

Western Washington University

Psychology 442
Seminar in Social Psychology
Fairhaven 340K
Culture, Gender, and Emotion

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*Winter Quarter, 2004
Miller Hall 106
Tuesday and Thursdays - 3:00 to 4:15*

Instructors -- Dana C. Jack, Ed.D., Professor, Fairhaven College; Jungsik Kim, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Fairhaven College; and Joseph E. Trimble, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

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Textbook and Readings -- Selected readings collected from journal articles and books are listed below under each of the topic areas. Bound copies of the readings are available either at the main office at Fairhaven College or in the main office of the Department of Psychology in Miller Hall 220.

Prerequisites - Psychology 201, 306, 307, and/or 315, 314, 357 or equivalent courses in anthropology, sociology, and psychology **or** permission of the instructor.

Course Theme

“What stopped inside you yesterday was what people have been telling you the world is like. You see, people tell us from the time that we are born to live in a world that is such and such and so and so, and naturally we have no choice but to see the world the way people have been telling us it is.”

-- *Don Juan, a Yaqui sorcerer to the anthropologist Carlos Castenada in "Journey to Ixtlan," 1972*

“(There is an) uninvited guest which has been seated....beside us...which is the human mind.”

-- *Claude Levi-Strauss, 1953.*

“...a man..., while staring at real elephant that is standing right in front of him, says. ‘This is *not* an elephant’; and only later, as the elephant begins to move away, does a slight doubt arise in his mind; until finally, when the elephant has disappeared, the man observes the footprints it left behind and declares with certainty, ‘An elephant was here.’”

-- *quoted in Jerome Bruner, Acts of Meaning, 1990.*

How does culture shape emotional experience and expression, the meanings we attach to emotions, and the translation of emotion into specific symptoms? Does gender, along with culture, play a role in shaping emotions, and, if so, how? In this course, we will examine such questions from cross-cultural and indigenous psychological perspectives.

We will start from a Western psychological view of emotions (along with Charles Darwin and Paul Ekman) that certain emotions are universal, study cultural constructions of human behaviors, compare differences and similarities of certain prototypical emotions cross-culturally, and explore some indigenous emotional experiences in order to learn the interactive dynamics between culture, gender, and emotion. Other discussion topics will include the effects of magical thinking on emotional expression, psycholinguistic variations in expressing emotions, the socialization of emotional expression especially through the family and kinship systems, geographical influences on gender roles and emotional expression, and sociocultural normative factors and their influence on emotional, expression.

Through discussing these topics, this class will provide a unique opportunity to learn how culture and gender influence human psychology and what functions they serve in part for understanding the human condition and experience.

Student and Course Learning Objectives

Upon successfully completing the course students will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- 1). Identify and describe the basic components of the term, “culture.”
- 2). Discuss alternative conceptions of culture and the role played by culture in influencing an individual’s behavior, world view, attitudes, values, and other dimensions of subjective culture.
- 3). Recognize and explain how gender, culture, and emotion interactively shape each other through specific examples such as anger and shame.
- 4). Identify and explain at least three socio-cultural and psychological theories that explain how humans express and think about emotions.
- 5). Describe and illustrate basic social psychological principles individuals and their unique socio-cultural groups use to express emotions

- 6). Distinguish among a range of coping strategies and explain the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors typically generated by each strategy.

Skills

- 6). Analyze and critique scientific research articles that describe aspects of human emotions.
- 7). Conduct in collaboration with others a small scale research project exploring selected characteristics, qualities, traits, or peculiarities associated with human emotional expression.

Synthesis

- 8). Reflect and write on emotional expressions as they relate to your personal life's experiences.
- 9). Identify and organize a range of emotional expressions and formulate a plan for use in assisting yourself and others in effectively dealing with stressful and problematic events.

Valuing

- 10). Resolve to avoid imposing one's own preferred emotional expressions onto others unless invited to do so.
- 11). Resolve to become more culturally sensitive through an awareness of wide variations in cultural display rules for emotion.

Student Evaluation

Student performance in the course and achievement of the student learning outcomes will be evaluated using the following criteria -

- Consistent regular attendance (More than 4 uninformed or unexcused absences will result in no credit for the course);
- Active informed participation in seminar discussions that include respect for, support of, and cooperation with others in the class. Initiate but do not dominate;
- A willingness to examine personal experiences as they relate to seminar topics; and proficient and demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings.

In addition, by the end of the quarter, seminar participants must complete a portfolio containing:

- 1). One 5-7 page essay on a topic provided by the instructors (due during the 6th week of the quarter) - 30 percent of final grade.
- 2). One 10 minute oral presentation based on the content and theme of one or more of the selected readings for the course. Presentations begin the second week of the quarter - 20 percent of final grade.
- 3). One 10 page or more literature research paper dealing with an acceptable topic in the field (due at the end of the 9th week of the quarter) **OR**

- 4). Small group presentation on a research project including a group report following conventional research report writing protocols (Final report on the project is due during the final examination period). Group size is limited to 3 or less – 50 percent of final grade.

Each written assignment will be assigned one of 3 evaluation ratings, as follows: **H** for Honors; **S** for Satisfactory; and **U** for Unacceptable. If you receive a **U** you must rewrite your paper and turn it in for another evaluation; you have one full week in which to turn in the revision. To avoid receiving a **U** students can submit a draft version of their paper for review and comment; this option applies only items 1 and 3 above. To receive a passing grade in the seminar students must receive at least an **S** for all assigned papers.

Each paper will be evaluated on two dimensions: the substantive and the mechanical. The substantive dimension, which will account for 60% of the rating, includes such features as writing style, evidence of considerable work expended, clarity, and ease of reading. The mechanical dimension includes such things as spelling, grammar, and proper sentence structure. Guidelines and criteria for both dimensions are available for student review and use. Papers containing more than 5 obvious mechanical errors will receive a rating of **U**. It is required that students follow the style guidelines of the American Psychological Association for every writing assignment. A guide for the APA style is available at - <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

Schedule of Seminar Activities

The following outline contains the general topics and approximate time allotted for discussion and review of assigned readings. At times, guest lecturers will be invited to the seminar to present and discuss relevant and appropriate material intended to supplement seminar activities. Additionally, a few videos and films will be presented to complement discussions. The seminar is organized around six basic units and corresponding parts or sub-units. Assigned and recommended readings are listed for each section. Students should familiarize themselves with the outline and the weekly activities, read the material in advance, and be prepared to discuss the readings during the seminar.

Course Organization

WEEK

TOPICS AND THEMES

1 and 2 **What is culture? What is gender? What is emotion?** We start with examining emotion from the Western perspective and then complicate and extend it by considering culture and gender as they affect emotion. “The face lies and the face leaks,” says Paul Ekman, a pioneer in research on emotions.

Required readings:

- Brislin, Richard. W. (1999). Conceptualizing culture and its impact. In R. Brislin, (Ed.), *Understanding culture's influence on behavior* (pp. 1-33). New York: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Ekman, P. (1993). An argument for basic emotions. *Cognition and Emotion*, 6, 169-200.
- Shields, S. A. (2000). Thinking about gender, thinking about theory: Gender and emotional experience. In A. H. Fisher, (Ed.), *Gender and emotion: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 3-23). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Price, W. F., & Crapo, R. H. (2002). *Cross-cultural perspectives in Introductory Psychology*, 4th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Chapter 14. ("Individualism vs. collectivism: Differences between Chinese and American value systems;")
- Lama, Dalai & Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: How can we overcome them?* (Chapter 6 – The universality of emotion). New York: Bantam.

Video: "Face Value"

Video: "Emotion: Integration and final reflections." Buddhist psychology and Western psychology begin with different understandings of emotion as a fundamental dimension of human mental life.

Guest lecturer on cultural and gender linguistic patterns

Guest lecturer on the biopsychology of emotion

3 and 4

Universal and culturally relevant perspectives on human emotions. Continuing overview of basic concepts, definitions, distinctions between feelings and emotions, and summaries of selected theoretical orientations.

Required readings:

- Harre, R. (1998). Emotion across cultures. *Innovation*, 11(1), 43-52.
- Boucher, J. D. (1983) Antecedents to emotions across cultures. In: S. H. Irvine and J. W. Berry (Eds.) *Human assessment and cultural factors* (pp. 407-420). New York: Plenum Press.
- Price, W. F., & Crapo, R. H. (2002). *Cross-cultural perspectives in Introductory Psychology*, 4th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Chapter 15 ("A frown is a frown is a frown: Facial expressions around the world")
- Altarriba, J., Basnight, D. M., & Canary, T. M. (2003). In W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sattler (Eds.), *Online readings in psychology and culture* (Unit 4, Chapter 5), (<http://www.wvu.edu/~culture>), Center for Cross-Cultural Research,

Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, U.S.A.
 - Donald E. Brown's List of Human Universals

5 and 6

Concept of emotion and expression of emotion – socialization influences, linguistic variations, and variations in display rules. We consider how cultures socialize emotion and control their display. How does gender, along with culture, play a role in shaping emotions? Also, we will discuss how cultural norms acquired through socialization influence people's self-understanding of emotions and how they are expressed as different forms through the lens of linguistics and display rules

Required readings:

- Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Progress on a cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion. *American Psychologist*, 46, 819-834.
- Mesquita, B., & Frijda, N. H. (1992). Cultural variations in emotions: A review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(2), 179-204.
- Burbank, V. K. (19887). Female aggression in cross-cultural perspective. *Behavior Science Research*, 21, 71-100.
- Fisher, A. H. & Manstead, A. (2000). The relation between gender and emotions in different cultures. In A. H. Fisher, (Ed.), *Gender and emotion: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 71-94). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jack, D. C. (2001). Anger. In J. Worell (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of women and gender: Sex similarities and differences and the impact of society on gender (Volume 1)*, (pp. 137-147). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- White, J. W. & Kowalski, R. M. (1994). Deconstructing the myth of the nonaggressive woman. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 18, 487-508.

Recommended readings:

- Shaver, P., Schwartz, J., Kirson, D. & O'Connor, C. (1987). Emotion knowledge: Further exploration of a prototype approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 1061-1086.
- Elfenbein, H. A. & Ambady, N. (2002). On the universality and cultural specificity of emotion recognition: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(2), 203-235.
- Jack, D. C. (2001). Understanding women's anger: A description of relational patterns. *Health Care for Women International*, 22, 385-400.

Guest lecturer on the influence of war on the differential emotional expressions of children

- 7 **Personal and social identity and their influence on emotional expression.** Consideration of these identity issues serves as a way to further explore socio-cultural influences on emotional expression. We also address the translation of emotion into specific symptom patterns, such as depression. Additional consideration will be given to the mediation through identity of culture's influence on emotional experiences and expressions.

Required readings:

- Trimble, J. E. & Dickson, R. (In press). Ethnic identity. In C. B. Fisher & Lerner, R. M. (Eds.), *Applied developmental science: An encyclopedia of research, policies, and programs*. Thousand Oaks Sage.
- Jack, D. C. (2003). The anger of hope and the anger of despair: Self-silencing, anger, and depression in women. In J. Stoppard & L. McMullen (Eds.), *Understanding depression from the standpoint of women*. New York University Series on Qualitative Studies in Psychology. M. Fine & J. Meracek, Series Editors. New York: New York University Press.

- 8 **Cultural and indigenous forms of emotions – shame, anger, and depression.** We compare differences and similarities of the prototypical emotions – shame and anger – and their expression through depression cross-culturally. Indigenous emotional experiences help understand the interactive dynamics between culture, gender and emotion and how antecedents and regulators of emotions vary across and within cultures.

Required readings:

- Price, W. F., & Crapo, R. H. (2002). *Cross-cultural perspectives in Introductory Psychology*, 4th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Chapter 13, ("Aggression: The nonviolent Semai").
- Smith, H. W., & Takako, N. (2000). Is Amae the key to understanding Japanese culture? *Electronic Journal of Sociology*, 1005, 1-8.
- Kobayashi, F., Schallert, D. S., & Ogren, H. A. (2003). Japanese and American Folk Vocabularies for emotions. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 14 (4), 451-478.
- Parker, G., & Gladstone, G., & Chee, K. T. (2001). Depression in the planet's largest ethnic group: The Chinese. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 158(6), 857-862.
- Yang, S., & Rosenblatt, P. C. (2001). Shame in Korean Families. *Journal of Comparative Family studies*, 32(3), 361-375.

- 9 **Magical thinking and its influence on emotional expression and thinking.** What is magical thinking, and how does it affect felt emotion and its expression? We examine examples

of magical thinking, including those found and used in our own cultures.

Required readings:

- Price, W. F., & Crapo, R. H. (2002). *Cross-cultural perspectives in Introductory Psychology*, 4th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Chapter 16. ("Witch fear among the Aivilik Eskimo.")

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Student presentations of essays and reports.

Presentations should be interesting and enjoyable – that is, fun. Do not read your essay. Prepare handouts or structure a PowerPoint type presentation. If necessary ask the instructors to make photocopies for your handouts for class members

Note

Student interest may necessitate spending more or less time on certain topics thus requiring a rearrangement of the topics or time schedules presented above.