(6), 948-968.
- Cohen, D. (2007). Methods in cultural psychology. In Kitayama, S. & Cohen, D. (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural psychology* (196-236). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Ferguson, G. M., Costigan, C. L., Clarke, C. V., & Ge, J. S. (2016). Introducing remote enculturation: Learning your heritage culture from afar. *Child Development Perspectives, 10*, 166-171.
- Fryberg, S. A., Markus, H. R., Oyserman, D., & Stone, J. M. (2008). Of warrior chiefs and Indian princesses: The psychological consequences of American Indian mascots. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 30*, 208-218.
- Gelfand, M. J., Raver, J. L., Nishii, L., Leslie, L. M., Lun, J., Lim, B. C., ... & Aycan, Z. (2011). Differences between tight and loose cultures: A 33-nation study. *Science, 332*, 1100-1104.
- Haidt, J. (2013). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Islam, M. R., & Hewstone, M. (1993). Dimensions of contact as predictors of intergroup anxiety, perceived out-group variability, and out-group attitude: An integrative model. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 19*, 700-710.
- Plaut, V. C. (2010). Diversity science: Why and how difference makes a difference. *Psychological Inquiry, 21*(2), 77-99.
- Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Eibach, R. P. (2008). Intersectional invisibility: The distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities. *Sex Roles, 59*, 377-391.
- Realo, A., Linnamägi, K., & Gelfand, M. J. (2015). The cultural dimension of tightness-looseness: An analysis of situational constraint in Estonia and Greece. *International Journal of Psychology, 50*(3), 193-204.
- Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69*, 797-811.
- Tomasello, M. (2009). *The cultural origins of human cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Watters, E. (2011). *Crazy like us: The globalization of the American psyche*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Additional readings that may be of interest are posted on Courseworks.