

PSY 251E CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Course Description

This course has been designed to offer a comprehensive view of Cultural Psychology with its most important phenomena, theoretical dilemmas, research methodologies and applications. We will approach these issues through a continuous navigating between theoretical developments and specific cases or examples, including those from the everydayness of our daily lives.

In order to achieve a meaningful understanding of the concepts involved in the subject, we will combine different materials such as teacher expositions, analysis of scientific articles, student's project presentations, class debates and films. Student's participation will be fostered and required.

The topics to work on include cognition, human development, emotions, the self, ethnic identity and cultural values. In the case of each of these topics, a principal focus of analysis will be whether the particular psychological processes and behaviors in question, at both individual and collective levels, can be explained more fully in culture-specific or universalistic terms, and how they are related to the salient characteristics of the cultural-historical context in which they are embedded. Specific research and intervention projects which run in different contexts (education, work-place, immigration policies) will also be presented and discussed. To give the class a relevant outlook, the bibliography studied will include both classic readings in the discipline as well as emergent new trends.

WEEKLY PLAN AND READINGS:

Week 1: Session 1

Introduction

Week 2: Sessions 2 and 3

1. Cultural Psychology: What is it? (I)

Definition and historical development of Cultural Psychology. Why is a cultural perspective necessary for the study of the human mind? New directions in Cultural Psychology.

Reading:

Kitayama, S. & Cohen, D. (2007): *Handbook of Cultural Psychology*. New York/London: the Guilford Press (Chapter 1)

Week 3: Sessions 4 and 5

1. Cultural Psychology: What is it? (II)

Research Methods in Cultural Psychology

Reading:

Kral, M. J., & Burkhardt, K. J. (2002). A new research agenda for a cultural psychology. *Canadian Psychology*, 43(3) 154-162.

Week 4: Sessions 6 and 7

1. Cultural Psychology: What is it? (III)

Research Methods in Cultural Psychology

Reading:

Ratner, C. (2008). Cultural Psychology and Qualitative Methodology: Scientific and Political Considerations, *Culture & Psychology*, 14 (3), 259-288.

Week 5: **Session 8**

EXAM ESSAY REHEARSAL AND SELF EVALUATION

Session 9

Presentation of topics for the Final Paper and group organization

Week 6: Sessions 10 and 11

2. Culture and Human Development (I)

How does culture influence human development and ontogeny? Cultural differences in child rearing and development.

Reading:

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 & 2.

Week 7: Sessions 12 and 13

2. Culture and Human Development (II)

How does culture influence human development and ontogeny? Cultural differences in child rearing and development.

Reading:

Wertsch, J. V., & Tulviste, P. (1992). L. S. Vygotsky and contemporary developmental psychology. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 548-557.

Week 8

Session 14

Mid term-recapitulation and paper presentation organisation

Session 15

MIDTERM EXAM

Week 9: Sessions 16 and 17

3. Culture, Self and identity

Identity and culture. Different ways of constructing the self among cultures. Sociocultural variables affecting the self.

Readings

Bathia, S. (2011). Narrative inquiry as cultural psychology. Meaning making in a contested global world, *Narrative Inquiry*, 21 (2), 345-352.

Hammack, P. (2010) The cultural psychology of Palestinian youth: A narrative approach, *Culture & Psychology*, 16(4) 507–537

Gilligan, C. (1977). In a different voice: Women's conceptions of the self and of morality. *Harvard Educational Review*, 47, 481-517.

Optional:

Macias-Gomez-Estern, B. & De la Mata, M.L. (2013). Narratives of migration: emotions and the interweaving of personal and cultural identity through narrative, *Culture & Psychology*, 19 (3), 348-368.

Week 10: Sessions 18 and 19

4. Culture and Emotion

Are emotions universal or are they oriented by language and culture?

Readings:

Ratner, C. (2000): A cultural-historical analysis of emotions, *Culture & Psychology*, 6(1): 5–39

Wierzbicka, A. (2004): The English Expressions Good Boy and Good Girl and Cultural Models of Child Rearing, *Culture & Psychology*, 10 (3),251-278.

Optional:

Edwards, D. (1999): Emotion discourse. *Culture & Psychology*, 5(3): 271–291

Week 11: Sessions 20 and 21

5. Culture and cognition

Readings:

Saxe, G.B. (1988). The mathematics of child street vendors. *Child Development*, 59, 1415-1425.

Cubero, M. de la Mata, M. and Cubero, R. (2008). Activity Settings, Discourse Modes and Ways of Understanding: On the Heterogeneity of Verbal Thinking, *Culture & Psychology*, 14 (4), 403-430.

Weeks 12 to 14: Sessions 22 to 26

Students' presentations.

Students can choose their own topics, but some suggestions on Cultural Psychology applied to different intervention contexts are proposed:

The Fifth Dimension, La Clase Mágica and Funds of Knowledge (Education)

Work-places, Communities of Practice

Counseling and psychotherapy

Dealing with diversity: immigration, multicultural societies.

Readings will be selected according to the selected topic

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Students will be evaluated on their ability to articulate and critically apply the terms, concepts and theories from class and readings. The final grade for the course is compromised of the following:

- Participation - 20%
- Midterm rehearsal - 5%
- Midterm Exam - 20%
- Final Exam - 25%
- Final paper-research project - 30%

Participation:

Participation is essential during the class and also outside of it. During the class you will be able to contribute to organized discussions or to introduce new topics relevant to the subject being studied. Suggestions of new materials to discuss or to consider are welcome, as well as activities which could contribute to richen our approach to the course subjects. Also as part of the class you will participate in organizing and presenting contents together with your classmates. This will make classes more dynamic, fostering abilities related to the selection of information, organization of it into time-unities, and social skills related to presenting contents to the others.

Outside of the class you will need to prepare for the classes, reading materials, reflecting about them and becoming ready to have a proper view on the issues being studied.

This participation represents 20% of your grade. It is structured the following way.

- 10% Voluntary class texts presentation (optional to include videos or other audiovisual material)
- 5% Class tasks
- 5% Participation in class debates and discussions

Exams:

Exams will include a mixture of multiple choice, short answer and short essay questions. Students must demonstrate that they have mastered the theories, concepts and terms from class discussions and readings. To prepare for these tests, each reading will be accompanied by a selection of concepts and questions that will facilitate its study.

There will be three different exams:

Mid-term rehearsal: This is an in-class exercise that will allow students to get familiar with the exam format. Its correction will take place during the class, and this test represents 5% of your grade.

Mid-term Exam: In the format indicated above, this test will count as 20% of your final grade.

Final exam: In the same format as before, this exam will count as 25% of your final grade.

Final paper-research project: In this project students will work in groups to explore in depth an object of study selected by them or proposed by the professor. The object of study can take manifold forms, it is open and creativity and innovative ideas are welcome. To analyze it, students can draw from the course readings and/or from additional readings related to the selected topic.

The groups will present their projects in class, during the last 3weeks of classes. However, the professor will give students feedback throughout the semester as the projects are developed.

This project represents 30% of your grade, structured the following way:

Project paper 20%

Project class presentations: 10%

References:

- Bathia, S. (2011). Narrative inquiry as cultural psychology. Meaning making in a contested global world, *Narrative Inquiry*, 21 (2), 345-352.
- Cole, M. (1996): *Cultural Psychology. A once and future discipline*. Harvard: Harvard University Press
- Cubero, M. de la Mata, M. and Cubero, R. (2008). Activity Settings, Discourse Modes and Ways of Understanding: On the Heterogeneity of Verbal Thinking, *Culture & Psychology*, 14 (4), 403-430.
- Edwards, D. (1999): Emotion discourse. *Culture & Psychology*, 5(3): 271–291
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- Kral, M. J., &Burkhardt, K. J.(2002). A new research agenda for a cultural psychology. *Canadian Psychology*, 43(3) 154-162.
- Macias-Gomez-Estern, B. (2013). “And now I am here..., but then we were there”: Space and social positioning in Andalusian migrant's narratives, *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, (ahead-of-print), 1-18.
- Macías, B., García, J., & Sánchez, J.A. (2008). Cultural identity and immigration. In B. Van Oers; E. Elbers; R. Van der Veer and W. Wardekker (Eds.).*The transformation of learning. Perspectives from activity theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Macías, B. Amián, J.G.; Sánchez, J.A. & Marco, M.J. (2010): Literacy and the formation of cultural identity. *Theory & Psychology*, 20 (2), 231-250.
- Macias-Gomez-Estern, B. & De la Mata, M.L. (2013). Narratives of migration: emotions and the interweaving of personal and cultural identity through narrative, *Culture & Psychology*, 19 (3), 348-368.
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- Super, C.M., & Harkness, S. (1986). The developmental niche: A conceptualization at the interface of child and culture. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 9, 545-569.
- Syed, M., & Azmitia, M. (2008). A narrative approach to ethnic identity in emerging adulthood: bringing life to the identity status model, *Developmental Psychology*, 44 (4), 1012-1027.
- Valsiner, J. (2009): *Cultural Psychology Today: Innovations and Oversights*, *Culture & Psychology*, 15 (1), 5-39.
- Vasquez, O. (2002): *La Clase Mágica: Imagining Optimal Possibilities in a Bilingual Community of Learners*. New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum.
- Vygotski, L.S. (1987). *Thinking and speech*. Ed. N. Minick. New York: Plenum.
- Wang, Q. & Brockmeier, J. (2002). Autobiographical remembering as cultural practice: Understanding the interplay between memory, self and culture. *Culture & Psychology*, 8, 45-64.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1991). *Voices of the mind : a sociocultural approach to mediated action*: Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1998). *Mind as action*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wertsch, J.V. (2002). *Voices of collective remembering*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V., & Tulviste, P. (1992). L. S. Vygotsky and contemporary developmental psychology. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 548-557.
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