COURSE SYLLABUS

MULTICULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY
IFSA-Butler Psychology in English Program in Buenos Aires

US Semester Credit Hours: 3
Contact hours: 45
Course Code: PS383-02
Course Length: Semester
Delivery Method: Face to Face
Language of Instruction: English

COURSE DESCRIPTION

*Never look for a psychological explanation unless every effort to find a cultural one has been exhausted* (Margaret Mead, 1959, p. 16).

The purpose of this course is to place psychology in a global perspective, to understand that cultural differences impact behavior, but to explore through a cross-cultural approach those behaviors and mental processes that may be universal. In so doing, we will examine and critically analyze theories associated with multiculturalism and diversity.

This course will examine how “cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, and transform the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotion” (Shweder, 1991, p. 91). It will explore the ways in which psychology is socially constructed and will pay particular attention to the following factors as they influence human development: oppression, language, acculturation, economic concerns, racism and prejudice, sociopolitical factors, child-rearing practices, religious practices, family structure and dynamics, and cultural values and attitudes.

We will explore the meaning of culture and how it affects our thoughts and behavior. Culture is a powerful influence, and often an invisible one. If we can learn to see this invisible force in our own lives, we can come to better understand the role culture plays in our interactions with those who have different cultural expectations. While cultural differences impact our behavior, what sorts of behaviors and thought processes do we share? What commonalities can be found? And what do these observations tell us about the development of multicultural competencies, whatever they may be? Questions such as these will guide our discussions.

This will not be your average lecture course. It is an experiment, designed around learning experiences and opportunities instead of a textbook. The only way to learn is to participate and observe both the behavior of others and your own behavior and thoughts. This unique opportunity in Argentina will allow you to focus on your own culture in contrast to the cultures encountered in Argentina.
COURSE DELIVERY

The course will use discussions, lectures, hands-on projects, and guest speakers to explore multicultural psychology as a psychological practice. The course will specifically compare the student’s own culture and identity to the cultural influences and identity of Argentineans and thus reinforce the idea and importance of using multi-cultural psychology to inform modern psychological practice. Students will complete reflections and assignments based on personal observations and exploration of the various cultural identities present in Buenos Aires.

This course emphasizes tools that can be used for understanding differences in social contexts, including those from intercultural communication, sociology, and urban anthropology.

Students are expected to read or view assigned resources in advance and be prepared to actively discuss them in class. In most meetings, the instructor will overview the topic and then facilitate a group discussion, drawing out relevant themes, following up on specific lines of inquiry, and prompting students’ thoughtful engagement with the topic.

Students are encouraged to bring their prior learning experiences into class discussions (based on experiential learning theory) and to make cognitive connections between this course and others in the IFSA-Butler Buenos Aires Program whenever possible (based on the philosophy of integrative learning).

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Understand and critically analyze theories associated with multiculturalism and diversity.
- Recognize the significance of and examine multicultural issues as they relate to psychological theory, research, and application of psychology principles.
- Stimulate an ongoing process of self-exploration and increase self-awareness around multicultural issues in psychology, with particular attention to personal biases based on one’s individual and multiple group identities that influence one’s behavior and attitudes in intercultural contexts.
- Critically evaluate and critique behavioral science research literature in order to determine whether ideas, methods, and research findings appropriately address relevant multicultural issues.
- Increase ability to attend to one’s own personal biases based on individual and multiple group identities through class discussion, group, experiential exercises, and reflective writing.
- Develop awareness and knowledge of the role of stereotyping, prejudice, and other “isms” and how they interact within the field of psychology.
- Increase critical reflection skills.
- Consider ways to apply learning to future academic and professional situations.
- Make cognitive connections between learning in this course and other learning experiences in the IFSA-Butler Psychology in English Program in Buenos Aires.

COURSE OUTLINE

Supporting readings will be assigned by the instructor for each week.
COURSE SYLLABUS

Part One

Week 1: Introductions and Planning for Learning
- Topic introduction, personal introductions, syllabus review, student and instructor expectations, discussion of connections to student learning plans.
- What is Multicultural Psychology?
- Personal Heritage/Identity Discussion and Assignment

Week 2: Cultural Identities in the United States and Argentina

Week 3: Differences in Worldviews

Assignment: Reflection Paper (Personal Development and Worldview)

Week 4: Theories relating to Multicultural Psychology

Week 5: Immigrants, Refugees and the Acculturation Process

Week 6: Stereotyping, Prejudice, Discrimination and Racism

Week 7: Cultural Identity Development

Study guides for the Mid-term Quiz to be distributed.

Week 8: Review of Part One Course Content

Mid-term Quiz (assessing understanding of course content)

Part Two

Week 9: Socioeconomic Class/Status, Cultural Capital and Opportunity, and the Egalitarian Ethos

Week 10: Culture and Health (including Mental Health), Argentine Tradition of Psychoanalysis

Week 11: Understanding Specific Cultural Groups

Week 12: Understanding Specific Cultural Groups (continued)

Assignment: Team presentations on cultural groups in Argentina

Week 13: Your Changing Worldview

In-class discussion: How is your worldview changing during your study abroad experience? Why?
What might multicultural competencies look like?

Week 14: In-class workshops in preparation for the Final Paper and Presentations

Week 15: Final Papers and Presentations
- Content Review
- Concluding Questions and Comments
ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Reflection Paper: Your Development and Your Worldview

For this assignment, you will write a 3-5 page Reflection Paper in which you describe some of the significant influences on your development. You should pay particular attention to ethnicity, culture, race, migration, religious factors, family values, sociocultural influences, economic factors, language, acculturation, gender, oppression, and racism or privilege. Major goals of this paper are to help students: (a) clarify the impact of culture on identity, life experiences, and world views; (b) identify the major groups and cultures that have contributed to your cultural identity; (c) encourage discussion of stereotypes that may be embedded in cultural experience; and (d) explore how your cultural identity may influence one’s interactions with individuals from other cultural, ethnic, and religious traditions.

Team Presentations: Cultural Groups in Argentina

Students will be assigned to small groups by the instructor. Each group will identify a cultural group of interest from within Argentina and prepare a presentation for the class on that group. Teams must receive approval from the instructor prior to embarking on the project. The following guiding questions are examples of those that will support the required 15-minute presentation: How can the group be described? How might the group view itself and how might others view it? What are its characteristics? How do the issues discussed in this course relate to the group (stereotyping, socioeconomic class, cultural capital, etc.)? What did you know about this group previously and what do you know now? What questions linger for you about this group? The presentation must be oral but may also be supporting by visual aids or distributed written or electronic materials. Each student must contribute to the team presentation in order to receive all possible points. Students will engage in a self-review and a peer review of team participation as part of this assignment.

Final Paper: Cross-cultural Comparison of a Psychological Concept

For this 8- to 10-page paper, you will compare the US and Argentine cultures with respect to multicultural psychology. You will examine comparative research and theory on this concept, examine the relevance of this concept to a non-American culture, critique it when appropriate, discuss how it may need to be modified in order to be of value in this culture, and/or identify an alternative concept that may be more relevant to this culture. Draw in theories of multicultural psychology discussed during this course to support your points. A minimum of four sources excluding those discussed in class must be referenced. The following concepts are likely to be especially relevant to this project:

- Social loafing
- Gender roles
- Cognitive styles
- Locus of control
- Intelligence
- Self-efficacy
- Culture-specific psychological disorders
- Attachment
- Child rearing styles
- Piaget's model of development
- Indigenous psychotherapies
- Achievement
- Interpersonal attraction
- Addictions from a cultural perspective
COURSE SYLLABUS

- the experience of emotion
- self-perception
- personality theories in multicultural perspective
- developmental theories
- a specific mental health issue in multicultural perspective

All written assignments should use Times New Roman 12-point font and double-spacing.

EVALUATION METHODS

The course instructor will provide specific requirements and grading rubrics for individual assignments for the course. Your final grade in the course will be comprised of the following course requirements:

Participation – 20%
(includes attendance, preparation, engagement in discussion, civility, and respect)

Reflection Paper – 10%

Mid-term Quiz – 20%

Team Presentations – 20%

Final Paper – 30%

Timely Submissions
Assignments submitted after the deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the course instructor and generally only in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

RESOURCES

Additional resources will be added by the instructor to the following:


ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student’s original work. Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

IFSA-Butler takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your instructor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may result. The incident will be reported to the IFSA-Butler resident director as well as your home institution.