



## **Psychology 470: Cross-Cultural Psychology**

Fall 2001; Dr. Carolyn Simmons

Office: SB 105A; office phone: 962-4057; e-mail: [SimmonsC@uncwil.edu](mailto:SimmonsC@uncwil.edu)

Office hours Tuesday and Thursday mornings and by appointment

"All the people like us are WE  
And everyone else is THEY  
And THEY live over the sea,  
While WE live over the way.  
But---would you believe it?---  
They look upon WE  
As only a sort of THEY."

--Rudyard Kipling

**TEXT:** Human Behavior in Global Perspective: An Introduction to Cross-Cultural Psychology,

Second Edition. Segall, Dasen, Berry, Poortinga; Allyn and Bacon; 1999.

Additional readings will be assigned in class; these either will be placed on reserve in the library or handed out in class.

**INTRODUCTION:** Cross-cultural psychology is the scientific study of the ways in which cultural factors shape and affect human behavior. Cultural factors include beliefs, human-made objects, ideas, values, and institutions. Other fields of psychology are defined either by the population studied (e.g. child psychology or abnormal psychology) or by the kind of behavior studied (e.g. cognition or motivation). Traditionally, the study of human psychology has been confined to theories and research carried out within one culture: first in Germany and more recently by Russian psychologists studying Russians and North American psychologists studying North Americans-- "indigenous psychology" within one culture. Cross-cultural psychology looks at less familiar indigenous psychologies and also studies comparative human behavior in co-cultural or cross-cultural environments.

**OBJECTIVES:** The general objective of this course is to help you learn that there are many ways of being human. Psychologists study three kinds of human behavior: (1) idiosyncratic or individual behaviors; (2) universal or ETIC human behaviors, which have a biological basis; and (3) culture-specific or EMIC human behaviors.

In studying human personality, we learn that individuals differ from each other in ideas, values and behavior. In cross-cultural psychology, we learn that some of these ideas, values and behaviors are universal (ETIC) and are shared by all humans in all cultures: for example, the capacity to learn a language, to raise children, to express aggression or cooperation.

Cross-cultural psychology provides the opportunity to learn the ways in which human behaviors differ from each other because of culture. While it is true that all humans learn a

language, it is also true that humans in different cultures learn different languages. These languages not only have different symbols but also reflect different ideas about and perceptions of the world: for example, which values to teach children as they are raised within a specific culture; acceptable ways of expressing aggression; and when and how to cooperate with others.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Your final grade for the course will be based on:

Cyberspace assignment	0-50 pts	due	Thursday August
IS reception report	0-10 pts		Tuesday , September
Test	0-100 pts		Thursday October
Interview report	0-20 pts		Thursday, October
Humor report	0-20 pts		Tuesday November
final exam	0-150 pts		Friday, December 11:30--2:30 pm

total points: 350

extra credit in-class      0-10 pts      throughout the semester

Total possible points:    360

Grades: A - = 315 pts.

B - = 280 pts.

C- = 245 pts.

D- = 210 pts.

F = less than 210 pts.

+ and - grades will be given.

**Test and Exam:** The test and exam will be short answer and essay format. They will cover reading material, lectures and topics covered in class discussion, films and other materials presented in class. Although there is no formal attendance policy for this course, you will do much better on the tests and in class discussion if you are present in class and have completed the reading assignments.

**International Student (IS) Reception:** the reception for international students attending UNCW this fall will be held in the **University Union Living Room on Tuesday September from 4-5:30 pm**. This is an excellent opportunity for you to meet people from other cultures and learn more about other cultures. To complete this assignment, you should attend the reception and then write a short report including the names of two students you met from different cultures and one significant thing you learned from each of those students about his or her culture. The report should be 1-2 pages long, typed double-spaced on computer. Use standard one-inch margins on all four sides.

**International Student Interview:** See handout for the format to follow. The best way to find an international student to interview is to contact one of the students you met at the international student reception. The interview report should be typed, double-spaced, on a computer, using standard one-inch margins on all four sides. Be prepared to discuss briefly in class some of your findings.








**Cyberspace assignment:** Follow directions on the class handout. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, on a computer, using standard one-inch margins. You will be expected to discuss the article you find (for question 4) briefly in class as part of class discussion.

**Humor report:** For this report, you should find at least one example of humor from a culture other than your own. It can be a cartoon, essay, or joke which you include or attach to your report. The report should discuss what this example of humor tells us about the culture which produced it and what we learn from the culture by understanding this example of humor. The report should be 1-2 pages long, typed, double-spaced, on a computer, using standard one-inch margins on all four sides. (Types of humor and details will be provided in class.)

**Due dates:** The dates given to submit reports are the final acceptable dates. The reports may be turned in early, and I encourage you to do so in order to avoid losing points due to last-minute problems which cause lateness: cars or computers breaking down, tests in other classes, etc. Points will be deducted for each day after the due date before a report is received.

**ACADEMIC HONOR CODE:** You are expected to know and abide by the UNCW Academic Honor Code as stated in the UNCW *Student Handbook* and the *Code of Student Life*. Be especially aware of what constitutes plagiarism--if you have any questions about what plagiarism is, ask!

## COURSE OUTLINE:

1. Introduction to cross-cultural psychology; August 19; Text chapter 1
2. Message systems, and context; individualism and collectivism; readings will be handed out in class. August 24--Sept 2nd
3. Research models: text, chapter 2; Sept 7th—9th  
 **---Cyberspace research due no later than September 9 th**  
 **---International Student reception, Tuesday September 14 th UU Living Room, 4--5:30**
4. Developmental processes; Text, chapter 3; Sept. 14th—30th  
 **---Report on IS reception due September 21st---**  
 **---Test Tuesday October 5th---**  
(No class October 7th --Fall Break)
5. Why is that funny? The Cultural context of humor; October 12th
6. Perception; Text, chapter 4; Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>—19th
7. Competence and cognition; text, chapters 5 & 6; Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>—28th  
 **---Interview report due no later than October 21st**
8. Emotions, beliefs, and values; Text, chapter 7; November 2<sup>nd</sup>—9th
9. Cultural contact and change. Text, chapters 10 & 11, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>—22nd  
 **---Humor report due Thursday November 11th---**  
(Thanksgiving break November 26th)
10. Cultural craziness: the biology and culture of mental illness. Nov. 30—Dec 2nd
11. The future of cross-cultural psychology; Text, chapter 12; Review and summing up; December 7th  
 **---Final exam Friday December, 11:30--2:30 pm---**

NOTE TO IACCP MEMBERS: The cyberspace assignment, and other handouts mentioned above are available from me by email.

