CIEE Amsterdam, Netherlands

Course title: Cross-Cultural Psychology
Course code: PSYC 3001 AMNT
Programs offering course: Business and Culture, Social Sciences and Humanities
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Fall 2020

Course Description

Cross-cultural psychology examines the ways in which an individual’s perception of themselves, others, and their environment is shaped by culturally specific factors, including both the individual’s own culture, as well as other cultures to which they are exposed. This course will begin with a review of the principal theories of and approaches to cross-cultural psychology (including emic versus etic approaches, individualism versus collectivism and indigenous perspectives of cross-cultural psychology). This will be followed by readings from key psychologists such as Bronfenbrenner and Bandura who contributed to our understanding of the way psychology and the social context interact. Students will use this foundational knowledge to interrogate how processes of socialization and enculturation impact discrete topics in psychology, such as identity, gender, social behavior, cognition, personality, intelligence, development and emotions. In other words, this course will investigate how culture affects human psychology, and how specific norms and behaviors can be understood both on a universal and a culturally-specific level.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Identify and engage with various approaches to cross-cultural psychology and apply this knowledge to practical case studies;
- Critically engage with the ways that culture informs aspects of our psychological experiences and, in turn, appreciate that psychological issues in development, intelligence, psychological disorders and identity vary across sociohistorical contexts;
- Examine and evaluate ways of conducting ethically sensitive cross-cultural research in psychology;
- Apply psychological theories regarding human identity, development, emotion, cognition and social behavior across multicultural contexts such that this application is culturally sensitive and critically aware of some of the theoretical limitations inherent in Eurocentric and Americanized psychological models; and
- Critique issues and manifestations of power, oppression, privilege, class, race, ethnicity and gender across cultural domains.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

This course is structured around weekly themes over a period of 14 weeks. Each week, students will be required to read and prepare up to five readings made available on Canvas. Thursday lectures will be led by the instructor; however, students will also be expected to engage through discussion and debate. Some of these lectures will be supported by additional materials such as Ted Talks and other internet content. Tuesday seminars will be student led – in the first hour, two students (per week) will present on one of the weekly topics, using the prescribed readings as well as other relevant material in the field. During the second hour of Tuesday classes, students will break up into smaller discussion groups to debate the readings and content from the week. Key take away points from each of these small group discussions will then be shared with the larger group. Students will also be expected to submit response papers every second week, thus ensuring that all students come to class prepared and able to participate. The course will culminate in a final examination and the submission of a case study assignment as well as a site visit to the Tropenmuseum.

Assessment and Final Grade
1. Student Presentation 20%
2. Case Study Assignment 25%
3. Response Papers 15%
4. Written Examination 25%
5. Class Participation 15%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Student Presentation

Students are to prepare presentations that comprise their own take of the meaning of the readings which have been posted for the week, providing their insights, taking positions, expanding or critiquing these, and engaging their classmates and instructor. Student presentations are expected to cover the theories relating to the topic they are assigned, debates in the field and cultural issues relating to the topic. Students are expected to include some material beyond the readings prescribed the instructor.

Students will be assigned presentation dates and topics in the introductory lecture. Each week, two students will present individually on a more focused topic relating back to the weekly topic. These topics and dates will be pre-assigned by the instructor and are not negotiable.

Each student has 15 minutes to present and 10 minutes for questions. The presentation format must be in PowerPoint or a similar software. The question component will be led by the instructor, however students in the audience will be expected to formulate questions for the presenter too (and this will, of course, contribute to class participation grades).

Presentations will be assessed according to:

- Originality and creativity
- Integration of a wide range of resources and materials
- Audience attention
- Time management
- Response to topic
- Critical interrogation of material
- Contextual application and provision of examples

Presentations will be marked against the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>MARK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Breadth and depth of seminal and recent relevant literature that has been reviewed</td>
<td>/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognisance of the applications relevant to psychological practice</td>
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<td>Application to culture and context</td>
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<td>Critical thought and effective argument</td>
<td>/20</td>
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<td>Use of examples and creative resources</td>
<td>/10</td>
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<td>Presentation skills and time management</td>
<td>/10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>/100</strong></td>
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Case Study Assignment

Students will be given three case studies in the introductory lecture. Each case study will detail a particular psychological issue (gender identity, psychological maladaptation, intelligence, etc.) in the context of an individual living within a particular culture. The psychological issue and cultural context of the individual will be described in detail in the case study. Students must choose one of the three case studies and use the cross-cultural approaches and theories they have learnt in the course, along with the material relating to that particular category of psychological experience to critically engage with how the issue should be approached, assessed and treated in light of the cultural context described. Students will be expected to use reading materials beyond those provided by the instructor. References must be included in APA format (see APA Guide posted on Canvas).

Response Papers
Students are to submit response papers every second Thursday, beginning Tuesday 19 February and ending Tuesday 23 April 2019. Students are to present integrated thought papers that demonstrate their understandings of the readings for a particular topic of their choice in that fortnight. In other words, students will submit a response paper in week three based on either topic one or topic two; a response paper in week five on either topic three or topic four, and so on. These thought papers should include a well-written integration of the all the readings for that topic that demonstrates the main arguments in the readings and students' critical reflections of these arguments. Each paper should be at least 300 words but no more than 450 words. The papers must be printed and brought to class on Thursdays to inform discussion. These must then be handed to the instructor. Should a student be absent for that lecture, the paper can be emailed to the instructor. Every student must submit 5 response papers to get a grade for this assignment. Response papers will be marked according to the following rubric:

Check plus (100%): Well formulated and coherent paper, with all the readings integrated into a 300- to 450-word response.

Check (70%): A summary of all the readings is supplied in a 300- to 450-word response paper, although the summary lacks some integration, critical reflection or coherence.

Check minus (50%): A summary is supplied however not ALL of the readings have been summarised OR the summary is less than 300 words.

Zero (0%): No hand in OR late hand in.

Written Examination

Students will bring their laptops to the final class (Tuesday 30 April) for a sit-down examination. Students will be given 90 minutes to respond to an essay question. Students will be allowed to bring notes and use their readings and other materials however good preparation is encouraged so that the time is well spent and that response time is not constrained by preparation during the examination. Students will be given the essay question via Canvas 24 hours before the examination so that they have adequate time to prepare. The essay question will be holistic and will use an example (case study) to urge students to think about cross-cultural issues in psychology, various theories to approach these issues, and the limitations of models that overly rely on Eurocentric and American conceptualizations of psychological wellbeing. Students will be awarded marks for critical thinking and for being able to identify issues relating to power, identity, oppression, class and privilege.

Class Participation

All students are expected to participate fully during both the instructor-led and student-led seminars. Participation involves discussion, debate, thoughtful responses to reading material, critical engagement with seminar material and asking questions. Participation will be assessed based on active engagement, group cooperation, attendance, punctuality and preparation for class using the following rubric:

Advanced participation (100%): Regular attendance, always punctual, excellent preparation for class in advance, draws out ideas or concerns of others, especially those who have said little, re-visits issues or ideas that need more attention, participates and often leads in class discussion, and is actively engaged in group work.

Proficient participation (70%): Well prepared in advance, good attendance and punctuality, takes a large part in setting group goals and agendas, actively participates in discussion and asks questions, listens actively and shows understanding by paraphrasing or by acknowledging and building on others’ ideas, volunteers willingly and carries own share of the group’s responsibilities.

Moderate participation (50%): Moderately prepared in advance, takes small part in setting group goals and agendas, participates minimally in discussions, but prefers to let others provide the direction, occasionally asks questions, likely to be absent or late, but informs instructor of this ahead of time.

Inadequate participation (0%): Little or no advance preparation, lets others set and pursue the agenda, observes passively and says little or nothing, fails to ask questions, appears distracted, attendance record is haphazard and inconsistent; and is sometimes absent or late without notice.

Since we will be discussing culturally sensitive issues in class, the classroom must be a safe space in which students are able to express their opinions openly. Discriminatory comments or language of any kind will not be tolerated.
Attendance

Each student is expected to attend all sessions of the course and to participate actively in class discussions. Attendance will be taken every class session by the course instructor. Absences will be penalized according to the CIEE Amsterdam attendance policy outlined below:

1 or 2 absences = complete 1,500 word make-up assignment
3 absences = 10 points deducted from the student’s final grade
4 absences = the student fails the course (F is listed on the transcript)

- If you arrive to class 15+ minutes late, this counts as a ½ absence.
- At all times, you need to inform the instructor – before the start of class – of any absences. Failure to notify the teacher in advance will result in an extra assignment.
- If you are sick (i.e. physically incapable of attending class), you may miss class, but you will have to complete a makeup assignment.
- Going on/returning from a trip are not valid excuses for missing or showing up late to a CIEE class.
- Note about all assignments: Late assignments will be marked down by 1 point (out of 10) for every day the assignment is late. Assignments that are more than 3 days (72 hours) late will not be accepted.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1
Class: 1.1 Introduction to Cross-Cultural Psychology

Readings: None

During the introductory lecture, the instructor will present the course outline and readings to students. Students will be assigned presentation dates and topics. The case study assignment will be discussed in detail and students will be given the three case studies so that they can use the entire semester to prepare this.

Class: 1.2 What is Cross-Cultural Psychology?

Readings:


This topic will briefly engage with the objectives of cross-cultural psychology. Students will be presented with (often competing) definitions of culture, multiculturalism and issues pertaining to individualistic versus collectivistic cultures. Developed cultures in the Global North will be contrasted with developing cultures in the Global South. Students will also need to think through issues relating to race, ethnicity, and class as they relate to power, oppression and privilege.

Week 2
Class: 2.1 Student led seminar

Class: 2.2 Key Theories and Approaches to Cross-Cultural Psychology

Readings:

This topic will cover emic versus etic perspectives in cross-cultural psychology. Students will also delve further into models of individualism versus collectivism as well as learn about indigenous perspectives of cross-cultural psychology.

Week 3
Class: 3.1 Instructor led seminar
Readings:
Tedx Talk: How Culture Drives Behaviours by Julien S. Bourrelle

Class: 3.2 Student led seminar
Response Paper One Due

Week 4
Class: 4.1 Key Psychological Theorists: Psychology and the Social Context
Readings:
This topic will briefly engage with original work from two key psychological theorists (Albert Bandura and Urie Bronfenbrenner) that pay particular attention to the way psychology and the social context interact. The intention is to demonstrate various ways of thinking in terms of human psychology and cultural interactions such that students understand how psychological wellbeing is always situated in (cultural) contexts.

Class: 4.2 Instructor led seminar

Week 5
Class: 5.1 Cognition and Culture
Readings:

This topic uses Jean Piaget’s theory of cognition as a starting point to understand how cognition
differs across cultures. Cognition is investigated in terms of thinking models and perceptions and from various cross-cultural perspectives.

**Class: 5.2 Instructor-led seminar**

**Week 6**

**Class: 6.1 Student led seminar**

Response Paper Two Due

**Class: 6.2 Intelligence and Culture**

**Readings:**

- Reynolds, C. R. (2000). Why is psychometric research on bias in mental testing so often ignored?. Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 6(1), 144.

This topic focuses on intelligence and the way it is normed in Western frameworks. Intelligence, typically measured by an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) through various psychometric tests such as the Raven's Matrices is a controversial topic in cross-cultural psychology. Using South Africa and the implications of its Apartheid system as an example, this topic demonstrates how IQ measurements can present apparent differences in intelligence across cultural groups, despite this difference being unlikely.

**Week 7**

**Class: 7.1 Instructor led seminar**

**Class: 7.2 Student led seminar**

**Week 8**

**Class: 8.1 Psychological Development and Culture**

**Readings:**


This topic focuses on childhood development. It begins with a review of the various psychological theories on childhood development, and Erik Erickson’s own thoughts about the application of his theory to other cultures. This is followed by cross-cultural understandings of childhood psychosocial development as well as some examples of the implications of low-income contexts for healthy childhood development.

**Class: 8.2 Instructor led seminar**

**Week 9**

**Class: 9.1 Student led seminar**

Response Paper Three Due
Week 10

Class: 10.1 Instructor led seminar

Class: 10.2 Student led seminar

Week 11

Class: 11.1 Gender Identity and Culture

Readings:


This topic investigates the ways that gender is constructed differently across cultures. Students will learn about the differences between sex (biological) and gender (a social construct) and the implications of the way gender is constructed for psychological wellbeing. Children's constructions of gender across cultures are used to demonstrate the cross-cultural differences in the making of gender. The implications of the way gender is constructed are considered in four contexts: in the context of gender identity disorder across cultures, in the context of violence and HIV/AIDS in South Africa, in the context of men's health practices and in the context of the lecturer's own work in the area of female-perpetrated crime and male victims.

Class: 11.2 Student led seminar

Response Paper Four Due

Week 12

Class: 12.1 Violence, Gender, Race and Culture

Readings:


This topic considers the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Psychological Disorders that is primarily based on Eurocentric and Americanized conceptions of psychological health. While culture is taken into account in the DSM, there are still some controversial issues relating to diagnosis and assessments and these are engaged with along with recommendations for psychologists to take into account when working cross-culturally. This topic also considers whether certain psychological disorders are culture-bound and uses eating disorders and Hikikomori (a Japanese syndrome), as examples.


Drawing on social constructionist and feminist theories, this topic demonstrates how violence emerges differently as a function of the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. This culturally-bound conceptualization of violence allows for the demonstration of how violence, in particular contexts, is more regular in the lives of minorities. Examples of domestic violence and crime from America and South Africa are used to support this argument.

Class: 12.2 Student led seminar

**Week 13**

Class: 13.1 Doing Cross-Cultural Research

Readings:


The final seminar considers the way cross-cultural psychological research is conducted in practice and outlines issues relating to unequal power relations between researchers and participants, challenges relating to translation and language barriers, inherent biases in psychometric tests developed in Global North contexts and researcher reflexivity. The instructor will use her own work across various cultural contexts to deepen student’s understandings of the ethics, complexities and challenges of doing cross-cultural research.

Class: 13.2 Student led seminar

Response Paper Five Due

**Week 14**

Class: 14.1 Site visit to Tropenmuseum

Class: 14.2 Cross-Cultural Psychology Final Examination

**Course Materials**

**Readings**

All the required readings (along with a complete bibliography) will be posted on Canvas under Files.


Morrell, R., Jewkes, R., & Lindegger, G. (2012). Hegemonic masculinity/masculinities in South Africa: Culture,


Reynolds, C. R. (2000). Why is psychometric research on bias in mental testing so often ignored?. Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 6(1), 144.


**Online Resources**

2. Ted Talk: The Danger of a Single Story by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

**Media Resources**