

PSYC 545: CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

W, 5:00-7:50 PM; 547 Fraser

<u>Instructor:</u>	<u>TA:</u>
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<u>Office Hours:</u> W 8:30-11:30 (JAN 31; FEB 14, 28; MAR 14; APR 04, 18; MAY 02) Th 8:00-11:00 (JAN 18; MAR 08, 29; APR 12, 26)	<u>Office Hours:</u> W 3:00-5:00 PM

OVERVIEW

Courses that go by the name of "Cultural Psychology" often have two goals. One goal is to describe cultural diversity in psychological experience. Another goal is to test the knowledge base of Psychology "across cultures" to determine whether the patterns it describes are truly universal. This course is different. Rather than psychological topics examined across cultural groups, the focus of the course is the idea of **MIND IN CONTEXT: the extent to which structures of mind embodied in brain exist in a dynamic relationship of mutual constitution with structures of mind deposited in everyday worlds**

THEMES OF THE COURSE

Diversity in Psychological Functioning

One can say of most psychology studies that "even the rat was white" (Guthrie, 1975). That is, most studies are based on Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (i.e., *WEIRD*) samples. One theme of the course is to consider a broader, more representative sample of human experience.

The Cultural Constitution of Psychological Experience

This theme refers to the extent to which habits of mind are not "just natural." Instead, human beings develop species-typical tendencies only through engagement with cultural ecologies shaped to reflect and promote particular sets of beliefs and desires. A major goal of the course is to make visible the cultural constitution of experience, not just for *exotic* "others", but also for the familiar patterns observed in North American settings and routinely reported in psychology textbooks.

The Psychological Constitution of Cultural Reality

This theme refers to the extent to which the everyday ecology of human life is likewise not a "just natural" environment. Instead, people inhabit "already there" *intentional worlds* that bear the imprint of human activity. Alternatively stated, everyday worlds are not "neutral", but instead are charged with beliefs and desires of the people who (re)produced them. Again, a major goal of the course is to make visible this psychological constitution of reality not only in distant places, but also in the everyday worlds outside our classroom window.

Decolonizing Psychological Science

Is hegemonic Psychological Science a cultural (and colonial) product? Although scientists often imagine themselves to be detached, neutral observers of a universal, objective reality, the fourth theme considers the extent to which hegemonic theory and practice in Psychological Science reflects a kind of cultural domination by a powerful Eurocentric elite. From this perspective, one goal of a cultural psychology is to develop a more human(e) version of psychological science that better serves the interests of global social justice.

ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge does not just sit there waiting to be discovered; instead it must be actively created. So rather than transmitting knowledge to you (and asking you to spit it back on an exam), this course requires you to participate in the production and consumption of knowledge. Regarding production, the course requires you to collaborate with a small group of students on a research project. Regarding consumption, the course requires you to engage with other students in discussions about a challenging set of materials.

GRADING SCHEME:

A. Course Participation (20%)

- (1) **Classroom Participation:** Class attendance is a required form of participation that deserves special mention. Because people sometimes need to miss class, you can have up to 2 absences without comment or penalty. If you have more than 2 absences, expect to take a hit on your class participation grade.
- (2) **Online Discussion:** I expect you to participate online via the Blackboard website **online discussion board (ODB)**. The ODB is a forum for extending classroom discussion or submitting material that adds to classroom discussion. You can participate via two forms.
 - a) **Reading Responses (REQUIRED):** By 11:59 PM on Tuesday before each class, you should post a half-page "reaction" to the weekly reading assignment. DO NOT repeat the contents of the reading. Instead, elaborate beyond the reading assignment to make links to material inside and outside of class.
 - b) **Freestyle (OPTIONAL):** Beyond the structured forms of online participation, you are free to contribute material or responses any time you think it relevant. **NOTE: I consider such freestyle contributions to be a very valuable form of class participation, and I grade them accordingly.**
- (3) **Co-Curricular Experiences:** One of the benefits of attending a large research university is the multitude of public lectures, colloquia, symposia, and other intellectual events, many of which deal directly with the themes of the course. To take advantage of these learning opportunities and to get students to engage in the intellectual life of the university, it is a course requirement that each student should attend and write a written reflection to at least TWO (2) co-curricular events. (I will keep a running list of qualified events in the announcements section of the Blackboard website. If you wish to attend and report on an event that does not appear on the list, please contact me to confirm that it is suitable for this assignment.) Within one week of attending the event, students should submit a brief written reflection (around 200 words) directly to the appropriate forum of the Discussion Board. If someone else has already posted a reflection about the event, post your own reflection as a response to that discussion thread. If no one has posted a reflection about the event, then please create a new thread and include the name of event in the title of the thread. This reaction should NOT merely describe the event; instead, you should thoughtfully reflect on the event and its relation to course themes.

B. Group Research Project (30%)

As a way to involve you in the production of knowledge, you will collaborate with students in small groups on a research project. Each group will report results of these projects in a 15-20 minute presentation during a classroom research symposium on 02 MAY. The presentation and supplemental materials will be the basis of your research project grade. I will assign each group a grade (p) out of 30 possible points. Each group member will then have $p \times n$ points to divide (as a grade from 0-30 points) among all n members, including self. Students' grades will be the average of the points awarded them by all group members. Guidelines for the project will appear in the Course Documents section of the website as appropriate.

C. Exams (50%)

There are two exams: one on 14 MAR, the other on 25 APR. The format of both exams is the same. Each exam will have approximately 20-30 multiple choice (MC) items that cover material from the Heine textbook and 2-3 open-ended response (OER) items. I will select the OER items from a pool of 4-10 items that I provide to students approximately one month before each exam to help direct your attention toward important ideas. You can feel free to collaborate with other students to prepare responses to these items (but you will not be able to bring prepared, written responses to the exam). I will grade both exams out of 50 points. [To determine your exam score for the course I will select your best performance of the two exams and discard the other.](#)

Required Textbook: Heine, S. J. (2016). *Cultural Psychology* (3rd Ed.). New York: Norton.

Notes on Diversity, Inclusion, and Civility:

The University of Kansas supports an inclusive learning environment in which students and faculty understand, respect, and appreciate diversity and individual differences. All students benefit from training and experiences that help them to learn, lead, and serve in an increasingly diverse society. All members of our campus community must accept the responsibility to demonstrate civility and respect for the dignity of others.

These issues are relevant to all courses, but they assume special importance in a course like this one, where the purpose is to understand diversity in human psychological experience. The success of the course depends on diversity of thought, and it is my expectation that ALL students experience this classroom as a safe environment. It is almost certain that you will not agree with every observation that people make in classroom discussion; still, the culture of this course demands courteous behavior and responses at all times. When you disagree with someone, be sure that you make a distinction between criticizing an idea and criticizing the person. We will not tolerate expressions or actions that disparage people on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity / expression, religion, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or disability.

Ground Rules for Class Interaction*

1. Strive for Intellectual Humility: You don't know what you don't know.
2. Opinions are not the same as informed knowledge.
3. Support your statements. Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points
4. Let go of personal anecdotal evidence and look at broader societal patterns.
5. Notice your own defensive reactions, and use them as opportunities for deeper self-knowledge.
6. Recognize how your social positionality informs your reactions to class material.
7. Respect others' rights to hold positions that differ from your own. Challenge the idea, not the person.
8. Listen carefully to what others are saying, even when you disagree. Your comments (requesting clarification, sharing critiques, expanding a point, etc.) should make clear that you paid attention to others.
9. Be courteous. Don't interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
10. Allow everyone the chance to talk. If you have much to say, try to hold back a bit.
11. If you are offended by something or think someone else might be, speak up and don't leave it for someone else to have to respond to it.

*Adapted from James A. Banks (Ed.) *Is Everyone Really Equal? An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education* and website of the University of Michigan Center for Research on Teaching and Learning.

Accessibility: The Academic Achievement & Access Center (AAAC) coordinates accommodations and services for all KU students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted the AAAC, please do so as soon as possible. Their office is located in 22 Strong Hall; their phone number is 785-864-4064 (V/TTY). Information about their services can be found at <http://disability.ku.edu>. Please contact me privately in regard to your needs in this course.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1 (17 JAN): Course Introduction

WEEK 2 (24 JAN): Foundation and Methods (Heine 1, 4)

WEEK 3 (31 JAN): Key Concepts (Shweder, 1990; Shweder, Jensen, & Goldstein, 1995)

Shweder, R. A. (1990). Cultural psychology: What is it? In J. W. Stigler, R. A. Shweder, & G. Herdt (Eds.), *Cultural psychology: Essays on comparative human development*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Shweder, R. A., Jensen, L., & Goldstein, W. (1995). Who sleeps by whom revisited: A method for extracting the moral goods implicit in praxis. In J. J. Goodnow, P. J. Miller, & F. Kessell (Eds.), *Cultural practices as contexts for development: New directions for child development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

WEEK 4 (07 FEB): Development and Socialization (Heine 5)

WEEK 5 (14 FEB): Self and Identity (Heine 6)

WEEK 6 (21 FEB): Living in Multicultural Worlds (Heine 7)

WEEK 7 (28 FEB): Relational Belonging (Heine 11; Adams et al., 2012)

Adams G., Kurtiş, T., Salter, P.S., & Anderson, S.L. (2012). A cultural psychology of relationship: Decolonizing science and practice. In O. Gillath, G. Adams, & A.D. Kunkel, (Eds.), *Relationship science: Integrating evolutionary, neuroscience, and sociocultural approaches* (pp. 49-70). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association

WEEK 8 (07 MAR): Morality, Religion, and Justice (Heine 12)

WEEK 9 (14 MAR): EXAM ONE

SPRING BREAK (21 MAR)

WEEK 10 (28 MAR): Motivation and Emotion (Heine 8, 10)

WEEK 11 (04 APR): Cognition and Perception (Heine 9; Rogoff, 2003)

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Chap. 7: "Thinking with the tools and institutions of culture". New York: Oxford University Press.

WEEK 12 (11 APR): Collective Belonging (Adams et al., 2008; Salter & Adams, 2016)

Salter, P. S.* and Adams, G. (2016). On the intentionality of cultural products: Representations of Black History as psychological affordances. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 1166. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01166

WEEK 13: (18 APR): Health and Well-Being (Heine 13, 14)

WEEK 14: (25 APR): EXAM TWO

WEEK 15: (02 MAY): Research Project Presentations

PLEASE NOTE: The schedule of reading assignments for this course is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.