

**Cultural Psychology**  
**Spring 2001~~Course # 50-2470-01**  
**Department of Liberal Education~~Columbia College Chicago**  
**Tuesdays 12:30-3:20pm Paul M. Camic, Ph.D., Instructor**  
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**Course Description:**

Building on the idea that we reside on a planet that is an interconnected web of people and environment, this class will explore the relationship between human behavior and culture using Western and indigenous psychological theories. Through class discussion, readings and an examination of visual and verbal documents (e.g. art, music, stories) of selected contemporary and ancient African, American, Asian and European societies, students will gain a greater understanding of cultural variation in human behavior and development.

**Course Objectives:**

- To appreciate the importance of cultural factors in human development
- Increase knowledge and understanding of psychological theories and practices in different cultures
- To demonstrate an understanding of the differences between universalist and relativist perspectives in cultural psychology
- To encourage students to examine and better appreciate their own culture(s)-of -origin

**Rationale:**

Most current psychological theory in social, clinical, developmental, personality and even community psychology has developed through a Western perspective. This perspective has often included unexamined assumptions that all human behavior can be explained by a similar and constant world view. Recent research in psychology however (and observations made by anthropologists for at least the last 70 years), have shown that what may hold true in many contemporary, Western European and North American societies is not necessarily the norm in other societies, be they in Africa, Asia or indigenous to the Americas. In order to better understand these differences, this class will examine psychological constructs and theories through relativist and universalist perspectives, sometimes referred to as cultural psychology and cross-cultural psychology, respectively. This examination will seek to compare and contrast what is universal in human behavior and what is shaped and interpreted by cultural variations.

**Required Readings** : (available in the bookstore or on-line through Borders, Barnes and Noble, etc.)  
Lonner, W.J. & Malpass, R. (Eds.) (1994). Psychology and culture. Neeham Heights, MA.: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN 0-205-14899-9

Matsumoto, D. (1994/2000). People: Psychology from a cultural perspective. Prospect Heights, IL.: Waveland Press. ISBN 1-57766-113-3

**Selected Chapters:** (Chapters from the following books are on reserve in the Library)

Ehrlich, P. R. (2000). Human natures: Genes, cultures and the human prospect. Washington, DC.: Island Press.

Goldberger, N. R. & Veroff, J. B. (1995). The culture and psychology reader. New York: New York University Press.

Harrison, L. E. & Huntington, S. P. (Eds.) (2000). Culture matters: How values shape human progress. New York: Basic Books.

**Selected Articles:**

A selection of articles will be handed out in class **or** be on reserve in the Columbia College Library.

**Class Policies:**

Departmental attendance policies will be described. The class will discuss these policies and come to a consensus about attendance, tardiness, late assignments and class behavior during the first class session. These decisions should be written here: *(and adhered to!)*

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**! Please note that cell phones and pagers must be turned off during class at all times !**

**Course Requirements:**

- Participate in class discussions\*
- Homework as assigned
- Completion of a Reflective Paper
- Completion of two, 5 page papers in essay format
- Interview Project
- Final Project and Documentation Paper involving the entire class
- I reserve the right to reduce your grade for not participating

**Grading:**

Reflective Paper: 10 points\* --*Due in class 4*

Term Papers: 50 points (25 points\* each) -- *Due in class 7 and 13 respectively*

Interview: 20 points\* --*Due in class 11*

Final Project: 20 points\* --*Due in class 15*

Homework: 1 point is added for each completed assignment *if handed in on time*. 1 point is subtracted for incomplete or late homework.

\* 2 points are deducted each day these assignments are late.

**Reflective Paper:**

A double-spaced, 3 page paper, with separate title page, following the stylistic guidelines cited below under "Paper Requirements". *References are not necessary for the reflective paper*. Your reflective paper should answer the question: How does culture affect my life? The paper should also briefly address how your views of absolutism, relativism and universalism shape your answer.

You may want to consider the impact of your gender, language(s) you speak, personal and professional goals, your ethnicity, religious/spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, political perspective, where you grew up and where you currently live, in developing your answer.

**Term Papers:**

Two term papers, double-spaced, 5 pages in length *not including the title page or reference page* are required. The title page should include your name, date, title of paper and date. All 5 text pages must be formatted according to the APA Manual of Style, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. This includes a *one inch margin* along all sides. The reference page (page 6) of your paper must contain a list of references cited in your paper. References must follow APA style which we will address in our first class. All pages should be numbered at the bottom right corner except the title page which is not numbered.

The topic of the *first term paper* is your choice in consultation with the instructor. The topic of the *second term paper* is about the cuisine and eating rituals of a specific culture. This paper coincides with our visit to World Kitchen. We will decide in class how best to approach this topic.

**Interview Project:**

You will conduct an interview with a person (must be over 18 years old) from a cultural background different from your own. We will work in class on developing a focus to the interview, deciding on specific interview questions, as well as discussing the ethics of interviewing, confidentiality of data and how to analyze interview data. The interview should take about 30 minutes and be tape recorded and transcribed.

**Final Project:**

A project involving all class members is presented on the last day of class. The project will involve multiple media (to be decided upon by the class) such as writing, visual arts, sound/music, graphics, animation, fashion, etc. The project this semester is the development of a cultural psychology web site for Columbia College Chicago. All class members will be listed on the web site as co-developers.

A 2-3 page, single-spaced documentation paper from all class members detailing their role in the project is due the last day of class. The paper should answer the following questions: What was the main problem you were addressing? How did you approach the problem? Where did you find the resources to address the problem? How did you decide what to include and what to exclude?

**Disclaimer:** Although unlikely to occur, the instructor reserves the right to make course alterations if necessary. Students will be informed of these in class and in writing.

**Academic Integrity & Class Behavior at Columbia** . *Academic integrity* is expected. Columbia College prohibits the use of all types of academic dishonesty including cheating, plagiarism and forgery. A failing grade will be issued in any of these situations.

**Class Behavior:** Civility and politeness is expected by all class participants. We are a community of learners with different perspectives and opinions about the world and have chosen to come together in a college setting to learn from each

other. While hearing opinions and beliefs different from one's own can perhaps be disturbing--- if this class is to benefit your personal and professional development--listening to and thinking about new ideas, beliefs and perspectives is essential. While no one is required to accept new ideas, beliefs and perspectives, we all need to listen and respect each other as we discuss and write about them.

**Class #/Date:**

**01/02.13      Introduction and overview.** The course will begin with an examination of what we understand "culture" to be and how is it related to psychology. We will define terms to be used in class and review the following sections which will provide a template for discussions throughout the semester:

- The universal experience of being different
- Cultural variations on some common human dimensions
- Cultural influences on social and developmental processes
- Self and other in cultural context
- Culture and basic psychological processes
- Healing Practices and culture

Specific topical areas we will explore during the semester include perception, cognition, developmental stages and child rearing practices, language, emotion, how cultures determine what is abnormal, healing practices, marriage, sexual orientation, the Self, the determination of intelligence, learning styles and gender roles.

**02/02.20      Cultural psychology, cross-cultural psychology and the nature of knowing: How cultures influence how we view ourselves.** We will refine our understanding of cultural psychology and look at the psychological construct of Self in different cultures. We will also examine the perspectives of absolutism, relativism and universalism in the study of human behavior.

***Readings: Lonner & Malpass: Introduction, p. 1-15 & chapter 18***

***( John Adamopoulos & Walter Lonner), p. 129-134***

***Matsumoto: preface, chapters 1-2, p. vii-37***

***Optional: Goldberger & Veroff: chapter 16 (Shinobu Kitayama & Hazel Rose Markus), p. 366-383 (on reserve)***

***also in Goldberger & Veroff: chapter 15 (Harry Triandis), p. 326-365***

**03/02.27      The evolving human--4.5 million years of evolution: From Australopithecus anamensis to Homo sapiens.** We will examine a condensed history of human evolution with specific focus on brain and mind development and the importance of language on the development of culture.

***Readings: Ehrlich: chapter 6, p. 108-138 (on reserve)***



**08/04.10**                    **Experiences of being different and of being the same: \_\_\_\_\_**  
**The (South and North) American experience for people of African, Asian,**  
**and European decent: What are the gains and what are the losses? \_\_\_\_\_ (Part I)**

In this class and in the following one we will examine the African heritage of African-Americans, the Asian heritage of Asian-Americans and the European heritage of European-Americans and their interaction with the Americas and indigenous peoples of these continents..

**Readings:    Lonner & Malpass: chapters 1-6, p. 17-51**  
**Harrison & Huntington: chapter 16 ( Nathan**

**Glazer),**

**p. 219-230 (on reserve)**

**09/04.17**                    **Experiences of being different and of being the same: \_\_\_\_\_**  
**The (South and North) American experience for people of African, Asian,**  
**and European decent: (Part II)**

**Readings:    Harrison & Huntington: chapter 18 (Lucian Pye),**  
**p.244-255 (on reserve).**

**Harrison & Huntington: chapter 19 (Tu Wei-**  
**Ming), p. 256-266.**

**10/04.24**                    **Normal and Abnormal Social Behavior: What cultural \_\_\_\_\_**  
**groups accept and what they do not. \_\_\_\_\_** Perhaps more than in any other area,  
cultural factors are clearly seen in the designation of what is abnormal and  
pathological and what is normal and healthy.

**Readings:    Lonner & Malpass: chapter 24 (Harry Triandis),**  
**p. 169-**

**173.**

**Lonner & Malpass: p. 165-167**

**Lonner & Malpass: chapter 9-cleanliness (**  
**Elizabeth &**

**Robert Fernea), p. 65-69**

**Lonner & Malpass: chapter 11-alcohol/drugs (**  
**Joseph**

**Trimble), p. 79-84**

**Matsumoto: chapter 9, p. 135-151**

**11/05.01**                    **Dimensions of Gender & Human Sexuality. \_\_\_\_\_** Human  
sexual behavior varies in both expression and partner, as well as age of passage,  
frequency, purpose and meaning. We will begin to sort out this tremendous  
variation seen world-wide and have a look at how cultural (group) norms are  
determined.

**Readings:    Matsumoto: chapter 10, p. 153-174**

**Lonner & Malpass: chapter 27 (John Williams &**  
**Deborah Best), p. 191-196**

**Lonner & Malpass: chapter 28 ( David Buss), p.**  
**197-201**

