

Culture and Psychology, PSYCH 352, Fall 2008

M&W 1-2:15 PM; SOCS2.



Instructor: Ludmila N. Praslova, Ph.D.,

Office: psychology complex 107

Phone: (714) 556-3610; ext. 3653

Office hours: M, W & F 8:00-8:50 AM; M, W, & F 12-12:50 PM; Mon 2:15-3:15 PM and by appointment

email: lpraslova@vanguard.edu

Course description: *Culture and Psychology course will cover the nature of culture and its applications to understanding human functioning. Students will examine cultural influences on thought, emotion, behavior and relationships through exploring their own and other domestic and international cultures.*

Culture is a complex multilevel and dynamic phenomenon. It expresses itself on the level of nations-states as well as on the level of ethnic, linguistic, religious, socioeconomic, and other subgroups within one or across multiple nations. Most importantly for psychologists, it also expresses itself on the individual level in that it shapes how we think, feel and perceive ourselves and others.

This class presents an overview of some of the major **concepts and research** topics in psychology of culture. We will talk about cultural influences on cognition, emotion, development, and mental health, and will also explore issues of ethnocentrism, inter-group relationships, and communication. In addition, we will consider **applications** of cross-cultural theory and research to everyday interpersonal interactions, educational programs and business practices.

Relation to Institutional Targets and Goals.

- 1) Intellectual engagement: Culture and Psychology will help students to think critically and to evaluate evidence empirically and theoretically, specifically as relevant to issues of cultural differences and similarities.
- 2) Spiritual formation: Culture and Psychology will address issues of interaction between human psychological functioning and culture in the context of Christian faith.
- 3) Professional excellence: Culture and Psychology will help students develop knowledge and skills important in multicultural professional environment.
- 4) Sociocultural responsiveness: Culture and Psychology will emphasize knowledge and skills relevant to understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and multiculturalism as relevant to differences in national cultures, ethnicity, race, gender, and social-economic status.
- 5) Responsible stewardship: Culture and Psychology will help student to consider the role of culture in making decisions relevant to family, church and business, as well as to national and international issues.

The following are **specific objectives** to be achieved in this class:

- I. To understand theories, concepts, and terminology relevant to psychology of culture. Special attention will be given to integration of different views and definitions in a systemic, dynamic framework.
- II. To understand and appreciate research associated with cross-cultural, cultural and indigenous psychology fields.
- III. To understand the process of enculturation (learning of one's own culture) and resulting culture-related differences in psychological functioning.
- IV. To explore one's own cultural identity (identities).
- V. To explore the roles of individual, cultural, and religious values in psychological functioning.
- VI. To understand limitations of ethnocentric view and to develop flexible, culturally informed approach to our encounters with international and locally diverse populations and individuals.

Required Readings:

Text:

Matsumoto, D. & Juang, L. (2008). *Culture and Psychology*, 4th edition. Thomson Wadsworth.

Articles:

Chao, G. T. & Moon, H. (2005). The Cultural Mosaic: A metatheory for understanding the complexity of culture. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90, 1128-1140

Erez, M. & Gati, E. (2004). A dynamic, multi-level model of culture: From the micro level of the individual to the macro level of a global culture. *Applied Psychology: an International Review*, 53, 583-598.

Hedden, T. Ketay, S. Aron, A. Markus, H.R. & Gabrieli, D. (2008). Cultural influences on neural substrates of attentional control. *Psychological Science*, 19, 12-17.

Evaluation:

Maximum total points in this class: 600

1) Chapter quizzes 150 points. 11 quizzes, 15 points each; 10 best quiz grades are counted.

2) Final Test, 150 points (multiple choice + essay).

3) In-class presentation 100 points (extra 5 points if you go first). Your role is to become an expert in specific area (e.g., specific (sub)culture; bicultural experience; deaf culture; mental health assessment in specific populations; Americans through the eyes of ...; culture and gender; culture and poverty; cross-cultural training; body image across cultures, etc.) Please let me know if you already have a topic of interest in mind. Presentations will be about 20-25 min. each. Presentation draft, including your detailed outline with estimation of time needed for distinct parts of your presentation, visuals, discussion questions, and other relevant elements (see presentation grading criteria at the end of the syllabus for more examples) is due to me 2 weeks prior to your presentation.

4) "Show and tell" (25 points; 27 for going in the first group). Bring an object associated with one of the cultures you identify with. Explain what are the customs & norms associated with this object. What are the cultural values behind the customs? What kinds of emotional and cognitive processes on the individual level are associated with these customs and the use of this object? Some examples of objects from previous semesters included: traditional musical instruments; traditional foods and beverages;

picture of a family tractor for rural culture; re-used objects for “recycling” culture; a dictionary of slang for inner city culture; ethnic clothing; hand-made toy representing student’s family ethnic heritage, etc.

5) Cultural self-reflection reports 75 pts: you will write one brief (3-4 pages) report. They should describe either a) your cultural self-exploration (understanding of your own cultural identity), or b) your experience of a long-term intercultural experience and how it influenced your understanding of yourself and others (you will get a list of qualifying experiences – they include a trip abroad; participating in activities of an ethnically different church; working with people who greatly differ from you in their SES, etc.). Additional instructions are at the end of syllabus. You will have a chance of earning 10 **extra credit** points by sharing key points of your paper with the class.

6) Living Lab (50 points). You will pick one of the topics described in a Culture and Communication Living Lab handout, follow the assignment instructions and write a brief reflection paper (2 pages, double spaced, size 12 font). *October 15 is a day designated for lab, but you can do it on some other day if it would work better. The report is due on Mon. Oct.20 and will lose 2 points for each day it is late.*

7) Culture and Food: 25 points: in groups of about 3, you will select a culture you are interested in and prepare a) poster and very brief (1-2 minutes) oral presentation explaining food-related customs, their origins, and cultural beliefs and values reflected in food customs; b) a traditional food setting (a rug on the floor, traditional table setting, etc; c) samples of traditional foods. Food samples should provide a small sampling for each class member and should not be expensive.

8) Participation: 25 points: Quantity and QUALITY of your questions or comments on each set of reading materials and participation in class discussion and activities will be evaluated. You receive a full score if you participate fully in discussion, make substantive contributions that indicate that you understand and want to further think about the issues discussed. In determining your grade, I will assume that there are legitimate reasons for missing maximum of three class periods during the semester, and as long as you actively participate in class sessions when you are present two absences will not hurt your participation grade. If you miss more than two class periods, please present the evidence of a serious reason (prolonged illness, serious family problems, etc).

The final percentage value resulting from the sum of the above components will be converted into a letter grade according to the following scale:

A= 92-100%; A- = 90-91%; B+ = 88-89%; B=82-87%; B-=80-81%; C+=78-79%; C=72-77%; C-= 70-71%; D+= 68-69%; D=62-67%; D-=60-61%; F=Below 60%

Class-related communication: E-mail is my preferred way of communication for most questions and concerns. However, grades may not be discussed via e-mail or phone due to privacy concerns. To discuss grades, please see me in person.

Class schedule:

Month	Day	Day of the week	Topics	Readings
August	27	Wednesday	Class overview; Introduction	Chapter 1
September	1	Monday	Labor Day, no classes	
	3	Wednesday	Introduction	Chapter 1
	8	Monday	Research methods	Chapter 2
	10	Wednesday	Research methods	Chapter 2

	15	Monday	Quiz 1 Enculturation	Chapter 3
	17	Wednesday	Enculturation Show and Tell 1	Chapter 3
	22	Monday	Quiz 2 Culture and development	Chapter 4
	24	Wednesday	Culture and development Show and Tell 2	Chapter 4
	29	Monday	Quiz3 Culture and cognition	Chapter 5 Hedden et. al (2008)
October	1	Wednesday	Culture and cognition Student presentations 1	Chapter 5 Hedden et. al (2008)
	6	Monday	Quiz 4 Culture and Gender	Chapter 6
	8	Wednesday	Culture and Emotion	Chapter 8
	13	Monday	Quiz 5 Culture and Communication	Chapter 9
	15	Wednesday	Culture and Communication Living Lab	Chapter 9
	20	Monday	Culture and personality Living Lab reports due	Chapter 10
	22	Wednesday	Culture and personality Show and Tell 3	Chapter 10
	27	Monday	Quiz 6 Culture and social behavior 1	Chapter 13 Chao & Moon (2005)
	29	Wednesday	Culture and social behavior 1 Self-reflection reports <u>DUE</u>. Sharing: 10 points extra credit	Chapter 13 Chao & Moon (2005)
November	3	Monday	Quiz 7 Culture and social behavior 2	Chapter 14
	5	Wednesday	Culture and social behavior 2 Student presentations 2	Chapter 14
	10	Monday	Quiz 8 Culture and abnormal psychology	Chapter 11
	12	Wednesday	Culture and abnormal psychology.	Chapter 11

	17	Monday	Quiz 9 Culture and treatment of abnormal behavior.	Chapter 12
	19	Wednesday	Culture and treatment of abnormal behavior. Student presentations 3	Chapter 12
	24	Monday	Quiz 10 Culture and Organizations	Chapter 15 Erez & Gati (2004)
	26	Wednesday	Culture and Organizations Student presentations 4	Chapter 15 Erez & Gati (2004)
December	1	Monday	Quiz 11 Student presentations /Show and tell	
	3	Wednesday	Culture and Food Customs: The Melting Pot(luck)	
	8	Monday	Final review	
	10	Wednesday	Final Test 1-3 PM	

Assignment Instructions.

Cultural self-reflection assignment guidelines:

Assignment option #1: Cultural Grounding of (My)Self;

The purpose of this assignment is to make you think deeply about the cultural settings that have shaped you into the person you are today. On one hand, this means thinking about the significant cultural settings—not only explicit cultural identities like ethnicity, gender, and race, but also more implicit communities of meaning or common-ground understandings that arise from engagement with shared realities—that you have engaged over the course of your life. On the other hand, this means being specific about how these settings have shaped you.

For example, if someone grew up in the kind of environment where most people practiced non-denominational, traditional form of Christianity, the pervasive sense of final accountability for one's actions could become an important part of the person's being and would likely to lead to tendencies like a belief in the value of work, discomfort at the feeling of idleness, and a sense of duty to do something beyond limited self-interest. People may be not even aware of these influences except in moments of reflection.

To summarize, your task in this assignment is to describe some of the cultural patterns - ideas and their embodiment in institutions, practices, and artifacts—that permeate your worlds and provide the foundation for your psychological experience. Rather than list cultural settings, try to identify the particular institutions, practices, and artifacts from those settings that have had the most influence on who you are. Also try to be specific (i.e., give examples) about the ways in which you think these settings have shaped you. Make sure to use relevant concepts and terminology used in class.

Assignment option #2: Multicultural experience Report.

You should describe a cultural experience you've had (trip abroad, working with the church of denomination significantly different from yours, being with those of different social-economic group, or similar experience of cross-cultural interaction). This must be a more than one day experience (at least a week).

Describe how this experience opened your eyes to cultural differences between you and the others, to the culture of others, and to elements of your own culture you previously took for granted. Identify beliefs, values and practices you noticed as different, and especially describe cognitions and emotions relevant to these differences. Make sure to use relevant concepts and terminology discussed in class.

Grading Criteria for self-reflection paper (75 points possible)

Your paper must be typed, double-spaced, with at least 1" margins on all sides, and stapled. The minimum length for the paper is 3 pages. There is no maximum length, but try not to go over 5 pages. The standard font is Times New Roman, 12pt.

Criteria	
60 points = Issues discussed The major criteria for this paper involve clearly demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the relevant course material, and making a clear case for the connection between the course material and your experience. Just mentioning or listing the concepts is not adequate; you must DESCRIBE and EXPLAIN how the concepts apply	
10 points = Organization (proper use of paragraphs, development of an idea within a paragraph, organization of ideas and information in the paper as a whole)	
5 points = Clarity (appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure)	
Total	

Grading criteria for class presentations (100 points possible):

Informational value (35 pts)

- Presentation has clear and stated relevance to course material/topic ____ (out of 5 pts)
- References are made to material covered in the textbook – at least 2 concepts or ideas ____ /10 pts.
- Presentation adds information NOT covered in the textbook – at least 3 cited sources from reputable publications (peer-reviewed publications found through PsycArticles or in the library, for example: JCCP (Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology; JAP (Journal of Applied Psychology) ; JPSP (Journal of Personality & Social Psychology); JASP (Journal of Applied Social Psychology); and other peer-reviewed sources. These articles should be recent (2000 and newer).

Interest level (at least 3 different presentation methods should be used) ____ /30 pts.

Presentation methods:

- Overheads/ppt
- Handouts
- Discussion

- Exercise/demonstration
- Video clip
- Role play
- Other _____

Coherence (parts of presentation work together as a whole) _____/5 pts.

Presentation (talking and interacting with the audience rather than reading off your paper and slides is the most important part of presentation; miscellaneous bells & whistles such as interesting graphics or group members being dressed in a uniform way may also earn you presentation points. Please understand that bells and whistles are secondary to the substance of your presentation.) _____/5 pts.

Clarity (clear and easy to understand) _____ / 5 pts.

Draft quality (all major parts of presentation are outlined; main points of presentation are clearly stated. You can also include specific questions/problems you would like my help with). The draft is due at least 10 days prior to your presentation and will lose one point for each day it is late ____ (out of 20).

Total _____/100.

Depending on the class size, presentations will be done either individually or in groups. If group presentation format is used, you are advised to fill out the following form to evaluate you group partners.

Group presentation partner evaluation form. Please evaluate each type of contributions on a 100% scale and turn it to me anonymously on your presentation day. To preserve your anonymity, evaluate yourself as well.

Group presentation topic _____.

Partner names	Understanding, analysis and synthesis of material	Creative Ideas	Time/ Effort	Overall contribution

Possible topics and grading criteria for Living Lab:

You will visit a place where English (or another language you are fluent in) is not a common way of communication, and non-verbal rules of communication might also be different. Your goal is to observe communication rules in a new setting and to use creative approach to communication (perhaps a combination of verbal and non-verbal communication) to achieve mutual understanding. Examples include spending the day in China town (unless you are fluent in Chinese/Mandarin); attending a church service of another culture, in a different language; eating at an ethnic restaurant in an ethnic neighborhood; bargaining with a salesperson of an ethnic market, etc ☺. You will write a 2 page paper on this adventure, which will include the following:

- Explanation of appropriateness of event for meeting assignment goals - 5 points
- Your expectations before the experience (such as fears, stereotypes) – 5 points
- Detailed description of the event and your observations– 5 points
- Personal reflection on the experience (what did you feel, how did you handle communication difficulties, whether the experience confirmed your expectations, etc)-10 points
- Theoretical integration (you can relate your experience to communication concepts and/or theories. Please apply and define at least 4 concepts or theoretical ideas) – 10 points
- Discussion of how you could improve your skills of intercultural communication - 10 points
- Writing style (grammar, style, clarity, organization) - 5 points

Personal note from your professor:

1) *We are all cultural beings. This means that one of the best ways to understand cultural processes is to share our experiences, thoughts, and questions. This makes student participation essential to successful learning of cultural psychology. Therefore, sharing your life experiences as relevant to the material covered is very much welcomed.*

2) *On the other hand, as cultural beings we sometimes do not realize just how important, personal and emotionally charged some of our cultural beliefs are. Because other people are likely to hold just as strong and personal, yet opposite cultural beliefs, effective discussion of cultural issues also requires respect, tolerance, and sincere desire to understand the views and cultures of others.*

3) *The most important thing for me is to approach my teaching as service to God first of all. This means striving to do my absolutely best with regard to class preparation, and treating students as valuable to God individuals. When you choose to also approach your studies as something you do before God, it helps you to do your best academically and to treat others in this class with the same respect you expect toward yourself.*

I hope all of us will have an enriching and enjoyable learning experience with Culture and Psychology.