Course Syllabus

Psychology 4332.001 – Cross-cultural Psychology
Summer II, 2016
MTWR 2:00 – 3:55, CI 102
Instructor: Dr. Lisa Comparini
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Office Hours: MTWR, 1:00-1:50

Required readings:
We will not use a textbook for this course. We will rely on a set of about 10 primary source readings (located on reserve at the Bell Library on campus) as well as the following work of non-fiction:


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 1.2)
- Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life. (APA Objective 4.4)
- 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 the readings in great detail. Second, I will occasionally assign in-class work (this is also part of your participation) to be turned in at the end of the class. These assignments cannot be completed outside of class and cannot be made up if the student is absent on the day it is assigned. Missed in-class work will be reflected in your participation 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 and discussions. 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 before they are due.

**In-class Discussion Leaders:** Throughout the course of the semester, we will devote time to in-depth discussion of the Fadiman book and how it relates to the concepts we cover in our discussion of the assigned articles. Each discussion will be led by a group of students who will function as discussion leaders/experts. In preparation for these discussions, the group members will prepare a few specific topics (these will be posted on BB) and/or questions for discussion and the students who are not assigned to be facilitators will post short responses to these. These discussions (both in-class and on Blackboard) along with discussions about the assigned articles, will help prepare you to write your final course paper.

**Final Paper:** Each student will write a final paper incorporating and connecting 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 in-class and blackboard discussions, so 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.
**Exams**: There will be four in-class written exams. Exams will only cover the material since the previous exam (i.e., will not be cumulative). The exams will include short answer and/or essay questions regarding topics covered in class discussions on the assigned weekly readings. Exams must be taken during the scheduled time and no make-ups will be given except in extreme circumstances such as a significant personal or family member’s illness documented by a letter from a physician (or doctor’s office). 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 within one week. 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, etc. I will also create several discussion boards for students to post weekly summaries of the assigned readings. In addition I will create a separate discussion board for the purpose of discussing the Fadiman book.

**Grading:**

1. Weekly Blackboard posts 60 points total (20%)
   - Week 1 15 points
   - Week 2 15 points
   - Week 3 15 points
   - Week 4 15 points

2. Discussion leader 40 points (13%)

3. Exams 100 points total (33%)
   - Exam 1 25 points
   - Exam 2 25 points
   - Exam 3 25 points
   - Exam 4 25 points

4. Final paper 100 points (33%)

**TOTAL** 300 points

**Letter Grades will be determined as follows:**

- **A** (270 – 300 points) 90-100% Excellent
- **B** (240 – 269 points) 80-89% Very Good
- **C** (210 – 239 points) 70-79% Satisfactory
- **D** (180 – 209 points) 60-69% Pass but unsatisfactory
- **F** (Below 180 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: Introduction to Themes and Methods
7/5 - 7
- Fadiman, chapters 1-4
- Exam 1

Week 2: Themes and Methods continued
7/11 - 14
- Fadiman, chapters 5-8
- Exam 2

Week 3: Self & Emotions
7/18 - 21
- Fadiman, chapters 9-12
- Exam 3

Week 4: Perception, Cognition, & Intelligence
7/25 - 28
- Fadiman, chapters 13-16
- Exam 4

**Week 5: Gender & Sexuality**
*8/1 - 4*

- Fadiman, chapters 17-19
- Final Exam (final course paper)

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

As a member of the professional community here at TAMUCC, I expect you to fulfill your academic obligations through honest and independent effort. In a community of scholars committed to truth, honesty in our academic efforts supports the code of ethics by which we live and is considered the standard by which all students and faculty are held accountable. Dishonesty in academic work is grounds for being dropped from the course with a failing grade. Don’t hesitate to ask me if you have questions about what is right and what is wrong.

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](http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~tlcweb/si.htm) before engaging in any questionable behavior. We will make use of APA style for all citations, references, etc. so I encourage you familiarize yourself with how this is done (check here [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/introduction.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/introduction.html) for a nice summary and introduction to using APA style in your writing).

**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.
DISABILITY SERVICES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

GRADE APPEALS PROCESS

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamu.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.