PSY 740: Culture and Mental Health  
Clinical Psychology Graduate Seminar  
Spring 2008  
Department of Psychology, Miami University Ohio  
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Vaishali Raval, PhD  
Office & hours: Psychology Building 308, Tues & Wed 11 am-12 pm or by appointment  
Email: ravalvv@muohio.edu  
Class time: Thursday 9:00 am- noon  
Class Location: Psychology Building room 343

Course Description and Objectives: This graduate seminar brings together intra- and interdisciplinary perspectives on the role of culture in understanding human behavior and pathology. Readings are drawn from cultural psychology, and psychological/psychiatric anthropology that emphasize the centrality of culture in understanding psychopathology, as well as from clinical, community, and counseling psychology that focus on clinical practice with individuals from diverse socio-cultural groups (formed through the intersecting influences of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation). The broader aims of this course are to familiarize students with interdisciplinary perspectives on culture and psychopathology, and facilitate the development of “cultural competence” in research and clinical practice.

The specific goals of this course include: a) to deeply and meaningfully explore what “culture” is and why it might matter in understanding human behavior, b) to contemplate on the position that “helping professions” such as clinical psychology and psychiatry might be so deeply rooted in Caucasian middle-class culture that perceiving individuals from other groups through the lenses of contemporary psychology/psychiatry could lead to a highly inadequate and erroneous understanding, c) to begin to be aware of one’s own unarticulated attitudes and assumptions towards individuals from other cultures, and examine how they might impact one’s interactions with them, and d) to explore ways to integrate theoretical knowledge, debates, and dilemmas about the cultural basis of the profession and cultural differences in psychopathology into clinical practice (e.g., What do you do when a client from another culture is sitting across from you, and you are expected to “help?”).

Required Text:  

Recommended:  
**Course Evaluation:**

1) **Class participation (10%):** The format of the course is that of a seminar, and I encourage each of you to participate actively. The class time is an opportunity to reflect on and critically evaluate the material you will be reading each week.

2) **Response journal (15%):** Please keep a record of your responses including your feelings, thoughts, reactions, and observations with respect to class discussions, readings, assigned activities, or relevant experiences outside the course. You may examine the effect of course material on your assumptions and knowledge about the role of culture, your work with clients, or your everyday interactions with others from a different culture/religion/socio-economic group. Your response journal should include an individual paper addressing each of the following 10 areas, and 5 entries on topics of your choice:
   - The first /most memorable interaction in a professional setting with an individual /family from a *cultural* background (race, gender, sexual orientation) different from your own.
   - Response to “Of two minds”
   - Response to the documentary film *Movements and Madness*
   - Response to the documentary film *The Color of Fear*
   - Response to the documentary film *In Whose Honor?*
   - Generate as many possible arguments as you can think of FOR and AGAINST the following statement: **As a liberally-minded, generally sensitive, educated and informed human being, I am inherently a “culturally sensitive and aware” person.** (provide examples of situations in which someone who is liberal, sensitive, educated and informed but not culturally sensitive)
   - Generate as many possible arguments as you can think of FOR and AGAINST the following statement: **As a “good” clinician, I am inherently “culturally competent.”** (articulate the ways in which cultural competence encompasses a set of skills beyond good clinical judgment, openness, sensitivity, and awareness; provide examples of situations in which a “good” clinician may not act in culturally competent ways)
   - Your experience of conducting the multicultural interview
   - Your definition of cultural competence
   - Reflection: How and what has changed for you as a person after participating in this course?

3) **Leading class discussion (10%):** Each of you will choose one topical area, and will lead the class discussion that week. You are not required to, but you can choose 1-2 articles from the literature pertaining to the topic covered that week for class discussion (in addition to or as a substitute for some of the assigned readings for that week). You will prepare a) a brief summary of the assigned readings to present to the class, and b) a list of questions for class discussion.

4) **Media analysis (10%):** Each of you will select a film or another form of media (television, music, literary fiction) about a specific cultural group/s. Discuss how and what you learned about the relevance of culture in understanding human behavior, what you learned about individuals from a specific cultural group, and/or what you learned about your own cultural background and how it might contribute to the way you view the world and interact with others. Each of you will present your media analysis to the class, and provide a written summary of your presentation to
the instructor on the day of your presentation. Some examples of relevant films are: The Namesake, Monsoon Wedding, Tsotsi, Babel, Bend it like Bekham, The Joy Luck Club, Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan, Son of the Bride, Anna and the King, Lost in Translation, Do the Right Thing, Crash, A Class Divided, First Person Plural.

5) **Multicultural interview (15%)**: Each of you will conduct a multicultural interview (protocol provided) with a student volunteer, write-up the interview in the format provided, and submitted it to the instructor. Also, there will be a designated class time for you to share what you learned from the experience with your classmates.

6) **Final Paper (40%)**: The paper must be clearly-written, well-organized, in APA format, and approximately 15-20 pages double spaced in length. Choose one of the following, or any other relevant topic after consultation with the instructor:
   a) Literature review and critique focusing on one of the following:
      - Relevance and meaningfulness of the DSM-IV-TR across cultures
      - Your response to the anthropological critic that helping professions are so deeply rooted in Western culture that viewing individuals from other cultural groups through the lenses of contemporary psychology/psychiatry could lead to a highly inadequate and erroneous understanding
      - At the end of the course, your advice to the clinician working with diverse cultural groups
      - Review the relevant literature concerning a specific group of psychiatric disorder in one culture or across cultures, and propose research questions for further investigation
      - Review the relevant literature concerning cultural competence and clinical practice
      - Review the relevant literature concerning minority mental health in United States (with a particular focus)
   b) Case-study: Examine a clinical case of a client you have seen in the context of class discussions and readings, articulate challenges presented by this case, and ways in which you addressed them, or would now address them based on the reading and reflections from this class.

**Course Expectations:**
1. Attendance is required for all class meetings. Please inform the instructor of an absence prior to the class. If a religious /cultural holiday falls on a class day, and if you plan to be absent from class, please let the instructor know in advance.
2. Assignments are due in class as indicated on the syllabus. Extensions may be requested in advance.
3. It is expected that all students will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. Information from response journals that are shared in class should be treated as confidential, as well as information about any clinical cases that may come up in class discussions, and individuals that you interview for the multicultural interview component of the course.
4. **Academic misconduct:** It is expected that you will adhere to all Miami University guidelines regarding academic misconduct (see part five of the Miami Student Handbook for details).
5. **Grading scheme:**
   - 90-100 pts = A
   - 80-89 pts = B
   - 70-79 pts = C
Class Schedule and Readings

Week 1 (Thurs. Jan 17): “Culture” in psychology and the social sciences (Cross-cultural versus Cultural psychology): Is culture “outside” or “inside” the person?


Recommended if not already read:


Further reading:


Week 2 (Thurs. Jan 24): The helping profession as a cultural construction

Luhmann (2000): Introduction; Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 3-118)

Guest discussant: Dr. Kelly Quinn, Department of American and World Cultures, Miami University

Week 3 (Thurs. Jan 31): The helping profession as a cultural construction cont’d

Luhmann (2000): Chapters 3, 4, and 5 (pp. 119-238)


Week 4 (Thurs Feb. 7): The Diagnostic system as a cultural construction


Mezzich, J. E., Kirmayer, L. J., Kleinman, A., Fabrega, H., Parron, D. L., Good, B. J., Lin, K-M,

Guest discussant: Dr. Cameron Hay-Rolins, Department of Anthropology, Miami University

*Further reading:*

**II) Culture and selective groups of disorders**

### Week 5 (Thurs Feb. 14): Culture and mood disorders: Is depression manifested as somatization in non-western cultures?


*Further reading:*


### Week 6 (Thurs Feb. 21): Culture, Substance Abuse, and Suicide: Why are the suicide rates increasing in Native American youth?


Manson, S. M. (1997). Ethnographic Methods, Cultural Context, and Mental Illness: Bridging Different

**Further reading:**

**FIRST SET OF (FIVE) JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE IN CLASS**

**Week 7 (Thurs Feb. 28): Culture and psychotic disorders: Does Schizophrenia have a better prognosis in developing countries? Why?**

**Further reading:**

**Week 8 (March 6): Culture, trauma, and dissociation: Is dissociation always pathological?**

**THREE MEDIA ANALYSIS PRESENTATIONS**

**Week 9 (Thurs. March 13): Social Psychology of Racial prejudice: How are negative stereotypes automatically activated?**
Dovidio, J., & Gaertner, S. (1998). On the nature of contemporary prejudice: The causes, consequences,


**Further reading:**


---

**Week 10 (Thurs. March 20): SPRING BREAK --NO CLASSES**

---

**Week 11 (Thurs. March 27): Minority experience in United States: race, gender, class, sexual orientation**


**Further reading:**

III) Integrating knowledge into clinical practice: what does it all mean for a clinician?

Week 12 (Thurs. Apr 3): Cultural competence in clinical practice: What does it mean to be “culturally competent?”


FOUR MEDIA ANALYSIS PRESENTATIONS

SECOND SET OF (FIVE) JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE IN CLASS

Week 13 (Thurs. Apr. 10): Cultural competence continued: Are we culturally competent?


Week 14 (Thurs. Apr. 17): Culture, Psychological Assessment, and Psychotherapy


Multicultural interview: in-class reflections

MULTICULTURAL INTERVIEW WRITE-UP DUE
Week 15 (Thurs. April 24): Culture and Psychotherapy
Student Discussant: DAREN DELL CASTILLO
   Chapter 4: Barriers to effective multicultural counseling/therapy (pp. 95-121)
   Chapter 5: Culturally appropriate intervention strategies (pp. 123-149)

Further reading:

Week 16 (Thurs May 1): Integrating academic and experiential knowledge: Reflections
- Is the DSM-IV-TR a relevant and meaningful tool in understanding psychopathology across cultures?
- Is clinical psychology, as a profession, so deeply rooted in Western culture that viewing individuals from other cultural groups through our professional lenses could lead to a highly inadequate and erroneous understanding?
- Which direction should the research in culture and psychopathology take?
- What is cultural competence? (your definition)
- Why is it not sufficient to be a “good” clinician to be “culturally competent?”
- What will you do when a client from a different socio-cultural background is sitting across from you and you are expected to help?
- Literature on cultural competence talks about maintaining a balance between cultural sensitivity and recognizing psychopathology (i.e., avoiding overemphasizing culture at the expense of recognizing psychopathology, as well as underemphasizing cultural influences in understanding psychopathology). How does one go about maintaining such a balance in practice?

THIRD SET OF (FIVE) JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE IN CLASS
Thurs May 8, 2007

FINAL PAPER DUE

Please note that if I make any alterations to this syllabus, I will notify you. Suggestions welcome!