



Society for the Teaching of Psychology (APA Division 2)

OFFICE OF TEACHING RESOURCES IN PSYCHOLOGY (OTRP)

Department of Psychology, University of St. Thomas, 3800 Montrose Blvd., Houston, TX 77006

Culture, Development, and Health (481-346)

Professor: Dr. Regan A. R. Gurung
Class time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3.30 - 4.45 p.m. MAC 217
Office: MAC-C318 465-5679
Office Hours: Tues/Thur 12.15-1.15 p.m.; Wed: 10.00a.m.– 3.00 p.m. AND/OR by appointment
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The Course

Understanding differences among cultural communities, whether of ethnicity, race, religion, gender or socioeconomic status, is critical to understanding attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. The communities in which children are raised differ markedly, and these can affect physical growth, aspirations, abilities, adjustment and worldview. Socio-cultural differences correspondingly impact many areas of our lives; what we eat and drink, our lifestyles and our health. This course examines how socio-cultural settings in America influence development, health beliefs, and health behaviors. Through a study of culture, you will have the opportunity to become more aware of the diversity around you and develop an increased understanding and tolerance of attitudes and viewpoints different from your own.

A note on my approach in this class: In contrast to many other courses in which we tend to accumulate facts and then present them in an exam, I have engineered this class to be more experiential in nature. You will do a majority of your learning from class discussions of the readings, and your classmates' comments, conversation, and anecdotes. Everything we talk about that illuminates cultural differences is critical. The partition of grades reflects this philosophy. An exam is only one measure of learning and only complements in-class experiences.

This course is designed for junior and senior level students and serves as an elective course in both the Human Development and Psychology majors. It also satisfies University Ethnic Studies and Writing Emphasis requirements.

Key goals of this class are to help you understand:

- The extent to which psychology, behavior, and health is culture-specific,
- The meaning of 'culture', and to examine your own personal culture,
- The cross-cultural utility of theories of human development, and
- How cultures vary in health behaviors, and how this affects mortality and morbidity.

Required Readings: Books

Edut, O., & Walker, R. (1998). *Adios, Barbie: Young Women Write About Body Image and Identity*. New York: Seal Press.

Fadiman, A. (1998). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux.

Galanti, G. (1997). *Caring for patients from different cultures: Case studies from American Hospitals*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Mehl-Medrona, L. (1997). *Coyote Medicine: Lessons from Native American healing*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Required Readings on Electronic Reserve

Loustaunau, M. O., & Sobo, E. J. (1997). *The cultural context of health, illness, and medicine* (pp. 49-71). Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey. [listed as L & Sobo on schedule]

Matsumoto, D. (2000) *Culture and Psychology: People around the world* (2nd Ed.). Wadsworth: USA.[listed as Matsumoto on schedule – Chapter 2]

A Framework for this Course

I have structured this course to reach many different learning styles and to provide multiple opportunities for enhancing understanding. This means going BEYOND multiple-choice exams to demonstrate your learning. I provide different opportunities for you to engage the material, AND provide rewards for it. Take the time to utilize the different resources provided and you will do well. Focus on the process and do not get bogged down by the outcome.

Learning Engagement Opportunities: There are a variety of course activities designed to help you to comprehend, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the major links between culture, development and health, and to apply them to everyday life. Participation in the class will consist of many different components. You will have an opportunity to engage in each one. There is a lot more to learning than just reading a textbook or article.

Successful learning often involves sharing your personal views and opinions, listening to and digesting the views and opinions of others, and engaging in an exchange of ideas. Attendance is critical to this process, although *be aware that participation goes beyond mere physical presence*.

I. Book Clubs. You will be divided up into groups of 4 to give you a chance to share your reactions to each of the 4 required books. A short Book Club Report (BCR) of your discussion will accompany each. You will take on one of these roles during the Book Club meeting and get a chance to try each one during the course of this semester:

- a. **Discussion leader:** You will be responsible for providing the group with a brief summary of the reading and a comfortable environment for your group members to share their reactions, comments, and criticisms to the assigned readings. This should involve the preparation of questions that will stimulate an exchange of ideas.
- b. **Group Synthesizer:** You will be responsible for summarizing the main points of view expressed by your group members and the flow of the discussion. What points or parts of the reading did group members feel strongly about, disagree with, get excited by, or consider most novel?
- c. **Point-counterpoint:** You are responsible for focusing on information, ideas, or examples from other readings (or cultural groups or stereotypes people may have) that goes against the main point presented in the reading.
- d. **The Big Picture:** You are responsible for identifying the main themes of the book and relating them explicitly to the main goals of the class. Provide examples to support your points.

II. Reaction Papers (RPs): I will conduct in (and out-of-class) activities that will illustrate and expand on some of the issues presented in the readings. You are to report on whichever of the following apply: What *you think* the activity was meant to demonstrate, what it *actually* demonstrated for you, and how it made you feel. You will also be expected to write an RP on one of the visiting speakers. See schedule for RP due dates.

Reaction Papers and Book Club write-ups are to be approximately 1 page long (single-spaced), and are due at the beginning of the next class period after the activity/speaker (except for (a.), which is due at the end of class on the day of discussion). This class is designated as a Writing Emphasis (WE) class. There will be 6 writing assignments. All write-ups will be evaluated on a scale of 0-5 (5 – Exceptional; 4 – Good; 3 – Satisfactory; 2- Unsatisfactory; 0 – Absent, if you are not present in class on the day of an activity or discussion). *The average of the BCR and RP scores will represent your Class Participation.*

III. Comment and Criticisms Cards (CCCs): I will hand out a set of index cards for your use for every required reading. To enable you to get the most of the readings, stimulate discussion, and prepare for class, write down 1-2 main questions about each reading/the main points, and/or your main criticisms. I will invite some of you to read your cards in every class, and collect cards after each class to get a sense of what you got from the readings. The default grade for each card is satisfactory (if you did not do the reading and/or provide thoughtful questions, or did not hand in your card, that would be unsatisfactory). A card is due for each non-Book Club reading assignment.

IV. Contact: You will also have the opportunity to interview a member of a culture that is different from your own, and write a **Final Report** that documents your rationale for choosing the interviewee and a summary of the person's cultural background and health behaviors. You will be given a worksheet/list of questions to guide you. Grades will reflect the degree to which each question was addressed.

V. Group Presentations: You will be required to choose a cultural group and provide a brief overview of the main belief system and health behaviors. Then, using one of the formats below, you will compare and contrast the beliefs, development, behaviors, and health of the chosen group with another cultural group. Groups will be formed based on common interests and pragmatic concerns (where you live, etc.) to facilitate group meetings. I will provide an entire class period for group planning, early in the semester. The following are only possibilities. Topics and formats not on this list are also acceptable; set up a time to discuss it with me.

1. *Theater:* Write and put on a play, skit, one-act production that clearly demonstrates key concepts from the course.
2. *Web Site:* Design and publish a web page resource with links and descriptions of a major aspect (s) of this course.
3. *Multi-media sampling:* Collect print images or television/movie clips that illustrate cultural differences in health behaviors
4. *Food-Fest:* Different cultural groups have different eating habits. Complement an in-depth description of food differences with prepared samples from the cultures.
5. OTHER.....(see what you can come up with).

Every member in the group will be asked to evaluate the extent and quality of their own contribution and those of the other group members both a week before and after the presentation. Group members will all get a similar grade UNLESS there are major discrepancies in individual contributions as indicated by self-evaluations. Members in danger of getting a lower grade than the group due to social loafing or for other reasons will be notified in time if possible. In addition the class will provide a rating of the presentation. Presentations grades will consist of a weighted average of class ratings and mine.

VI. Exams: The quiz will consist of multiple choice, short answers, and an essay. Exams will test for your comprehension of key terms and theories, and have you analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the material from the readings and from class. The TAKE-HOME essay question will be provided the last day of class and will be due on TUESDAY, 18th December, 2001. Study questions and guides will be provided in a timely manner for each exam.

Extra-credit opportunities may arise on occasion throughout the course (e.g., attendance at a lecture).

<u>Participation</u>	30%	<u>QUIZ</u>	15%
<u>CCCs</u>	5%	<u>Take-home Essay</u>	20%
<u>Contact:</u>	15%	<u>Group Presentation</u>	15%

How does it all add up?

THERE IS NO CURVE! My philosophy on grading is that individual effort rather than competition results in a more productive and successful learning environment. **LATE POLICY:** You lose 1 point for every day the paper is late. I count weekend days too.

A	93%	C	70%
A/B	88%	D	65%
B	83%	F	<<<60% [near impossible]
B/C	78%		