



Psychology 381
Psychology of Culture
Lecture: 1:40 -2:55 TTH
Fall 2008
Prerequisite: PSY 101

Professor: Jill M. Norvilitis
Office: CLAS C 318
Phone: 878-3145
Office Hours: TH 8:00-9:15
and W 9:15 to 11:00
e-mail: norviljm@buffalostate.edu
Web address: <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/norviljm>

Text:

Matsumoto, D., & Juang, L. (2008). *Culture and psychology* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Course Description:

Welcome to Psych of Culture! I hope that you enjoy this course as much as I do. So much of psychology is based on Americans with the assumption that the rest of the world looks just like we do. We will be challenging that idea this semester. We will explore the dimensions along which culture varies and the issues involved in conducting cross-cultural research. In addition, we will examine the specific differences and similarities between cultures in areas such as the self and personality; conformity, obedience, and aggression; attachment and child-rearing; abnormal psychology and culture-bound syndromes; and interpersonal and group relations.

In addition to the great stuff you will be learning in class, you will also be participating in a volunteer/service learning opportunity. You will spend about 20 hours working in groups of three with refugees through Journey's End in a project to teach them financial literacy. Refugees arrive in this country often not even knowing the difference between a quarter and a dime. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to learn about another culture first hand while providing a valuable service to a population in need.

The objectives for the course are as follows:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the dimensions along which cultures vary and the implications of this for understanding cultural differences.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, and prejudice of people from other cultures.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of how well Western psychological principles and research hold up in other cultures.
- Students will gain first hand experience with a family from another culture.
- Students will apply the information from the first three objectives to their understanding of the family with whom they have been matched.

Service Learning Component

We are working with Journey's End, one of a handful of service providers for refugees in the community. Every year, about 1000 refugees arrive in our community. Among many things that are new is our economic system. For just a few families, we are going to help with that. In the second week of class, you will receive an orientation to Journey's End and will complete a volunteer application form.

Following that, you will work in groups of three that we will identify together in class. Each group of three will be matched with a family, individual, or couple.

Then, over the course of the semester, you will meet with your family six times. During each of those sessions, you will spend some time talking to them about who they are, their culture, and their thoughts on adjusting to this culture. The other half of the session will cover a financial literacy topic. Before each session, we will talk about the curriculum for that session in class. Never fear! We will go over what you need to do ahead of time and these are all topics with which you are familiar (you won't need to discuss the stock market). You should plan on each session taking two or three hours, for a total of about 18 hours.

Student Evaluation:

Examinations: Three exams will be administered during the course. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short essay-type questions. The exams will not be cumulative and will be worth a total of 70 percent of your final grade. No make-up exams will be given, except under extreme circumstances and with written documentation. There is also a no credit/partial credit/full credit world geography assignment to be completed before the first exam. Students who do not complete the assignment will have 20 points taken off of their first exam grade. Students who do not complete the assignment well will have 10 points taken off. Students who complete the assignment correctly will not have their exam grades adjusted at all. This assignment will be explained in class.

Service Learning: The remaining 30 percent of the grade will be based on the service learning component.

Journal Entries: Fifteen percent of the grade will be based on 6 two-page journal entries. Each journal entry will answer two questions: 1) What happened at the most recent session? and 2) How does your interaction with the family fit with what has been discussed in class since the last journal entry? For this second question, you will choose one topic from class and apply it to the family. For instance, if we discussed ethnocentrism in class, you might choose to write about how your own ethnocentric lenses affect your view of the family. Due dates for these entries are noted on the class schedule.

Research Paper: The second 15 percent will be based on a 6-9 page paper about your experience and the psychological needs of refugees. You will use 4-5 journal articles to examine this issue from a scientific perspective. The end result will be a paper that blends your observations with psychological research. You must use APA style for citations and references, but you may write this paper in the first person. You must attach the journal article first pages to the paper or 10 points will be deducted from the final paper grade. **The paper is due on November 18.**

Service Learning Attendance Policy: You are expected to attend all sessions with your matched family. If you miss a session, you will receive a zero on the corresponding journal assignment. If you miss more than two sessions, your course grade will also be lowered by one grade per additional session missed.

Class Attendance Policy: Although attendance and participation are not mandatory, attendance will be kept and it will be taken into account when determining borderline final grades (i.e., whether a 79.4% is a C+ or B-). The exception to this rule is that attendance is mandatory for guest speakers. If a student is absent on the day of a guest speaker, five percent will be taken off of the next exam grade.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is based on the principles of honesty and individual responsibility for actions. Violations of academic integrity include cheating on exams, plagiarism, falsifying data, or engaging in behavior that inhibits someone else's academic performance. This type of behavior will not be tolerated and may result in failure of the course. If you are unclear about the policy regarding academic integrity at BSC, you are encouraged to read the college's official policy, which can be found at <http://www.buffalostate.edu/academicstandards/x564.xml>.

Tentative Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Topic</u>
8/26	Ch. 1	Course Introduction/An Introduction to Cross-Cultural Psychology
8/28		continued
9/2		Rain in a Dry Land
9/4		Journey's End Orientation Session
9/9	Ch. 2	Evaluating Cross-Cultural Research
9/11		continued
9/16		Ethnocentrism, Stereotypes, and Prejudice
9/18	Ch. 3	Enculturation
9/23	Ch. 4	Culture and Development
9/25		continued
9/30		Exam 1
10/2	Ch. 5	Culture and Cognition
10/7		continued
10/9	Ch. 6	Culture and Gender
10/14	Ch. 7	Culture and Physical Health; Session 1 Journal Due
10/16	Ch. 8	Culture and Emotion
10/21	Ch. 9	Culture, Language, and Communication; Session 2 Journal Due
10/23		continued
10/28		continued; Session 3 Journal Due
10/30		Exam 2
11/4	Ch. 10 & 13	Personality, self, and identity
11/6		continued; Session 4 Journal Due
11/13		continued
11/18	Ch. 11	Abnormal Psychology; Paper Due
11/20		continued; Session 5 Journal Due
11/25	Ch. 14	Social Behavior
12/2		continued; Session 6 Journal Due
12/4	Ch. 17	Culture and Organizations

Final Exam: 1:40 Thursday, December 11

Journey's End Financial Literacy Program

Welcome to the volunteer-service learning component of the course. A brief outline of the VSL section follows:

In the second week of class, I will show the film *Rain in a Dry Land*, about refugees arriving in this country, on Tuesday. There will be an in-class orientation session for Journey's End the following session. Students will complete and turn in application forms for background checks on the day of that orientation. Students will be given a copy of the financial literacy curriculum to cover with their families.

Students will be grouped in threes. Students are not to go to families' homes alone. Sessions will begin in the fourth week of classes.

Session 1: Go through the provided booklet to determine a starting place for the sessions. Evaluate the families' financial literacy. Do they understand the denominations of money? Do they have a bank account? Etc.

Session 2: This session is optional depending on preexisting knowledge. If necessary, cover denominations. Bring in either play money and demonstrate how many coins equal a dollar, etc.

Session 3: Budgeting: Again using play money, determine the amount of monthly income. Place money for each necessary expense (rent, food, utilities) into different envelopes to demonstrate how to budget.

Session 4: Cover pitfalls of money in this country: rent-a-centers, check cashing stores, phone solicitors. Also discuss solutions to this: financial goal-setting, bank accounts, the do-not-call registry.

Session 5: Go grocery shopping together. Students should plan to purchase a few things to demonstrate comparison shopping, how to buy produce by the pound, etc. Help family do the same.

Session 6: Set financial goals. For what would they like to save money? What are some ways to do this? Impress upon them that financial institutions are insured and explain what this means. Talk about the West Side Housing matching funds for savings and banks in the area that do not have minimum balances.

Session 7: Go to a bank and set up an account (checking or savings). Once this is done, go through—in detail—the process to deposit and withdraw money. If a checking account, demonstrate how to balance the account. Impress upon them that having checks does not equal having money in the account. Finally, go over issues for the future. This includes the need to get a digital converter for the television. Need to continue to save and budget. Cover balancing a bank account again to solidify gains.