

Psychology 459: CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

12:00 – 1:20 pm (1200-1320), Tuesdays and Thursdays

Class meets in 229 McKenzie Hall

Professor: Gerard Saucier, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-11 am (Franklin); Thursdays (except 10/31) 1:20-1:45 (at 229 McKenzie – I stick around the classroom) and 2-2:35 pm (back at Franklin)

Course TA: Nicole D. Cummins, 228 Franklin Bldg., ncummins@uoregon.edu, tel. 346-1973, office hrs. Tues. 2-4 pm (Franklin building is across Franklin Blvd. from Jaqua, Hamilton, and Ford Alumni Center)

Text: Heine, Steven J. (2012). *Cultural psychology* (2nd ed.). New York: Norton (*plus a few other readings made available via blackboard*)

Course Objectives: What's the Purpose of This Course?

Welcome to cultural psychology! This course explores that way that groups of humans form and maintain shared, transmittable bodies of the norms, beliefs, values, practices, and the like, and how such 'cultural models' affect individual thought, feeling, and behavior. Knowledge of cultural psychology should be useful to you in any future endeavor that involves interacting with people from different backgrounds. At the end of the term, you will likely find yourself looking at your own ways of thinking, interacting, and organizing your time with an increased awareness of how your mindset and your way of life reflects particular cultural models as well as a certain few cross-cultural universals. You will likely increase your appreciation for what is variable and malleable in persons around this planet, both within and across cultures, but also your appreciation for what humans have in common. Hopefully this experience will increase not only your resources for useful critical thinking about human behavior, but also increase your interest and compassion for people from all backgrounds.

Cultural (or 'cross-cultural') psychology is a "crossroads" field with links to many other disciplines, which are explored here abundantly. The course format is primarily a series of talks (i.e., lecture), with some discussion and/or in-class exercises at *every* session but particularly at certain sessions when we devote about half of the class session to such. *This course has extensive readings; you're expected to read everything assigned.*

Assignments and Grading

Your **final course grade** is based on the following:

- 14% ...credit for five "responses to readings" (3% for each one, except that the 5th counts as 2%)
- 10% ...discussion-group class-citizenship credit (2% for each of first five you participate in)
- 2% ...class attendance credit
- 4% ...grade on outline/abstract of your research paper
- 20% ...grade on final version of research paper
- 20% ...score on the midterm quiz
- 30% ...score on final exam

What follows is more detail on each of these components (a guide to doing well in the course).

The **exams** – both midterm quiz and final – consist of a multiple choice section (60% of the point total for the exam) concentrating on key concepts (definitions and examples of them), followed by a set of mini-essay questions (40% of the point total for the exam). The mini-essay questions are drawn from among the

“big questions” listed at the end of this syllabus. They are these exact questions, though they may be revised during the term to increase clarity. The mini-essay questions on the **midterm exam** will be drawn from among the *first four* of the big questions. Those on the **final exam** will be drawn from big questions 5-10. Mini-essay responses typically fill one page or less (unless one has very large handwriting). No dictionaries, thesauruses, calculators, or electronic devices can be used during the exams, except that a translating dictionary can be allowed for those with English fluency issues, if instructor approves it. Multiple-choice items especially emphasize material covered both in the assigned readings and in class.

Reading responses are responses to assigned readings. They should be sent electronically to the course TA. They are due at 12:01 am (1 minute past midnight) on class days, thus the reading response is due 11 hours and 59 minutes before the class meeting (that is associated with a given reading) begins; this ensures that we always will have time to process received responses prior to class. The purpose of reading responses is manifold: to stimulate students to actively engage with readings, to be earlier and better prepared for class (and exams), and also to provide important raw material for educative group discussions. The length for a reading response is exactly one (full, can be single- or double-spaced) page of text for each. Each reading response must be based on the assigned readings corresponding to a due date for the reading response. For each reading response, you must refer to the content in the assigned reading for that due date (citing specifically one or more pages in the reading). Here is a guiding framework:

After a sentence or two or three describing some relevant point(s) in what you have read (thus demonstrating accurate knowledge of some content in the reading), use one of these three ‘magic phrases’:

- i. ‘*But here is an important question.*’ Then describe an important question or controversy (related to the relevant point[s]) that has not been (and perhaps will not be easily) answered or settled, OR
- ii. ‘*But here I found something I must question.*’ Describe something -- an idea or finding or inference or assumption or over-simplification or way of labeling or summarizing things -- that you found in the reading (related to the relevant point[s]) that you think is questionable -- and what makes it questionable, OR
- iii. ‘*And here is the most important point in the entire reading for today.*’ Describe something (an idea or finding, related to the relevant point[s]) you think is very important and explain why you think it is more important (has priority over) than one or more other things emphasized elsewhere in the reading. Identify clearly what these other things are, it is *not* enough to just say something is important, say also *what* is *less* important.

To get full credit, your response must be something that (in the judgment of course TA or instructor) could conceivably be discussed in this class. It should include one of the ‘magic phrases’ (or something close). To get full credit for this part of the course, you must complete five reading responses satisfactorily during the term, and each must be for a session with a different letter code (a) through (f) next to it in the course calendar later in this syllabus. You have a great deal of freedom in deciding which class sessions or readings to submit reading responses for. But they are not accepted late, or for wrong readings for a date.

In general, in-class ***discussion groups*** will occur in the latter part of a class session, and in general you will be assigned to a specific discussion group (based on various algorithms) at the beginning of the group-discussion period, although in some cases these might be simply with people sitting near you. The general format: Groups discuss, then the whole class discusses. To get credit, you must sign onto a page (handed out) that fills in the consensus or major points of view in your group with regard to that session’s topics.

There is a small bit of ***credit for attendance*** (2% of course grade). You get this credit automatically, unless instructor experiences repeated (i.e., on > 3 occasions) difficulties finding you in class sessions. If you should happen to be documented as participating in all six (rather than just the required five) group-discussions, you automatically get all this credit (regardless of how hard you were to find otherwise).

The research paper is designed to better traditional term papers in terms of advancing student learning. I have found that students learn more from the writing experience when they have the opportunity to make use of feedback. The topic for the paper is chosen by you, within the constraints that you must choose a topic from a limited “menu,” and there will be no more than approximately ten different topics done by members of the whole class.

Research-paper topics will be focused on some issue on which there are different points of view or approaches that can be compared. For each topic, at least one article (sometimes two) will be assigned, and at least two additional articles are chosen by you. Multiple students will be working on the same topic, but there is no joint or group product and no group grade for the research paper. Because papers on one topic are evaluated simultaneously, be sure that, if you are influenced by the thoughts of other students, you acknowledge that contribution accurately and openly (so as to avoid “plagiarism” – see note below). Originality is one of the grading criteria (see below).

The first step is to read the assigned articles. You might develop a very carefully thought-out response to it (or them) – what you agree with and don’t, what you think is well-supported by evidence and what isn’t, what seems logical or illogical, what might be left out. In your best judgment, identify what you think is the most essential issue on your topic that is incompletely addressed by the assigned article(s). Next, find other sources, and for each source (article) ask similar questions about each of them. Having done this, you are ready to start working on your research-paper outline or abstract. This outline must all fit on one side of one sheet of paper. For the outline/abstract only it is OK to use single-spacing if you wish. In all other respects, the same criteria as for the final research-paper are useful to determine how good your outline is.

As for the final research-paper, bear in mind what Gracián wrote in 1647: “good things, when short, are twice as good.” The aim is to create a paper that packs a lot of valuable thinking into a relatively brief space. It should be a minimum of three full double-spaced pages in length (not counting reference list), and at a maximum it should not exceed five full double-spaced pages in length, not counting reference list, it must be double-spaced throughout, and with a size 12 font.

You should include (cite, discuss) also the two best additional journal articles you could find; you are free to change what you identify as the best additional articles after you turn in the outline. These must be journal articles, not a book, book chapter, or internet site or page (Why? Because you should identify a scientifically peer-reviewed source.). You can include more than two additional articles or sources, but especially important for grading purposes is quality of the first two, best additional ones you introduce, so it pays to consult multiple articles and choose or prioritize the two that do the most for your paper. But this is not a “critique the article” assignment – instead you are to use these articles in the course of trying to answer in the best possible way the basic question posed by the research-paper topic. Keep focus on that question.

The final research-paper is graded on the following criteria:

1. Is typed, readable, free of gross spelling and typographic errors
2. Is well-organized and focused (not rambling, or with irrelevant sections)
3. Addresses what makes this issue (or paper topic) important, practically and/or scientifically
4. Defines key terms clearly, especially potentially ambiguous terms that will be used frequently in the paper, and/or identifies key assumptions
5. Considers a plurality of views, that is, identifies differing points of view, or a major issue that is unresolved or on which there is disagreement. Sets out clearly and effectively the arguments in favor of and against varying (that means at least two) approaches, ways of thinking about an issue, or ways of answering the main question. (In preparing paper, you should seek out competing views.)
6. Applies critical thinking to the research approaches described. This might include: how good is the

supporting evidence (or the rationale), how good (relevant, reliable, large effect size, large sample, etc.) is this evidence (or rationale) is, whether some other reasonable interpretation of findings is plausible but has not been ruled out, and other issues.

7. Attempts to synthesize and (even better) actually effectively synthesizes the arguments and evidence, combining all of the discussion into a reasonable conclusion (which may include recommendations for future research work)

8. Originality – indications are that (at least) the thinking is your own and (at best) it goes beyond and even challenges the “conventional wisdom” or “commonsense view” on aspects of the topic

9. Includes use of the assigned articles and two additional journal articles

10. The citations and reference list in APA style; see <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/psychology> for help on APA styles and on finding articles –on the more mundane side, do not include binders or covers on the papers when you turn them in, and no title page is necessary.

For the research paper (or the outline/abstract for the research paper) turned in **late** lose 10% of their points for each weekday they are not turned in (starting with the due date). With *some* course requirements, alternative arrangements for due dates may be possible but *only when* an authoritative excuse is presented in advance of an absence. Credit for the reading-responses and discussion-groups allow (in each case) for one to be missed without penalty, which gives some flexibility re whatever comes up for you unexpectedly.

Your ***final grade*** in the course will be based on the total of your points from papers, exams, participation, etc. **A** range is 90% or better, **B** range is 80% to 90%, **C** range 70% to 80%, **D** range 60% to 70%, **Fs** are less than 60%. ‘+’ and ‘-’ are added to grades if they fall in the top 1/3 or bottom 1/3, respectively, of A, B, C, and D range.

Special Requirements for Graduate Students (Psychology 559)

There will be special requirements for graduate students taking the course as Psychology 571. 571 students will meet at additional times outside the class time, either in-person or electronically. 571 students are expected to attend an in-person graduate student meeting with the instructor early in the quarter (typically by about the third or fourth week of the term).

Academic Integrity

This instructor takes academic integrity seriously. Insuring the "validity" of grades requires seeing that they reflect honest work and learning rather than cheating. **Cheating** is defined as providing or accepting information on an exam, plagiarism or copying anyone's written work. Students caught cheating will be given an **"F"** for the course, and UO's student conduct coordinator will be informed. The instructor retains the right to assign seats for tests, to change individual's seating for test security purposes, to require and check ID for admission to tests. **"Plagiarism"** is basically a form of theft: putting your name on work that is (in any part) not yours, where you have not fully identified the source from which you borrowed. Even taking someone else's ideas or paraphrasing their expression, without acknowledgment, is plagiarism. Be aware that the instructor is knowledgeable about computer-age plagiarizing techniques and how to diagnose their use. "Your responsibility, when you put your name on a piece of work, is simply to distinguish between what is yours and what is not, and to credit those who in any way have contributed" (quote is from Nancy Cotton of Wake Forest U.).

List of Psych. 471/571 additional readings (in APA style), these will be made available via blackboard.

Hutcheson, F. (1755). *A system of moral philosophy, in three books*. London: A. Millar and T. Longman. (Vol 1., pp. 64-79)
 Schwartz, S. H. & Rubel, T. (2005). Sex differences in value priorities: Cross-cultural and multimethod studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89, 1010-1028.

PSYCHOLOGY 459 SCHEDULE: What's Happening When

- October 1 Syllabus; overview of the course
 Reading Assignment (i.e., for session listed on next line): Heine chs. 1-2
- October 3 (a) Universality and cultural specificity; culture and human nature
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 3
- October 8 (a) Cultural learning and cultural evolution
 Reading Assignment: none
- October 10 Cultural innovation and tradition; *discussion groups*
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 4
- October 15 (b) Considerations and methods for good cultural-psychology research
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 5
- October 17 (b) Development and socialization in cultural perspective
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 6
- October 22 (b) The self in cultural perspective
 Reading Assignment: none
- October 24 Personality in cultural perspective; *discussion groups*
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 7
- October 29 (c) Motivation in cultural perspective
 Reading Assignment: Hutcheson (1755); Schwartz & Rubel (2005) [see blackboard]
- October 31 (c) Value-priorities and culture; *discussion groups*
- November 5 ***MIDTERM QUIZ***
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 8
- November 7 (d) Cultural effects on (and cultural styles in) cognition and perception
OUTLINE/ABSTRACT OF RESEARCH PAPER is due November 12!
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 9
- Nov. 12 (d) Groups, relationships, interpersonal attraction
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 10
- Nov. 14 (d) Acculturation, multiculturalism; *discussion groups*
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 11
- Nov. 19 (e) Culture and health
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 12
- Nov. 21 (e) Universals and cultural specific in psychological disorders, and treatment
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 14 (note that we skip ahead!)
- Nov. 26 (e) Emotions; *discussion groups*
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 13 (and now we skip back!), pp. 491-515
- December 3 (f) Ethics, morality, and justice: Universals and cultural specificity
FINAL VERSION OF RESEARCH PAPER is due December 5, at beginning of class!
 Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 13, pp. 515-527
- December 5 (f) Culture vis-à-vis fairness, and morality of thoughts; *discussion groups*; wrap-up

December 10 (Tuesday), 8:00 am, FINAL EXAM

Letters in parentheses: you are expected to turn in one reading response for any one of the (a) sessions, of the (b) sessions, and so on for (c) through (f) sessions. See syllabus above for details.

Big questions: The pool of potential mini-essay items for midterm and final exams

1. What is the best way of defining 'culture' – what can be called 'cultural' and what cannot? What are advantages and disadvantages of understanding 'culture' to mean the same thing as 'nation' or 'society' or 'a particular group of individuals'?
2. What is the best way to discover and/or measure the cultural aspects of human behavior?
3. What are the basic dynamics of culture, that is: How do societies change and maintain their cultural system? How do children learn a cultural system?
4. Self, personality, motivation, and values – which of these areas of psychology shows the most cross-cultural variability (and in what way) and which shows the least (in what is so much in common)?
5. With respect to cognition and perception – what are the most important cross-cultural differences, and which phenomena are relatively universal?
6. What are important cultural differences in how individuals carry on relationships with each other, and in how they relate to the cultural systems they have experienced in their family and in their wider society?
7. With respect to biology and physical health, mental health, and emotions – what are the most important cross-cultural differences, and which phenomena are relatively universal?
8. Morality, religion, and justice – which one shows the most cross-cultural variability (and in what way) and which shows the least (in what is so much in common)?
9. What are the most important biases that have developed within psychology because of the overreliance on so-called 'WEIRD' (or 'WIRED') – from Western, educated, industrialized, rich democracies – samples? (And are any areas of knowledge in psychology not much affected by the nature of the sample?) What are some aspects of WEIRD (e.g. American) societies that those immersed in them assume to be normal, but that are actually rather unusual in cross-cultural perspective?
10. (The most integrative question:) Which aspects of human psychology are most universal and which aspects are most variable across cultural settings? Among those most universal aspects, which are shared with some other animal species? For those aspects which are most variable, what seem to be the major sources of the variability?

Numbers 1-4 are candidates to be on the midterm, and the remaining questions 5-10 are candidates to be on the final exam. However, note that numbers 9 and 10 in particular may draw on material from before as well as after the midterm.

Mini-essays should include somewhere a brief (30 words or less, either in CAPS or underlined or circled) summary of the main points of your answer. Most of your response should be an explanation/justification for why you are giving the kind of answer you are giving (why that is the best way to answer the question[s]).