Course Syllabus

Psychology 4332.001 – Cross-cultural Psychology
Fall 2011
CI 107
Instructor: Dr. Lisa Comparini
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Email: lisa.comparini@tamucc.edu
Phone: 825-2184
Office Hours: M (9-12), T (3:30-4:30), Th (3:30-4:30) or by appointment if necessary

Required readings:
The course textbook (Matsumoto and Juang) as well as the non-fiction book by Fadiman are available in the University bookstore.


Course Theme:
Many in the Social sciences have argued that the discipline of Psychology has not paid as much attention to the influence of culture on human thought and behavior as it should. In order to claim that psychology makes valid and important claims about all humans (not just some subset of humans) cross-cultural psychologists have critiqued early work in psychology on the grounds that it has systematically focused on a small portion of the world’s people, collecting empirical data and building theories based only on this arbitrary focus. Ideally, all of the topics in psychology would be viewed from the perspective of all the world’s cultures and not just from the perspective of 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. We will explore the role that culture plays in shaping human thought and behavior and simultaneously raise awareness of the range of cultural variation in all aspects of human thought and behavior.

Course Objectives and Related Assessment Goals:
Certain objectives for the course are measurable, others are not. The following are some of the measurable objectives on which student assessment will be based. You will be asked to demonstrate your mastery of these “Student Learning Outcomes” on exams and class assignments:

- Identify and describe topics in psychology that have been studied from a cross-cultural perspective, explaining how these have been shown to be embedded in and therefore shaped by cultural context. (APA Objective 8.2)
- Identify and describe sociocultural and international contexts that influence individual differences. (APA Objective 1.2)
- Using the discourse of the field, apply the concepts and major theories of the discipline to account for psychological phenomena. (APA Objective 4.4)
- Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life. (APA Objective 5.3)
- Seek and evaluate scientific evidence for cross-cultural claims in psychology. (APA Objective 5.3)
- Identify and describe differences between your own and other cultural practices from a non-ethnocentric framework.

Among the intangible course objectives that I hope will, over time, grow out of meeting the measurable objectives listed above, are:

- To develop an appreciation and deeper and more subtle understanding of how culture, thought and behavior interact in order to better understand and appreciate world events and everyday behavior of people from other cultures making cross-cultural interactions more productive and enjoyable.
- To better understand the ways much of Western psychological thought and theory has been ethnocentric, and how the reduction of ethnocentrism might lead to the development of a more universal psychology.
- To help develop an appreciation for the wide variations in human behavior, but also to appreciate the arguments made by some that there is a common thread among all humans in many aspects of behavior.
- 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.

**Course Requirements:**

*Attendance and Participation:* Attendance is required at all class meetings for several reasons. First, this course will be, in part, discussion based (this is part of the participation part!). Therefore, your interpretations, insights, experiences, and point of view will be an integral and necessary part of the class. Because of this, it is expected that you come to class prepared to discuss in detail the reading and homework assignments. Second, additional information will sometimes be presented in the form of lecture. This information will be needed for future exams and papers. Finally, there will be group work completed within the class (this is also part of your participation). Groups rely on the equal participation of each of its members. If more than one in-class activity is missed, this may be reflected in your final grade.

*Reading and Homework Assignments:* The schedule of reading assignments is listed at the end of this syllabus. Reading assignments must be read prior to the class meeting under which they are listed as they will provide you with a foundation for the lecture and discussion. They will also prepare you for any in-class work. In addition to in-class written assignments, I will from time to time assign written homework assignments to be done prior to class to further support hands-on work with relevant concepts as well as class discussion. Specific instructions will be given the week before they are due.

*Group Project:* Each student will complete a group project. The project will be an extension of a topic covered in class and will involve an in-class presentation and a final written paper. Additional handouts will provide detailed instructions on how to complete the presentation and final written paper. Each group will be assigned a specific class time during which to present their work. The final write-up is due the week after the presentation date.

*Final Paper:* Each student will write a final paper incorporating themes from the course to the book by Fadiman. This is not a research paper as the main goal is to apply concepts of this course to Fadiman’s work, resulting in an analysis of Fadiman’s work using information from the course. No other outside sources are required or encouraged. Much of what you write about will be developed through discussions with your book club members (how these groups are organized will be discussed further in class), and to a certain extent, the preparation for writing the paper will consist of collaborative work. The final write-up
will be done individually. Specific instructions will be given in a separate handout. This assignment is due in class on April 27th.

*You may want to consult a general “Grading Matrix” posted on Blackboard for guidelines on what to pay special attention to when preparing written assignments.

**Exams:** There will be three written exams. Exams will only cover the material since the previous exam (i.e., will not be cumulative). The exams will include multiple choice, short answer and/or essay questions regarding topics covered in class lectures as well as the readings. Exams must be taken during the scheduled time and no make-ups will be given except in extreme circumstances such as a significant illness documented by a letter from a physician (or doctor’s office), an extremely serious family problem (e.g., death of a family member), or another very serious impediment. Please do not schedule work, appointments, other obligations, etc. during class time. If there are extreme circumstances, you must notify me within 24 hours of the exam time in order to be allowed to take a make-up. If I am properly contacted within 24 hours of the exam and the excuse is a legitimate one, you must take the make-up exam prior to the next class period. After that time, no make-ups will be given.

**Blackboard.** We will use Blackboard for posting important class documents including the syllabus, specific instructions for the various writing assignments, announcements, grades, etc. You are also welcome and encouraged to contribute to the discussion boards as another form of participation in the course.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class preparation and participation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>(15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>(15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>(15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group project</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>(15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(presentation 5%, final write-up 10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>500</td>
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**Letter Grades will be determined as follows:**

- **A** (450 – 500 points) 90-100% Excellent
- **B** (400 – 449 points) 80-89% Very Good
- **C** (350 – 399 points) 70-79% Satisfactory
- **D** (300 – 349 points) 60-69% Pass but unsatisfactory
- **F** (Below 300 points) Below 60% Failure
Course Outline

Please note that this syllabus serves as a general guideline for our progress this semester. If we fall behind or wish to explore a topic in more depth, I may change the syllabus, so please be flexible.

Week 1: Culture, Psychology and Cross-cultural psychology: Themes and Methods
8/24
- M&J: Chapters 1 & 2

Week 2: Themes and Methods continued; Enculturation
8/31:
- M&J: Chapter 3
- H. Miner article
- “Culture, values, and Social Thought” handout

Week 3: Why are people different? The Importance of Developmental Context
9/7:
- M&J: Chapter 4

Week 4: TEST #1
9/14
- Group 1 brief planning meeting

Week 5: Culture and Cognition
9/21
- M&J: Chapter 5
- Fadiman: Preface and Chapters 1-2
- Group project presentation (group 1)

Week 6: Culture and Gender
9/28
- M&J: Chapter 6
- Fadiman: Preface and Chapters 3-4

Week 7: Culture and Emotion
10/5
- M&J: Chapter 8
- Fadiman: Chapters 5-6
- Group 2 brief planning meeting
- Group 1 project final write-ups due in class

Week 8: Culture, Language and Communication
10/12
- M&J: Chapter 9
- Fadiman: Chapters 7-8
- Group project presentation: (group 2)
- Group 3 brief planning meeting
Week 9: First Book Club discussion; TEST #2  
10/19
- **Group project presentation: (group 3)**
- Group 4 brief planning meeting

Week 10: Culture and Self  
10/26
- **M&J: Chapter 13**
- **Fadiman: Chapters 9-11**
- **Group project presentation: (group 4)**
- Group 5 brief planning meeting
- Group 2 & 3 project final write-ups due in class

Week 11: Interpersonal and Intergroup Relations  
11/2
- **M&J: Chapter 14**
- **Group project presentation: (group 5)**

Week 12: Culture and Health (physical and mental)  
11/9
- **M&J: Chapter 7, 11**
- **Fadiman: Chapters 12-13**
- Group 4 project final write-ups due in class

Week 13: Culture and Health, continued  
11/16
- **M&J: Chapter 12**
- **Fadiman: Chapters 14-15**
- Group 5 project final write-ups due in class

Week 15: Second Book Club discussion  
11/23
- **Fadiman: Chapters 16-19**

Week 16: Exam 3; FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS  
11/30

Academic Honesty Policy

As is true of all institutions of higher learning and intellectual communities in general, academic integrity is very highly valued at TAMUCC. I take this issue very seriously such that cheating on exams, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration on materials that are turned in will be strongly sanctioned. Make sure you are familiar with all the information on TAMUCC’s Academic Honesty Policy at [http://www.tamucc.edu/catalog/archives/Catalog03/Undergraduate/generali/general.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/catalog/archives/Catalog03/Undergraduate/generali/general.html) and if you have any questions or are unclear about anything, by all means please talk with me or contact someone at
the Tutoring and Learning center http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~tlcweb/si.htm before engaging in any questionable behavior.

Students with Disabilities

TAMUCC is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. I am too. If you have a documented disability (or you think you may have a disability) and, as a result need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class or complete course requirements, then you should contact the office of Disability Services at X 5816 (http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/) as soon as possible to request such accommodations. Disability Services is located in Driftwood 101. In addition, make sure to speak with me so that I can help accommodate your particular needs.

ACADEMIC ADVISING: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

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1 Grade Appeal Process. As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.