

**Psychology 355  
Psychology and Culture**

**Section 03 (MWF 11:00-11:50 ASH 2119)**

**Section 04 (MWF 2:00-2:50 ASH 2146)**

**Winter 2017**

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**Office Hours:** M,W 1:00-2:00, and by appointment.

**Texts:**

1. Matsumoto, D., & Juang, L. (2013) (6th ed.). *Culture and psychology*. Belmont, CA : Wadsworth.
2. *Online readings in psychology and culture* (<http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/>)

**Course Description**

This course deals with the manner in which culture (broadly defined as the human-made part of our environment) interacts with, influences, and is influenced by psychological processes and structures.

Until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the study of culture was generally neglected in American psychology. The assumption has been that, since psychology deals with issues that are common to all human beings, the attempt to understand human thought and behavior in terms of specific contexts and social environments is one that should be left to anthropologists and sociologists. However, this assumption has been challenged in recent years, and a number of sub-disciplines and interdisciplinary approaches have emerged (e.g., cultural and cross-cultural psychology).

The main purpose of this course is to:

1. Introduce you to the study of culture and its interaction with ecological and psychological processes.
2. Introduce you to the concept of ethnocentrism, and demonstrate that many of our beliefs, values, and explanations of social events are the result of our implicit assumption that the world is as we personally think it (or wish it) to be.
3. Explain how psychology becomes a different theoretical and methodological discipline when cultural influences are taken into consideration.
4. Help you develop an appreciation for the diversity that we observe in human behavior, but, at the same time, acknowledge that there may be similarities in our behavior that attest to our common humanity and to the possibility that it transcends all cultural experience.

This course fulfills the “World Perspectives” requirement in the General Education Curriculum by:

1. Examining the interaction between individual and group behavior and the physical and social environment in a variety of national cultures.
2. Examining a number of perceptual, cognitive, and behavioral phenomena in various cultures around the world.
3. Exploring psychological similarities and differences among various cultural groups.

The General Education Curriculum at GVSU requires that this course train students in the skills of critical thinking and student collaboration. Critical thinking includes the ability to examine and evaluate ideas, and collaboration involves the process of working together to achieve a shared objective. Descriptions of how these skills will be achieved in this course appear in the next few paragraphs.

Your final grade in this course will be based on your performance on three examinations, one written assignment, and two group projects. There will be a total of 180 points possible. The total number of points gained (out of a possible 180) will be converted to a percentage and final grades will be assigned in the usual manner (93% and above for an A, 90-92% for an A-, 87-89% for a B+, 83-86% for a B, 80-82% for a B-, and so on). The written assignment will be worth 20 points and will be scored in a **credit/half-credit/no credit (0/10/20 points)** fashion. Each of the group projects will be worth 5 points. More details on these projects will follow. **Each** of the three examinations will count for 50 points, and will consist of 50 multiple choice questions based on the reading assignments and class discussions. Each examination will focus only on the material of the course segment immediately preceding it. The third examination will be on the day of the regularly-scheduled final exam (but will **not** be cumulative).

For your **written assignment**, please select any three (3) papers from the list of selected readings that follows. All of these readings are found in **text 2, but they must be from the list appearing below**. Read these carefully, and write a summary and critique of each reading, emphasizing the issues that you consider most interesting or important along with your reasons for considering them so. **The minimum length of this assignment is three (3) pages—at least one page for each article**. The paper must be typed and double-spaced. For each article, please include its title and the name(s) of its author(s) before your critique. Other details of style, along with additional references, are not important or necessary. The assignment will be due in class on **4/10**. Late or e-mailed assignments will not be accepted unless there exist compelling health or personal reasons. Please keep in mind that failure to follow these instructions for the preparation of your paper may result in a lower grade.

### Selected Readings from Text 2 for Written Assignment

#### Location in website and paper author name(s)

- Unit 2, Subunit 2.1 (G. Hofstede)
- Subunit 2.2 (P. B. Smith)
- Subunit 2.2 (J. He & F. van de Vijver)
- Unit 3, Subunit 3.1 (A. M. Padilla)
- Subunit 3.1 (J. P. Chu & S. Sue)
- Unit 4, Subunit 4.1 (J. Altarriba, D. M. Basnight, & T. M. Canary)
- Subunit 4.2 (C-Y Chiu)
- Subunit 4.3 (R. J. Sternberg)
- Subunit 4.4 (R. McCrae)
- Subunit 4.4 (A.T. Church & M. S. Katigbak)
- Unit 5, Subunit 5.3 (J. H. Liu)
- Subunit 5.3 (R. V. Levine)
- Subunit 5.4 (J. Adamopoulos)
- Unit 6, Subunit 6.1 (H. Keller)
- Subunit 6.1 (R. P. Rohner & A. Khaleque)
- Subunit 6.3 (J. Georgas)

For the **group projects**, each student will be assigned to a small group of 3-4 individuals. Please consult the course site on Blackboard for the number of your group and for information on how to contact the other group members. You will be responsible for arranging the two group meetings on the days designated in the syllabus. Please look at the schedule on the next page for tentative dates during which group members will meet, discuss, evaluate, and write about an issue of importance to the subject matter of the course. The topics will be provided on Blackboard about a week before each meeting.

**The written reports (ONE copy per group) must be at least two pages of text and must summarize the main arguments and ideas from the group discussion. In addition, they must include the group number, the names of all assigned group members, and the names of any group members who did not participate in the discussion and/or writing of the report. Please keep in mind that this is supposed to be a collaborative experience.**

Class attendance and participation are, of course, strongly encouraged, and may make a difference in your final grade (especially in borderline cases). You will be expected to have done the assigned readings in advance of each class and to be prepared to participate in class discussions.

## Tentative Schedule, Topic Outline, and Assignments

|                 |                                                                     |                   |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1/9-1/20        | Introduction to culture & behavior                                  | Text 1 (ch. 1)    |
| <b>1/16</b>     | <b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—no class</b>                         |                   |
| 1/23-1/25       | Goals & methods of cross-cultural psychology                        | Text 1 (ch. 2)    |
| 1/27-2/8        | Culture, perception, cognition, and the concept of intelligence     | Text 1 (ch. 8)    |
| <b>2/10</b>     | <b>Exam 1</b>                                                       |                   |
| 2/13-2/17       | Culture & development                                               | Text 1 (3, 4)     |
| 2/20-2/24       | Culture & gender                                                    | Text 1 (ch. 7)    |
| <b>2/27</b>     | <b>GROUP MEETINGS FOR PROJECT 1</b>                                 |                   |
| <b>3/3</b>      | <b>GROUP REPORTS FOR PROJECT 1 DUE IN CLASS</b>                     |                   |
| 3/1-3/15        | Culture, language, and communication                                | Text 1 (ch. 10)   |
| <b>3/5-3/12</b> | <b>SPRING BREAK</b>                                                 |                   |
| <b>3/17</b>     | <b>Exam 2</b>                                                       |                   |
| 3/20-3/24       | Personality                                                         | Text 1 (ch. 6)    |
| <b>3/27</b>     | <b>GROUP MEETINGS FOR PROJECT 2</b>                                 |                   |
| <b>3/31</b>     | <b>GROUP REPORTS FOR PROJECT 2 DUE IN CLASS</b>                     |                   |
| 3/29-4/10       | Culture, social cognition, and emotion                              | Text 1 (ch. 5, 9) |
| <b>4/10</b>     | <b>Written assignment due in class</b>                              |                   |
| 4/12-4/21       | Culture and interpersonal behavior                                  | Text 1 (ch. 14)   |
| <b>4/26</b>     | <b>Exam 3 at 10:00-11:50 for Section 03 (meets MWF 11:00-11:50)</b> |                   |
| <b>4/24</b>     | <b>Exam 3 at 2:00-3:50 for Section 04 (meets MWF 2:00-2:50)</b>     |                   |