Culture & Mental Health
(PSYCH 477-002 / AMCULT 405-004)

Fall 2015
Time: T/Th 10 – 11:30 am
Room: 142 Lorch
Office Hours: TBA

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Course Description

This seminar will examine the cultural foundations of mental health research and intervention, attending to the significant implications of a substantive cultural analysis for the cross-cultural assessment and treatment of psychopathology. Foci of the course will include attention to the conceptual and methodological study of cultural meaning and practice; the prospects for identifying and distinguishing between universal kinds of psychopathology and locally variant cultural syndromes; and the comparison of the modern psychotherapies with alternative healing traditions in cultural terms. Several examples will be drawn from the experiences of Indigenous/Native/Aboriginal communities in the U.S. and Canada. A central dilemma considered throughout the course will be whether and how the techniques and technologies of contemporary professional clinical intervention might be appropriately adapted and/or adopted for use with distinctive cultural communities in an increasingly globalized world. This course is designed for upper-level undergraduate students in psychology and in the social and health sciences.

Course Readings

One book is available in local campus bookstores:


Additional readings will be uploaded to the course CTools site.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation. Given the seminar format of this course, class preparation and participation is essential. You are expected to fully participate throughout the term in routine activities such as class discussion and presentation of your ideas and reactions to our readings. Everyone will take turns assuming responsibility for helping to organize our in-class discussions. You are allowed to miss two class meetings (only if necessary) without penalty. Additional absences beyond the most extenuating of circumstances (with accompanying documentation) will result in loss of 3 participation points for each absence. [12 pts]

2. Reaction Papers: A brief response to the assigned readings of no less than 300 words in which you develop a substantive comment or question should be uploaded to our CTools site by 5 pm on the evening preceding class on twelve occasions (at your discretion) throughout the term. The purpose of these responses is to both deepen your own engagement with the material as well as to prepare you to contribute ideas for class consideration during group discussions. Note, however, that these can only be submitted for days on which there is an assigned reading and for which you are in class to contribute your ideas for discussion. You are responsible for ensuring that I have received 12 timely responses by the end of the term. Late submissions will not count toward your quota. [12 Reaction Papers x 4 pts = 48 pts]

3. Class Project. Each student will invest substantial intellectual and creative energy into a major project that engages course themes of your own choosing. This project can be undertaken individually or in collaboration with up to two other students (but for collaborative projects the amount of energy invested per student should be equivalent to that of an individual project). The most familiar way to fulfill this requirement is to author a 25-page research paper addressed to some question at the intersection of culture and mental health. But other kinds of
projects are possible as well, such as the development of an informational website, or the creation of a policy
document. In any case, you are responsible for identifying a project and developing a prospectus (a summary outline
of the “who, what, when, where, and why” of your project) for review and approval early on in the course. This
prospectus, once negotiated and approved, becomes a contract for purposes of meeting this course requirement. All
projects must involve both a written component and an oral presentation (and both components must be
explicitly described in the prospectus). Presentations will occur during the final part of the course for a duration of
about 10 minutes per student (and possibly shorter depending on the total number of presentations). Finally, a
portion of your credit for this requirement will be an in-class written response due for each day of scheduled
presentations. NOTE: Students wishing to count this course toward the minor in Native American Studies must
complete a project pertaining to Native American mental health issues. [40 pts]

**Course Calendar**

**SEP 08:** Introductions & Course Overview

*Appreciating the Problem*

**SEP 10:** Mental Health in (Critical) Review

**SEP 15:** “Culture Counts”
     Psychology: Research and Practice, 31*(1), 5-13. [9d]

*Psychopathology*

**SEP 17:** The Question of Relativity

**SEP 22:** Conceptual Foundations
directions. In S. Kitayama & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural psychology* (pp. 797-818). New York:
Guilford Press. [19d]

**SEP 24:** Real World Issues
Issues and findings. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 41,* 755-776. [17s]

**SEP 29:** Disorders & Trends
illness. *Annual Review of Psychology, 51,* 571-98. [20s]

*Assessment*

**OCT 01:** Culture & Clinical Assessment
F. Geisinger (Ed.), *APA handbook of testing and assessment in psychology: Vol. 2. Testing and assessment
in clinical and counseling psychology* (pp. 193-212). Washington DC: American Psychological
Association. [15d]
OCT 06: Culture & DSM-5

OCT 08: Cultural Formulation

***Draft Project Prospectuses DUE in Class***

Treatment

OCT 13: Outcomes

OCT 15: Cultural Competence

OCT 20: Fall Break (No Class)

OCT 22: Cultural Adaptation

***Draft Project Prospectuses Returned***

OCT 27: Culture & Evidence-Based Practice

Alternatives

OCT 29: Therapy & Selfhood

NOV 03: Therapy as Healing

NOV 05: Culture as Therapy

***Final Project Prospectuses DUE in Class***

NOV 10: Integrative Therapy (Part 1)
Read: 19a. Duran, Intro + Chs. 1-2 [pp. 1-38: 38s]

NOV 12: Integrative Therapy (Part 2)
Read: 19b. Duran, Chs. 3-5 [pp. 39-78: 40s]

NOV 17: Integrative Therapy (Part 3)
Read: 19c. Duran, Chs. 6, 9 [pp. 79-111, 133-137: 37s]
**The Future**

**NOV 19:** Putting It All Together  

**NOV 24:** Project PRESENTATIONS / Work on Projects

**NOV 26:** Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class)

**DEC 01:** Project PRESENTATIONS / Work on Projects

**DEC 03:** Work on Projects [Prep Presentations / Finalize Written Component] (No Class)

**DEC 08:** Project PRESENTATIONS / Work on Projects

**DEC 10:** Project PRESENTATIONS / Course Wrap Up!

***Hard copies of Final Written Project Materials DUE in class on DEC 10***

(Note: Late submissions will lose substantial points [e.g., up to a letter grade per day!])