

Psychology

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Fall 2008

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Monday 2:30-3:20;

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Thursday

10:30-11:20

What is culture? How does it affect the psychology of individuals? These are the basic questions we will explore in surveying several ways in which culture and psychology intertwine. Starting with a brief history of various perspectives through which culture has been defined and understood, this course will review the theories and methods of specific "psychologies of culture". In doing so, this course will examine the fundamental nature of what it means to be a person, a self, or to have a personality. We will examine how cultural worldviews shape the very nature of who we are, as influenced through the beliefs, practices, values and mythologies to which we are exposed. Following the development of a foundation to the study of culture and psychology, this course will address various applied social issues, including: immigration and acculturation, health psychology, counselling and psychological disorders, as well as prejudice and other issues that have been examined by psychologists in Canada and abroad.

Course Description

This course examines various relationships between psychology and culture. Topics covered range from research methods and foundations to the cultural construction of self and identity, through various applied areas of cultural psychology including: language, thought and emotion in cultural context, development, mythology, health, clinical disorders, inter-group relations and social policy.

Learning outcomes

1. Identify and describe the difference between cultural psychology and cross-cultural psychology
2. Design a research study for understanding the influence of culture on psychology
3. Describe the role that cultural myths play in the psychological lives of people.
4. Describe and demonstrate their understanding of the role that culture plays in the development and expression of language, thought, emotion and one's sense of self & identity.

<i>Class Participation</i>	10 %		weekly
<i>Midterm Exam</i>	20 %	Week 8	Oct 22nd
<i>Culture Log</i>	15 %	Week 14	Dec 5th
<i>Field Assignment</i>	10 %	Week 10	Nov 7th
<i>Term Paper / Project</i>	25 %	Week 13	Nov. 26th
<i>Final Exam</i>	20 %		TBA

Assignments:

There will be a mid-term and a final exam that will be based upon some multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The full list of topics and readings can be found in the [course syllabus](#). Students will be provided with the [essay questions](#) in advance, and some time will be given during tutorial to address these questions. The emphasis will be on the lecture material, but some multiple choice and short answer questions will come from the textbook.

One short [field assignment](#) will be given where the students will be asked to make observations about culture in their everyday lives. Here students will focus on the role of mythology in everyday cultural life.

Term Paper:

The term paper will involve providing a review of some theoretical or research issue that pertains to the study of culture and psychology. There are a wide variety of potential topics, and students are encouraged to choose topics that are of interest to them. With the goal of gaining insight into (and appreciation for) the role that culture plays in our psychological lives, *students are also given the option of providing observations on culture as part of their term papers.* Here, along with a brief theoretical or empirical background to their observations, students can provide descriptions of the influence of culture on their own psychological lives.

In choosing the first option, students can write about one or another theoretical or methodological issue that pertains to the study of psychology and culture. For example it is possible to compare and contrast two major perspectives for the study of psychology and culture, such as cultural psychology and cross-cultural psychology. It is also possible to write about the history of the study of an issue or sub-field in the study of psychology and culture. For example one may write on the topic of the "emic-etic" issue or about the role of learning in the appropriation of a cultural world-view. Alternatively, one may wish to examine an "indigenous" psychology from somewhere around the world, for example Aboriginal perspectives on the healing circle, or Asian conceptions of self and nature.

It is also possible to review a collection of empirical research studies on some topic of study in the psychology of culture. Here one may examine topics such as visual perceptions across cultures, child-rearing practices across cultures, social relations across culture, acculturation, ethnic relations, prejudice, or some other topic of interest.

The third possible choice is to carry out a field study on a topic of interest to you in culture and psychology. All class members will be carrying out a small field study on the role of mythology in their lives. The term paper may offer some students the chance to expand on those projects or on another topic. It is recommended that students who choose this option have some background in research methods, and they are expected to consult with their Teaching Assistant and course instructor prior to the commencement of such projects.

The papers are to be written 8 - 10 pages typed double space (12 point font only) in the standard APA style. If you are not familiar with this style of referencing and paper writing please take a look at the APA publication manual (5th edition) in the library. In taking a cultural perspective on psychology there are several alternatives that you may wish to pursue through any of the options outlined below

Good Papers:

Most people want to get good marks even if they don't expect an "A+" on their papers. It is a good idea, however, to point out a few things regarding the creation a good paper. Typically, good papers are those that take a *critical perspective* on the topic that they are presenting. To be critical does not mean that you simply have to be negative and try to put down some theory or perspective. Being critical involves the careful examination and explanation of issues pertaining to the creation and development of theories or ideologies of psychology. In providing a critical examination of some ideas, try to go to the original sources and consider providing your reader with an understanding or explanation of the central issue(s) of the perspective(s) that you are examining. Make use of your own thoughts and concerns when choosing a topic, and also don't be afraid to rely on your own reasoning and judgment. It is a good idea to talk to classmates and your teachers about any ideas you might have as you think them through and get better at expressing such thoughts. Additionally, the papers that generally receive good marks are those which are well thought out, well organized, and clearly presented. If you have the greatest ideas in the world they

are not worth much if you cannot express them clearly. Take the time to think about the topic you choose and start thinking about it soon.

To facilitate clear communication between the Instructor and the students with respect to understanding of the grading expectations of the Instructor (who will be marking the papers), you will be asked to *hand in a one page outline of your paper topic by week 5 of the semester*. The papers will be due in 13th week of classes and it is expected that you will staple your outline (that your Instructor returned to you with comments on it) to the back of your term paper.

In-Class Seminar Activities:

We will occasionally have videos and other activities (such as culture-sharing) that will be done in seminar time. During this portion of the course we will also be discussing the study questions that accompany the lectures.

Aside from ongoing in-class activities, a **class project on music** will be done where **students are asked to contribute pieces of music (on tape, record or CD) along with a brief description of the cultural significance or importance of that piece**. The instructor will compile a CD of various selections to play later in the semester during our final class where we will also exam social ritual and gatherings as part of our cultural identity formation.

Culture Log - The Culture Log is a notebook that records your observations about culture and everyday life. Here you will be asked to record specific types of cultural phenomena as well as those that you find interesting over the course of the semester.

Grading Scheme: (Camosun Standards)

A+ 90- 100

B 73-76

D 50 - 59

A 85 - 89

B- 70 - 72

F 0 - 49

A- 80-84

C+ 65 - 69

I = Incomplete*

B+ 77 -79

C 60 - 64

*(If the missing work is not completed within 6 weeks from the semester end, the grade will become F).

LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS - There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College Calendar, Registrar's Office or the College web site at

<http://www.camosun.bc.ca>

ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY - There is an Academic Conduct Policy **which includes plagiarism**. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, Registration, and on the College web site in the Policy Section.

www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/2-5.html
