

Course Syllabus

Psychology 310 - Psychology and Culture
Winter Quarter 2001

Instructor: Dr. Walter J. Lonner, Professor of Psychology

Office: Miller Hall 328A **Office Hours:** 10:00-12:00 MW or arrange if necessary.

Required texts:

Lonner, W. J. and Malpass, R. S. (Eds.) (1994). **Psychology and culture**.
 Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Matsumoto, D. (2000). **Culture and psychology (2nd Ed.)**. Belmont, CA:
 Wadsworth.

Additional Readings:

From time to time additional readings may either be distributed to everyone or otherwise made available to members of the class. For example, the following articles should be read early in the quarter:

Lonner, W. J. (2000), On the growth and continuing importance of cross-cultural psychology. **Eye on Psi Chi**, Spring 2000, 12-16. (Temporary loan copies of the magazine in which this article appears this will be distributed in class.)

Segall, M. H., Lonner, W. J., & Berry, J. W. (1998) Cross-cultural psychology as a scholarly discipline: On the flowering of culture in behavioral research. **American Psychologist**, 53, 1101-1110. (Several copies of this article will be available in the Reserve Reading section of Wilson Library.)

Course Theme:

A strong argument can be made that the discipline of Psychology has not paid as much attention to the influence of culture on human behavior as it should have for it to qualify as a universally valid science of human behavior. All of the topics in psychology --ranging from the ABCs (for instance, Aggression, Bestiality, and Conformity) to the XYZs (such as Xenophobia, the Yerkes-Dodson Law, and the Zeigarnik Effect) -- need to be viewed from the perspective of all the world's cultures and not just a select few that are easily accessible to researchers in the highly "psychologized" Western world. The theme of the course, therefore, is to explore many of the topical areas in psychology from a multicultural, multiethnic perspective. In the process, students should become more aware of the role that culture and ethnicity play in the shaping of human behavior. Another aspect of the course theme is to raise students' awareness of the range of cultural variation in all aspects of human thought and behavior and to gain an appreciation for the sources of this variation, primarily from a psychological perspective.

Assumptions Regarding Student Prerequisites:

The one prerequisite for the course is Psychology 201 (Introduction to Psychology) or its equivalent. This means that you should have a fairly good idea about the breadth of topics in Psychology as a discipline and about the methods that psychologists use. Students who have not had such a course should not be in this class.

Course Goals:

The course has several interrelated aims:

1. To help students gain a better appreciation for the ways in which culture, ecology, and behavior interact from a **psychological** perspective and essentially shape all thought and behavior;
2. To demonstrate that much of Western psychological thought and theory has been ethnocentric, and that the reduction of ethnocentrism is essential for the development of a truly universal psychology;
3. To help develop an appreciation for the wide variations there are in human behavior, but also to appreciate that there is a common thread among all humans in most aspects of behavior;
4. To encourage an appreciation for the mutual relevance of psychology and other disciplines (such as anthropology and sociology) in studying human behavior in broad international perspective; that is, this course has a **psychological** focus and **not** an anthropological or sociological focus. Nor does it have a "cross-cultural communication" focus as might be found, for example, in speech departments or education curricula;
5. To help students prepare for other courses where culture and ecology might be important variables;
6. To aid in the process of being better able to deal with and understand variations in human behavior, thus making cross-cultural interactions more productive and enjoyable. An informed and enlightened person should be able to understand and appreciate both world events and everyday behavior of people from other cultures at a fairly sophisticated level, and this class should contribute to this preparation;
7. To give **you**, the student, more insight into **your** behavior, attitudes, and values because probably more than any other factor your culture has both directly and indirectly molded you into the person you are today. This is true for you and is true for everybody.

Student Evaluation:

There will be four exams administered during the quarter. Three of the exams will be worth 50 points and the fourth will be a 75-point final. The exams may consist of different types of items (e.g., short-answer essay, matching, definition of terms, and multiple choice). The lowest of the first three (50-point) exams will be dropped. With the exception of certain concepts and words that are used consistently in cross-cultural psychology, all exams except the final will be non-comprehensive. The final will cover some material since Exam 3 but will also be comprehensive (e.g., covering material throughout the quarter). Missed exams cannot be made up with an official legitimate excuse. There is also the option of writing a paper in order to qualify for the top grades (see below).

Note: There may be one or more quizzes either announced or unannounced. Like exams, no quiz, if missed, may be made up without a legitimate excuse. The value of these quizzes will be added to the point total.

Grading: Final letter grades will be based on percentages of the final "anchor" score (the top-scoring student for the exams and any quizzes). The **pre-paper** grade distribution will **approximate** the following:

About 90% of the anchor score	=	B+ to B
80-89%	=	B to B-
65-79%	=	B- to C
54-64%	=	C- to D-
below 54% of the anchor	=	F

Plus (+) and minus (-) grades, such as B+ and C-, will be assigned as appropriate.

Example: The top-scoring student gets 160 points (of 175 possible points) for the three **retained** exam scores. Ninety percent of 160 (the "anchor" score) is 144. Therefore, students scoring at or above 144 (approximately) will qualify for a B+, those scoring between 128-143 (approximately) will get a B to B-, and so forth. **In all cases, however, the assignment of grades will be based on the final shape of the distribution and the spread of scores and not on the automatic use of the approximate percentage cutoffs given above.** It is important to remember that **final letter grades** will be based on your **final point total**. Thus any letter grades associated with exams prior to determining final grades are **tentative** and **approximate**. Also, this example does not include any points associated with quizzes, one or more of which may be given (see above). Additionally, see below for how an optional paper may improve your grade.

Intangibles in Grading: When grades are assigned, instructors sometimes find it necessary to use information, data, observations, or other intangibles to help determine what a particular student's grade should be. One such intangible (and perhaps the most important one) is class attendance, participation, and enthusiasm. Frequent absences are always noticeable, and unless absences are based on some valid excuse (e.g., "I can't make it to class on Fridays because I have to take my great-grandmother to the hospital") they suggest relative disinterest in the class. **If you do not plan to attend class on a regular basis, you may want to consider either dropping the class immediately (and make room for someone else) or be ready to accept the consequences.**

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

The first four days of class (January 9-12) will be used to introduce the class and to explain the overall class structure. Beginning with the second week (Tuesday, January 16), the weekly format will be as follows:

Monday through Thursday: Lecture and discussion of the topic(s) for the week. In addition to lectures, this could involve films or videos or general discussion of the readings for the week as specified below.

Friday: This will normally be "Activity Day" and will involve exams, quizzes, films, videos, possible guest speakers, completing questionnaires and tests, and the like.

ORGANIZATION OF CLASS

The class will be organized around three three-week units and one two-week unit, as follows:

UNIT 1: January 9 – 26 (14 days).

Basic introduction to cross-cultural psychology and to a sampling of ways that humans differ in their experiences and in defining and experiencing the self. Historical considerations and an introduction to various conceptual and methodological problems.

Week 1 (1/9 – 1/12) Readings:

Lonner and Malpass (L & M): Preface and pages 1-12; Chapter 18.
Matsumoto (M): Chapters 1 and 2

Week 2 (1/16 – 1/19) Readings:

L & M: Section I (Chaps 1-6)
M: Chap. 3

Week 3 (1/22 – 1/26) Readings:

L & M: Chap. 18 (again)
M: Chap. 5

Exam 1: Friday, January 26

UNIT 2: January 29 – February 16 (15 days)

Considerations of cultural and ecological influences on basic psychological processes such as thinking, memory, perception, and intelligence. Also, culture and human development and cultural influences on gender.

Week 4 (1/29 – 2/2) Readings:

L & M: Section IV: Chaps 19-23
M: Chaps. 6, 12

Week 5 (2/5 – 2/9) Readings:

L & M: Section III: Chaps. 13-17, 10
M: Chap. 7

Week 6 (2/12 – 2/16) Readings:

L & M: Chaps 27, 28
M: Chap. 8

Exam 2: Friday, February 16

UNIT 3: February 20 – March 7 (12 days)

Culture and a selection of social psychological topics such as individualism-collectivism, non-verbal communication, values, ethnocentrism, prejudice, and

stereotyping. Also, cross-cultural research on personality.

Week 7 (2/20 - 2/23) Readings:

L & M: Section V (Chaps. 24, 25, 26, 29) and Chap. 12

M: Chaps 4, 13, 16

Week 8 (2/26 - 3/2) Readings:

Continuation of above plus

M: Chaps. 4, 15

Week 9 (3/5 - 3/7) Readings:

L & M: Chap. 25 (revisit)

M: Chap. 11

Exam 3: Wednesday, March 7

UNIT 4: March 8 - 16 (5 days)

This brief unit will be oriented around various concepts and issues involving culture, abnormality, and psychotherapy.

Week 10 (March 8 - 16) Readings:

L & M: Chaps 30, 34, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42

M: Chaps 9, 10

Final Exam: Thursday, March 22, 8:00 - 10:00

Optional Writing Project.

Many students will be satisfied with a respectable course grade of B+ to C-. For this course, those grades will be based **exclusively** on scores received on exams and possible quizzes, as explained above. **That is, the highest grade one can receive without writing a paper is B+.** However, many may be motivated to qualify for a grade of either A or A-. To receive one of these two top grades, a **quality** paper must be written. This section gives details about the writing project.

For the paper, choice of topic is at your discretion, but obviously must be consistent with course content. The paper should be taken from one of the following categories. Generally, you should select a topic that **interests** you, one that you find personally intriguing. The only "rule" governing your choice of topic is that it should in some clear way involve an interrelationship between psychology and culture. That rule, coupled with the several categories given below, will permit the inclusion of nearly any topic. It has to fit the nature of the course in some clear and unambiguous way.

While papers may be turned in anytime before then, the firm deadline is 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 14. Late papers will not be accepted for any reason other than a bona fide medical emergency.

Category A: Standard Secondary Research Format. Papers in this category will generally follow the standard rules of writing term papers. Possible topics include the following (given **only** as examples; many more topics than these are possible and the student is encouraged to be creative in choosing a topic):

Ethnocentrism and its possible reduction.
 The nature of culture shock and its consequences.
 Alcoholism and culture.
 Cultural differences in child rearing.
 Examining your cultural roots.
 Differences in gender-related behavior across cultures.
 Canadian-American differences in values (or other characteristics).
 Cultural differences in the perception of AIDS.
 Cultural and ethnic differences in the experience of aging, death,
 and dying
 Cultural factors affecting any world event or ongoing world crisis (such as
 population, crime or terrorism, politicians and morals).
 Cultural factors affecting school motivation and achievement.
 Cultural and sexual development
 Psychological consequences of uprooting (e.g., Haiti, Cuba)
 The nature of ethnocide, genocide, and "ethnic cleansing"

Note: Category A is similar to Category E and F.

Category B: Description of a Specific Culture or Selected Aspects of a Specific Culture. The chosen group (or aspect) will constitute what amounts to a brief psychological profile of a particular culture. Sections of the paper might include (but are not limited to) factors such as the following:

Description and brief historical overview
 Family considerations (e.g., nuclear or extended, etc.)
 Childrearing practices
 Relationships between the sexes
 Relationships with other groups, including hostilities
 Significant rituals and beliefs
 Nature of the language
 Specific ways in which abilities are used

Category C: Outline of a Hypothetical Research Project. In this category the student will select an hypothesis concerning relationships between some psychological variable and how it may be affected by specific cultural and/or ecological factors. Examples of such hypotheses and research projects can be found throughout the readings. The student merely has to create one on his or her own and to develop interesting ways in which it may be tested by using an appropriate methodology. Note that you are not required to carry out the project. This could be called an experimental design. Your only task would be to develop a potentially doable project. A generally useful guideline around which to structure your paper is as follows:

Background factors and a **brief** review of relevant literature
 Statement of hypothesis (or hypotheses)
 Methodology
 Selection of relevant dependent and independent variables
 Description of sample(s) and their justification
 Measures taken (testing, experiments, other data)
 Anticipated results and a discussion of their implications
 References

Category D: An Extension of One of the Chapters in the Lonner and Malpass. If you choose this category you will select one of the chapters in the book and extend

it in a direction of your choice or in some way develop one of the topics in the chapter more completely. For instance, if you decided to extend Chapter 17 on Gender and Culture you could focus on gender and culture in a specific culture (e.g., Ireland, Kenya) or in a particular part of the world (e.g., the Middle East or Indonesia).

Category E: Writing a Paper As If It Is To Be Used As Another Chapter in Lonner and Malpass. For instance, you might write a paper on Culture and Dreams, Depression and Culture, or Culture and Emotion. The writing and format used in Lonner and Malpass should be used as a guide.

Category F: Potpourri. This category is intended to include all other possible topics. In other words, if you would like to write about a topic, problem, perspective, etc. that is *not* clearly included under Categories A through E, this would be up your alley. The only "rule" governing selection of topic here is that it must have something *clearly* to do with some interaction between psychology and culture. Please note especially that this category may include designing a small study or research project that will lead to the collection of data.

Category G: Group Research Project. This category is to be used if a group of students (2 to about 5) would like to design a small study, including the collection and analysis of data. Details will be discussed in class. All students in the group will receive the same number of points that the paper merits.

The paper will be graded as either High Pass (HP), Pass (P), or No Pass (NP). If your paper is graded HP and you have received a grade of B+ (not B or B-) on the exams, this would qualify you for a course grade of A. If you receive a grade of P on the paper and have received a grade of either B or B- on the exams, this would qualify you for a course grade of A-. If your grade is C+ or below, then writing a paper of either HP or P may increase your grade to a maximum of B-. The evaluation of papers will be based on substantive variables such as adequacy of topic, bibliographic resources, and overall care and interest shown in the writing as well as mechanical details such as punctuation, spelling, and grammar. In other words, it is expected that if you elect to write a paper to qualify for either A or A-, the finished product must be a quality, college-level paper. Substandard and poorly done papers will be quickly graded NP and will therefore not affect the grade you receive for the exams. While it would be best to prepare references according to the APA Publication Manual, it is not mandatory that the APA format be used. Your references will be in good shape if you simply follow the format given in the two texts. The paper must be typed using double spacing throughout. Length of the paper should be in the range of 5 to 8 double-spaced pages. It can, however, be shorter or longer if the topic warrants deviations from this suggested length.

A Checklist of Common Problems Associated with Papers

Listed below are problems that are often associated with poorly done papers. To avoid getting a quick assignment of NP for the paper, please consult this list:

1. Frequent misspellings and inappropriate contractions (e.g., it's for its, or its for it's);
2. Incomplete sentences. For example: "Such as things like that." Remember, a sentence must have a subject, a verb, and express a complete thought.
3. Long, complex sentences that are difficult to follow. As a general rule

of thumb, you should aim for short, crisp sentences and not long, complex sentences that may express several ideas.

4. Inaccurate and/or incomplete references. The references should be in the same format as found in either of the texts, or in most psychology texts and journals. Use the text as a guide for references.

5. Poor use of paragraph breaks.

6. Poor use of headings and subheadings. Headings and subheadings are often necessary to help the reader understand the organization of your paper.

7. Unnumbered pages.

8. Incomplete or careless editing resulting in a paper that is difficult to read. A well-known Canadian psychologist, D. O. Hebb, once said that "anything that is not worth doing is not worth doing well." Applied to this or any required paper, this may be transposed in this context as "any paper not worth writing is not worth writing well."

Grading of papers will be strict and demanding. Just writing "any old thing" will not do. As outlined above, to qualify for a grade of A or A- it **must** be a quality job.