

Culture and Psychology

PSYC 4350-01 | Fall 2019 | 4 credits

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11AM-12:50PM | Melson Hall 218

Professor: Dr. Nisha Gupta

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Office: Melson Hall Office 205

Office Hours: 1-3PM Tuesdays & Thursdays, by appointment only

Course Description:

The field of psychology has increasingly been realizing that it cannot ignore cultural difference. This course provides a basic framework to understand how the psyches of human beings are shaped by sociocultural factors while living in a multicultural society. Readings, lectures, discussions, films, and assignments will be used to deepen your sensitivity to topics such as cultural identity development and worldviews, the psychology of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination, and building cultural competence as students of psychology and citizens of a multicultural society. While the main text for this course emphasizes race and ethnicity, we will also be exploring cultural differences in national origin, gender, social class, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, and ability.

At a historical time when cultural differences are becoming more polarized in the United States, this course also integrates a ‘social advocacy’ approach to the study of multicultural psychology—you are invited to consider what it means to be an “active citizen” in a culturally diverse society, and to engage in efforts towards sociocultural healing and justice. To that end, this class will also focus on building respectful civil discourse and solidarity across difference, as we learn to dialogue together about sensitive societal topics.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Become familiar with multiculturalism and its place in the field of psychology
- Increase their personal self-awareness as cultural beings in a diverse society
- Increase their empathic understanding and appreciation for diversity and difference
- Develop knowledge of how stereotypes, biases, and prejudices develop and impact their interactions in society
- Increase their understanding of how sociocultural contexts influence psychological health
- Practice civil discourse and respectful dialogue across difference
- Develop themselves as ‘active citizens’ in promoting sociocultural healing and justice

Required Readings:

We will be using the following textbook:

Mio, S.J., Barker, L.A., & Domenech Rodriguez, M. M. (2016). *Multicultural Psychology: Understanding Our Diverse Communities* (4th Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Additional articles will be also assigned which are accessible as pdfs on Courseden.

The course goals will be met and evaluated on the basis of the class assignments below.

Evaluation and Grading:

10% Class participation about readings: Every student will be expected to come to each class prepared to contribute 1-2 insights about multicultural psychology that interest them, sparked from the reading material assigned for that day. Sharing your insights from the readings will help us kick off dialogue about the cultural topics that we are exploring together. You are also expected to bring the textbook, and hard copy of the pdf readings, to class.

10% Weekly intellectual journal entries: By Sunday 12AM each weekend, you are required to submit an “intellectual journal entry” on Courseden (1 or 2 pages, double spaced) regarding that week’s course material. For each journal entry, you are expected to do the following:

- (1) Write one original question about multicultural psychology that was inspired by that week’s course material.
- (2) Develop your question further by linking it to theories or concepts from the assigned reading and lectures that week.
- (3) Ground that question with a personal example from your everyday life.

This exercise is meant to help you personally engage with the course material, become critical thinkers, and cultivate curious minds as multicultural psychologists. It will also allow you the opportunity to flush out ideas, thoughts, or questions that you may not have felt comfortable discussing aloud in class. Each journal submission should be submitted on Courseden by 11:59PM Sunday. Any work turned in after this time will receive 50% credit.

30% Midterm exam: There will be a midterm exam that consists of multiple choice and short essay questions. The questions on the exam will draw from material covered in the textbook, supplemental assigned readings, and class lectures, in order to ensure that you have learned and retained the significant concepts of multicultural psychology to that point.

30% Sociocultural healing intervention: You will partner with classmates to develop a “sociocultural healing intervention” and present it to the class during the end of the semester. For this presentation, you are expected to (1) Describe a specific kind of cultural wound that you are concerned about, and cite relevant literature from multicultural psychology when discussing this wound. (2) Propose an intervention that can help heal this cultural wound. You are expected to create your own original idea for an intervention, but can refer to examples of existing interventions that have inspired your idea. (3) Discuss how/where/with whom you could foresee actually implementing your intervention in real life. (4) Evaluate your intervention’s strengths and weaknesses. (5) Discuss how your cultural identities have influenced your approach to this cultural intervention. Presentations should be 20 minutes, with 10 minutes for Q&A. You are expected to submit a one-page handout of your presentation on the day you present. You will be given some time in class to work on this project, but you are mostly expected to collaborate with your partners outside of class throughout the semester to develop this intervention.

20% Multicultural autobiography project: By the last day of class, you are expected to submit a multicultural autobiography about the development of yourself as a cultural being, including your cultural worldview, communication, intersectional identity development, experiences of privilege/oppression, encounters with cultural difference, being an active citizen, etc. It may be helpful

to pinpoint aspects of your cultural development that have emerged due to personal life experiences, family interactions, community/social participation, political events, and the media. Please reflect on your cultural identity across various intersectional domains (i.e. ethnicity/race, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ability). Feel free to submit your narrative in any creative format you would like—be it a traditional paper (10-12 pages double-spaced), graphic memoir/comic book, video, etc. If you choose to submit a non-traditional creative format, please discuss your idea with me by the week following midterms. Across all creative formats, you are expected to integrate psychological concepts and theories from the course readings/lectures when reflecting upon your life experiences. Please email me your project or hand in a hard copy on the last day of class.

Grading Information and Policy:

There are a total of 100 points possible in the course. These 100 points will be used to calculate a percentage grade according to the standard percentage point divisions (see table below):

Grading structure and point scale

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|-----------------------|------------|---|
| 90-100 points | 90% - 100% | A |
| 80 points - 89 points | 80% - 89% | B |
| 70 points - 79 points | 70% - 79% | C |
| 60 points - 69 points | 60% - 69% | D |
| < 60 points | < 60% | F |

Attendance Policy:

Formal attendance will be taken throughout the semester. More than three unexcused absences in the semester will result in a 10% grade drop. Late attendance will also be penalized; three unexcused late arrivals will equal one unexcused absence.

Syllabus

As this document corresponds with a dynamic entity (a class), this syllabus is subject to change.

Semester Schedule:

| Date | Topic | Reading due | Assignment due |
|---------|--|--|--------------------------|
| Th 8/15 | Introduction and syllabus | | |
| T 8/20 | Community-making | Peck: "The true meaning of community." | |
| Th 8/22 | Dialoguing across difference | Bohm: "On dialogue" | Journal 1 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 8/27 | Intro to multicultural psychology | Mio: Chapter 1 | |
| Th 8/29 | Creating sociocultural healing interventions | Finish Mio: Chapter 1 | Journal 2 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 9/3 | Cultural differences in worldviews | Mio: Chapter 3 | |

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| Th 9/5 | Cultural differences in worldviews | Finish Mio: Chapter 3 | Journal 3 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 9/10 | Cultural differences in communication | Mio: Chapter 4 | |
| Th 9/12 | Cultural differences in communication | Finish Mio: Chapter 4 | Journal 4 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 9/17 | Immigrants, refugees, and the acculturation process | Mio: Chapter 5 | |
| Th 9/19 | Immigrants, refugees, and the acculturation process | Finish Mio: Chapter 5 | Journal 5 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 9/24 | Stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and racism | Mio: Chapter 6 | |
| Th 9/26 | Stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and racism | Finish Mio: Chapter 6 | Journal 6 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 9/28 | Stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and racism | White: "Surviving hating and being hated" | |
| Th 10/3 | No class: fall break | | |
| T 10/8 | Midterm review | | |
| Th 10/10 | Midterm exam | | |
| T 10/15 | Cultural identity development | Mio: Chapter 7 | |
| Th 10/17 | Cultural identity development | Tatum. "The complexity of identity: "Who am I?" | Journal 7 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 10/22 | Gender identity development | Lorber: "Night to his day: the social construction of gender." | |
| Th 10/24 | Sexual identity development | Minwalla: "Identity experiences among progressive gay Muslims in North America" | Journal 8 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 10/29 | Religious Identity development | Griffith: "Religious identity status" | |
| Th 10/31 | Writing the Intersectional multicultural autobiography | Pierson: "An autoethnography" | Journal 9 11:59PM Sunday |

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| T 11/5 | Culture and health | Mio: Chapter 8 | |
| Th 11/7 | Culture and mental health | Mio: Chapter 9 | Journal 10 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 11/12 | Culture and mental health | Finish Mio: Chapter 9 | |
| Th 11/14 | Multicultural competence | Mio: Chapter 10 | Journal 11 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 11/19 | Multicultural competence | | |
| Th 11/21 | Class presentations & handouts due (3 groups: social class awareness, undoing Black stereotypes, multiracial education curriculum) | | Extra credit journal 11:59PM Sunday |
| T 11/26 | Thanksgiving break | | |
| Th 11/28 | Thanksgiving break | | |
| T 12/3 | Class presentations & handouts due (3 groups: LGBTQ-inclusive sex education, disability inclusiveness in schools, empathy intervention for immigrant families) | | |
| Th 12/5 | Class presentations & handouts due (2 groups: parents and families of LGBTQ high school students, jewish/muslim interfaith intervention) | | Extra credit journal 11:59PM Sunday |
| S 12/8 | Final multicultural autobiography projects due by 11:59PM Sunday | | Final multicultural autobiography projects due on Courseden 11:59PM Sunday |

Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the **Student Handbook**.

Email Policy

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email.

Accessibility Services

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact **Accessibility Services**.

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement: If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and require assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the Office for Accessibility Services. UWG also provides Accessibility Statements for Technology that you may be required to use for this course.

For more information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, UWG Email, Credit Hour, and UWG Honor Code policies as well as information on Academic Tutoring, Student Services, and Technical Requirements, Privacy Policy, and Accessibility Statements, please see the Common Language for Syllabus document.

Academic Support

The **Center for Academic Success** provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu

The **University Writing Center** assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu

Smarthinking offers online tutoring services and resources (including the Writing Center) for UWG students/instructors in all courses. A link to Smarthinking is available in CourseDen under Resources in the navigation bar.

Here is a great resource of **Student Services** for all students at UWG, whether or not they are taking online courses. This link provides students with most of the information they need. If a student is experiencing distress and needs some help, check out **UWG Cares**.

Additional Support Information

Technical Support: Technical support for CourseDen, as well as the technological requirements, accessibility statements, privacy statements, tutorials, and other information can be found at [Technology Requirements](#).