Welcome to Cross-Cultural Psychology
PSYC 4393; INST 4393

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WHAT IS THIS COURSE ALL ABOUT?

In 2002, APA adopted central guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice and organizational change for all psychologists. The first guidelines outlined the importance for all psychologists to gain understanding of one’s own cultural heritage and multiple social identities and the second guideline emphasized learning of other cultures. Knowledge of diverse cultures and how to behave in a multicultural context is increasingly becoming an important skill set required in a globalized world.

This course will provide an overview of basic concepts in cross-cultural psychology, applied to the specific historical, political and social context of Nepal. Along with an immersive experience in Nepal, the course will cover theoretical, empirical, and applied issues in the cross-cultural study of human behavior. We will discuss some aspects of human behavior that are universal and some that are culture-specific. The course will review both within- and between-culture variabilities as evidenced by social, developmental, cognitive, organizational and clinical research. In addition, topics related to social justice, immigration, acculturation, and human rights issues will be explored.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, you will:

i. Gain factual knowledge on basic concepts in cross-cultural psychology and related research
ii. Understand how social and cultural forces influence interpersonal and group interactions
iii. Develop critical thinking skills by examining cultural and social norms underlying human behavior in multicultural context
iv. Develop multicultural competence and learn to interact in unfamiliar cultural context
v. Apply cross-cultural themes to the development of your own cultural identity and life experiences
vi. Conduct literature searches and learn writing skills in compliance with APA-style.

You will develop skills to be educated consumers of science and critically examine scholarly research in the field of clinical psychology.

PARTICIPATION POLICY

You are expected to be an active participant in this class. To do this, you must be prepared – so be sure to complete all reading and other assignments according to the class schedule. I also expect that the classroom will be a place of mutual respect and that you will not engage in behaviors that are not conducive to learning (e.g., having side conversations, sleeping in class, talking or texting on the phone, late arrival or early departure). All views are valued in class and discussion is encouraged when different views are expressed. However, any behavior related to verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated.
We will be each other’s support in a foreign land. Therefore, let your teammates or me know if you are having any difficulty. Also, reach out of anyone in the group who might be demonstrating shock, sadness or agitation. Let’s take care of each other.

**GRADING PROCEDURES**

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<tr>
<th>Grade in Class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94.00 to 100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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Final grades are based on a point system that is consistent with University’s official letter grade system. Grades are assigned according to standard rubrics (rubric for each assignment, except exams, are listed at the end of this document). I understand that grades are important and that grading concerns arise. I will listen to legitimate concerns and I am willing to change my mind if I make an error. Please remember, this is not the only class in your undergraduate career so rest assured that your GPA does not depend solely on this course!

**EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

**Reaction Papers:**

In total, you will submit ten 2-page papers that will outline your reactions to the reading, field visits or class discussion. In these papers, you will document your opinion about, reactions to and reflection of personal experiences related to the topic. You will not be graded on the “political correctness”, or lack thereof, in your response. However, you will need to incorporate a critical discussion of the content and topics discussed. The critical discussion may include a) an examination of the “argument” or position presented in the course content, b) a discussion of insights gained, c) research findings that support or refute the arguments made in the written or audio/visual material or d) reflection of any aspects that were not addressed in the written or audio/visual material.

**Visit Preparation:**

While in Nepal you will visit several local organizations to learn more about how those institutions function and to apply discussion topics from the class to Nepali context. Before these visits, you will conduct background research on the organization and prepare at least three questions to ask the presenter.

**Cultural Self-Study:**

This activity is designed to help you understand how cultural forces shaped your experiences (both internal and interactions with others). You will reflect on how your behavior/attitudes, your family and your reference groups represent larger cultural realities. You can use the following domains to organize your cultural self-study. Use a minimum of five domains that are most relevant to your story.

- **Antecedents.** Describe historical antecedents, which even if nearly forgotten, still covertly influence thought, feelings, and behavior in your family. Consider immigrant beginnings and
migration history, critical past experiences, valued traditions, characteristics likes and dislikes, views of persons of different ethnic and social groups, and institutions (school, church, neighborhood, etc.) critical in shaping you.

Representative Behavior Settings and Scripts. Describe four behavior settings and their typical scripts which helped to shape you. You might consider situations such as a family meal, a classroom, peer group activities, family behavior around a holiday or important event, etc. After each description, indicate briefly for each setting-script complex its cultural significance and socialization impact on you.

Beliefs, values, worldviews: What spoken, articulate beliefs were important as you grew up? What were other critical values, norms, and worldviews were more taken-for-granted? What larger values and worldview were communicated to you through your social environment?

Your visible cultural persona: Describe your current characteristic non-verbal, linguistic characteristics and patterns. What is the content and style of your typical movements and gestures? What “sign equipment” (dress, age, health, status indicators) do you carry that are likely to influence how others perceive you and categorize you as a member of certain groups?

Preferred patterns of speaking and relating to others: Think of elements like your accent, manner and tempo of speech, the type of “spatial envelope” you use, your preference for more active or quiet-attentive interaction. Consider how you structure relationships over time in terms of task vs. socio-emotional roles, management of dependence and independence, needs for control, and handling of emotions and interpersonal closeness. What aspects of these patterns do you view as cultural?

Your personality patterns: Describe a few features of your personality which are shaped by gender, age, social class, and ethnic factors. Though you are a distinct individual, how you express this is shaped at least in part by certain cultural and social conventions. Think of your personality as an accepted way of adapting to or “syncing” with settings which are important parts of your past and present life.

Stories: Are there stories that repeatedly appear in your family or your own life? What types of emotions do these stories elicit? Identify the insiders and outsiders in these stories. Which character do you most identify with? How have these stories impacted your own life?

Summary Self-Statement: In no more than 250 words prepare a summary statement of your cultural programming and identity.

You will submit a 8-page paper synthesizing the results of your cultural self-study. Your work will be evaluated on the basis of the variety of course concepts you use appropriately and evidence that you have made a genuine effort to deal with tasks which require some very deep reflection. No student, however, should in any way feel compelled to share information which she or he believes is private or personal. Keep in mind, though, that a degree of discomfort with this project is normal, as it requires making explicit things that usually remain implicit, automatic, and wordless—like how you drive a car or greet a stranger visiting your home. Many students have found this exercise, no matter how difficult, to provide a very powerful and useful form of self-discovery.

Final paper

You will select one area in cross-cultural psychology that is of interest to you. You will review five articles on the topic. The articles need to be empirical (use data) and published in a peer-reviewed, scientific journal. You will summarize each study, integrate the findings from studies and discuss the
implications of the findings. You can incorporate theory related to your topic and applied information. The paper needs to be 8-pages long written in APA-format. All paper will be submitted using turnitin.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
All students are expected to attend every class on time but I will not take attendance. If you are absent, obtain class notes from another student. The instructor does not provide notes for any classes missed.

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE POLICY
If you have any question, feel free to email me at my stthom address. Emails sent from Monday through Thursday will be answered within 48 hours. Those sent on Friday will be addressed by Monday of the following week.

LATE PAPER POLICY
Points will be deducted from late papers: a half-letter grade if it is one day late, or a full-letter grade for 2-7 days late. Papers will not be accepted if overdue by more than seven days.

GRADES OF INCOMPLETE
This course follows the current university policy concerning incomplete grades. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course. Your Instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the “I” will automatically be recorded as an “F” on your transcript.

TRIP PLANNING
I want to take this opportunity to lay out a few suggestions that will help you to gain most out of the course and the trip.
1) Please understand that you may experience discomforts and minor annoyances (squat toilets, cold or unpredictable weather, long walking days, delays and rescheduling, strikes, etc.) Your ability to tolerate and learn from these experiences will determine the tone for the entire group.
2) Come with an open mind and a willingness to show compassion, empathy, and caring for other team members during challenging times, as well as humility and sensitivity to the vast cultural differences in this region.
3) Take this opportunity to enhance your flexibility and willingness to “go with the flow,” avoid whining and complaining when things inevitably change or seem incomprehensible.
4) You will keep a balance between being independent but also being mindful for the needs and comfort of your teammates.
TREK PLANNING

Most of the time, we will be in Kathmandu and Pokhara, both major city hubs in Nepal. The trek can be managed by almost anyone, of any age, who is in reasonably good shape and trains for a few months ahead of time. You must be able to walk several hours each day. It also helps to jog, train on a stair climber, and increase mileage to walk up to 6 miles at a brisk pace. During the trek you carry nothing except a daypack containing a water bottle, camera, and jacket. Everyone walks at their own pace because we have so many guides along with us for support. Nevertheless, the walking is sometimes rigorous and exhausting so you must be in reasonably good shape and prepare for the mountains, especially considering the trek will get us to about 10,000 feet in elevation.