

# **Human Culture and Cross-cultural Comparisons of Psychological and Behavioural Processes**

## **Course number & Section Psyc 3850A**

### **Summer semesters I/II**

**Instructor:** Lanna J. Petterson

**Instructor email:** l.petterson@uleth.ca

**Class Time:** Tuesday & Thursday 9:00– 11:50

**Classroom:** AH117

**Office hours:** Tuesday 1:00 – 2:00 in D853 or email to book an appointment; Following the exam, additional office hours will be open to review the exam (TBD)

### **Course Description:**

Psychology tends to focus on WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, and Democratic) samples. We will investigate why this WEIRD-centric focus provides only a partial (and often bias) picture of human psychology and behaviour.

The course will follow the theme described in *Cultural Psychology: 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (Heine, 2015): “Psychological processes are shaped (but not determined) by experiences.” During this course students will be introduced to cultural psychology and the methods employed in cross- cultural psychology. We will investigate the uniqueness of human culture. Additionally, we will begin to explore the way that culture acts on psychology/behaviour, creates novel selection pressures, and affords opportunities for population change and innovation. Further, we will take a high-level exploration of the way that incorporating a cross-cultural perspective to psychological study can expand our understanding of various aspects of human psychology and behaviour (including personality, emotion, mental and physical health, cognition and perception, attraction and relationships, and morality).

### **Students:**

*Cultural Psychology* is a 3000-level psychology course. As such, the course will be targeted toward students with foundational understanding of general psychology (e.g., students are expected to have completed Psyc1000 and at least two 2000-level Psychology courses). (Exceptions can be made if students can indicate that they have completed courses that would have provided them with a sufficient background to succeed in the course.) The course will be taught with the assumption that the majority of the class will be comprised of psychology students or students from other disciplines with a strong interest in psychology and behaviour.

This is a higher-level psychology course. As such, students are expected to be working toward: understanding and discussing (both in writing and orally) complex and multifaceted conceptual issues; evaluating the logic and findings of empirical sources; developing mature, evidence- based arguments; and applying what has been learned to new

situations.

### **Learning Objectives:**

#### **Material-based learning objectives:**

The course material will follow the theme described in *Cultural Psychology: 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (Heine, 2015): “Psychological processes are shaped (but not determined) by experiences.”

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand, identify, and describe the importance of considering multiple cultural contexts when evaluating psychological and behavioural phenomenon; cultural universal and cultural variable psychologies; cultural evolution; and the relevance of cultural psychology to multiple subfields of psychology
- Recognize methods employed in cultural psychology and the challenges posed in conducting cross-cultural research

#### **General learning objectives:**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Think critically about a variety of subject matter
- Create and evaluate academic arguments, or positions that are based on empirical evidence
- Apply learned information to novel situations/descriptions
- Discuss issues that do not necessarily have a “correct” answer.

### **Readings:**

#### **Text-book:**

- Heine, S. J. (2016). *Cultural Psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Ebooks may be available here: <http://books.wwnorton.com/books/webad-detail-editions.aspx?id=4294990296>

*Students are expected to read the assigned chapter for each lesson. These readings will assist students with their understanding of the key points. Heine (2015) generally presents each concept and then describes the supporting evidence. It is valuable for students to understand that the key points are empirically supported. However, for the purposes of this course, students are expected to understand, discuss, and think critically about the key concepts. They are not expected to memorize the specific details of the supporting evidence.*

*A copy, or copies, will be available in the library for short-term check out. Please be respectful that other students may need to use them (in other words, don't hold on to them when you are not reading them). Also, if you are using books from the library, do not wait until the last minute to read the text book as other people may have the same plan.*

**Additional required reading:**

- Caldwell, C. A. & Millen, A. E. (2009). Social learning mechanisms and cumulative cultural evolution: Is imitation necessary? *Psychological Science*, 20, 1478-1483.
- Students are required to read academic, peer reviewed articles for their writing assignment. It is the student’s responsibility to find these articles.
- Students are required to read academic, peer reviewed articles for their presentation assignment. These articles are listed in the course schedule.

**Grading scheme:**

Grade item	Weighting
Midterm <i>May 23 – 25</i>	25%
Final <i>June 14 – 18</i>	30%
Outline <i>June 4 (by class time)</i>	20%
Presentation <i>Sign up for presentation date</i>	15%
Participation <i>Throughout course</i>	10%

The following ranges will be employed in assigning grades in this course:

<b>A+</b>	89.5 and above	<b>B+</b>	76.5-79.49	<b>C+</b>	66.5-69.49	<b>D+</b>	56.5-59.49
<b>A</b>	84.5-89.49	<b>B</b>	73.5-76.49	<b>C</b>	63.5-66.49	<b>D</b>	50-56.49
<b>A-</b>	79.5-84.49	<b>B-</b>	69.5-73.49	<b>C-</b>	59.5-63.49	<b>F</b>	49.9 and below

In accordance with the University of Lethbridge Calendar, A = Excellent; B = Good; C = Satisfactory; D = Poor; F = Fail

**Grading Items:**

**Exams:**

Exams will be completed on Moodle in the Testing Centre or in the Accommodated Learning Centre. The first exam will open on the Thursday and will close Saturday. You will be excused early from class on Thursday to ensure that you have time to complete the exams. The last exam is scheduled during Finals Week; it will open the preceding Friday and will close on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June. The final exam will not be cumulative, although some concepts will run through the course. Exams will be comprised of multiple-choice questions. Questions will primarily focus on topics that were covered in class, but you may be tested on material exclusively from the text. Students will be asked to evaluate their peer presentations, but they will not be tested on the material from these presentations.

The exams will focus on key concepts and important terms. However, you will be required to apply the concepts from class to novel situations. As per the University calendar section

9.b.3, “Students may be expected to apply what has been taught in the course to new situations, to analyze different examples, or to synthesize original responses to questions that remain within the realm of fairness, even though the particular applications, examples or circumstances may not have been explicitly addressed in course lectures and readings.”

Students who wish to view their exams will need to do so during the week following their exam. Students who have concerns about their grade should discuss these concerns with the instructor during the week after their exam. If a student fails to bring an issue to the attention of the instructor in a timely manner, grade changes may not be considered. The instructor will allocate time for students to view their exam and will address questions and concerns during these times. The instructor reserves the right to adjust grades up based on student’s response to the exam questions (e.g., if one question is found to be problematic following the exam).

*Exams are designed to (1) evaluate your knowledge and understanding of the material covered in class and in the readings, (2) examine to what extent students are able to apply concepts to novel situations, and (3) provide students and the instructor with feedback.*

#### **Outline:**

You will be required to investigate a psychological or behavioural phenomenon using a cross-cultural perspective. You are required to put together a detailed outline. The outline should be organized as though you were going to use to construct an essay, but you are not going to write the essay. You are expected to develop a research topic and address this topic using findings from at least two cultures. In your outline, you must present findings based on their cross-cultural comparison and explain what conclusions and inferences can be drawn from this comparison.

*The project is designed to provide students with an opportunity to (1) investigate a topic and develop a research question; and (2) form an academic (evidence-based) argument, explain the conclusion that can be drawn based on this argument, and describe what this conclusion means for our broader understanding of the phenomenon. **Additional information and grading rubrics will be posted online. Students are responsible for reading the additional assignment information before submitting their outline.***

#### **Presentation:**

You will form a small group (maximum 5 per group) and prepare a short oral presentation on a data-based article. The articles and dates of presentations are on the course schedule below. You are asked to put together a presentation with a PowerPoint slideshow. The presentation should summarize the introduction, methods, results, and discussion section of the article in 12-15 minutes. You are also required to come up with discussion questions and lead a brief (3-5 minute) class discussion. After you have presented, students in the class will provide you with anonymous, but moderated, feedback (5 things that the group did well and 5 things that the group could develop). This feedback is intended to help peers develop their presentation skills. Constructive criticism and praise are encouraged. Students who provide intentionally disrespectful or hurtful comments will be asked to leave.

All group members will receive the same grade, based on the assumption that everyone participated in the preparation of the project. Please do not work on your section separately without going through the presentation as a group. You will have to sign up for an article/date (if you want to work with particular people, each member will need to be included on the list). Each article has a designated date. I will email a Google sheet link to the class. Please write your name beside the article that you would like to present. If your selection is full, you will have to select a different article. **Please let me know in advance if any problems arise.**

**\*\*\* You can sign up for articles using by copying and pasting the following url**

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Q-rUP2s81EqUA9HwD\\_qXrMkIsBphZlX\\_jCilr8alHDA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Q-rUP2s81EqUA9HwD_qXrMkIsBphZlX_jCilr8alHDA/edit?usp=sharing)

*The project is designed to provide students with an opportunity to practice (1) reading and discussing an academic article; (2) presenting; (3) integrative group work; (4) engaging in peer review and providing and receiving feedback. **Additional information and grading rubrics will be posted online. Students are responsible for reading the additional assignment information before presenting.***

### **Participation:**

Class discussion and engagement with the material are essential for success in this course. As such, students will be assigned class participation marks. A portion of the marks (50%) will be based on student's attendance and participation in peer presentation evaluations. However, students are expected to participate in classroom activities, peer evaluations, and group/class discussions. If students are in class but not participating, they may not receive full marks. You can send me an email with questions for class discussion/points for clarification to contribute to this grade item also. Nevertheless, students may "pass" if they do not wish to answer a question. The remaining marks will be based on student's contribution to class discussion. The frequency of student's participation as well as the depth and quality of their comments will be considered for this portion of the marks.

*Participation is encouraged to (1) further the depth of students understanding of the material; (2) facilitate a deeper engagement with the material; (3) provide students with an opportunity to play with ideas, practice discussing new concepts, and developing questions; (4) practice public speaking; and (5) develop a sense of cohort community*

### **Extra Credits for Research Participation:**

This course provides students with an opportunity to get involved as a participant in ongoing research projects. If you volunteer to be a participant, each project usually requires about one hour of your time. In recognition of the value of your data, and in recognition that you are learning something about the discipline of psychology beyond that of the typical classroom environment, an extra credit of 1 to 2% for each study (variable) in which you participate will be added to your final course percentage. **MAXIMUM EXTRA CREDIT = 2%.** These extra credits are added after all grade cutoffs have been established for course work (see Grading Scheme), such that students who choose not to participate are not

disadvantaged.

Directions for Participation: Following add/drop, you will receive an email to your U of L account with your Login name and password. It is IMPORTANT that you keep this information. The first time you login to the Sona System you will use your user name and the password. Once you have signed in you may change your password (recommended). Please go to <http://psychleth.sonasystems.com> and sign in as soon as you receive notification to do so. Studies will then become available on (May 7th).

Note: There will be no transfer of credits between courses. If you are registered in another course that offers credits, a second email will be sent to you with a different email and password. Sign up in the course to which you want your credits to be assigned. Further studies and timeslots will be added throughout the semester, please keep checking, but remember that participation is on a first-come basis. Note that there is no guarantee that all students will be able to achieve the maximum credit. The last date to participate in studies is (June 17th). If you experience problems with the Sona System, or you have inquiries regarding participation in studies regarding research participation should be directed to Ms. Leanne Wehlage-Ellis at [wehlage@uleth.ca](mailto:wehlage@uleth.ca).

### **Class Regulations:**

Students in this course are subject to the student discipline policy for academic and non- academic offenses in accordance with the *University Calendar*.

The course may cover topics that are sensitive to some people. Counselling services are available for free on campus at AH153 (Anderson Hall) and can be contacted at (403) 317-2845 or [counselling.services@uleth.ca](mailto:counselling.services@uleth.ca).

As per the University calendar section 9.b.4 (p. 87), you are expected to monitor your university email for messages pertaining to this course.

### **Lecture notes and in-class discussion:**

- Slides will be posted online before class. Students are encouraged to take additional notes.
- Discussion will be encouraged during class. However, any student that is disrespectful to others will be told to leave immediately.

### **Exam and assignment due dates:**

- If a student must miss an exam, with reasonable cause, the student must inform the instructor before or promptly after an exam. The student will receive a zero on the exam if the exam is missed without reasonable cause.
- If a student is unable to turn in an assignment on the due date the student must inform the instructor before the day or promptly after. The student will receive a zero if the missed assignment is unexcused.

*Note:* The instructor reserves the right ask a student who misses due dates to provide official documentation.

- Additional work will not be assigned for those who wish to improve their grades.
- I will not change the weighting of the writing assignments or the tests if you do

better on one of them compared to the other(s).

## Course Schedule

*Note: The instructor reserves the right to adjust the schedule as needed. Students will be notified of the changes*

- Readings
- Group projects
- Individual exams and assignments
- Learning objectives

**Questions that will be covered in the course: What is human culture? How does culture shape how we see ourselves, how we see others, how we act, our goals, our values, the way we see and understand the world, our emotions, and our mental and physical health? Are there aspects of psychology and behaviour that are common to humans regardless of cultural context?**

### WEEK ONE

**May 7 – Lecture 1:** What is human culture? What makes it unique relative to other animals? How do you read an academic article?

*Objectives: To understand what culture is, what cultural psychology is, and what cultural psychology contributes to the general study of psychology. To understand how important social learning has been to humans and how culture can contribute to shaping human psychology and behaviour.*

#### Readings

- Chapter 1: What is cultural psychology?
- Make sure to read for next time – Caldwell, C. A. & Millen, A. E. (2009). Social learning mechanisms and cumulative cultural evolution: Is imitation necessary? *Psychological Science*, 20, 1478-1483.

**May 9 – Lecture 2:** How does culture emerge? How do we end up with such a rich diversity of cultures and cultural complexity? We will discuss Caldwell & Millen (2009) in groups as a practice for group presentations.

*Objectives: To understand how to search for and navigate an empirical article. To understand the similarities and differences between cultural evolution and biological evolution. To understand how cultural innovations can become more complex over time due to small cumulative changes. Students will be introduced to the concepts of cultural transmission, meme theory, and cumulative cultural evolution.*

#### Reading

- Chapter 2: Culture and human nature
- Chapter 3: Cultural evolution

## WEEK TWO

**May 14 – Lecture 3:** How do we study cultural psychology? If we do not finish all of the material from week 1, we will finish it here.

Objectives: *To understand the methods used to conduct cross-cultural research. To understand how to select sample groups. To understand the pros and cons of different methods of cross-cultural psychology. To understand how to discuss academic articles.*

### Reading

- Chapter 4: Methods for studying culture and psychology

### Group 1 presentation

Lee, J. W., Jones, P. S., Mineyama, Y., Zhang, X. E. (2002). Cultural differences in response to a likert scale. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 25, 295–306.

**May 16 – Lecture 4:** How does our psychology and behavior become shaped by our culture? Or, how do we become cultural beings? How do the people shape and reinforce their culture?

Objectives: *To understanding the way that universal psychological and behavioural processes can become shaped in culturally specific ways based on experiences, particularly those during infancy and childhood.*

### Reading

- Chapter 5: Development and socialization

### Group 2 presentation

Keller, H. & Otto, H. (2009). The cultural socialization of emotion regulation during infancy. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 40, 996–1011.

## WEEK THREE

**May 21 – Lecture 5:** How do we view ourselves and our relationships with those around us? Does our cultural impact how we see ourselves and others? Does our culture influence aspects of our personality?

Objectives: *To understand what independent self-concepts and interdependent self-concepts mean and how they differ. To understand that additional self-concepts vary based on culture, especially between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. To understand some of the difficulties studying personality across cultures.*

### Reading

- Chapter 6: Self and personality

\*End of material for the Midterm

### Group 3 presentation

Campbell, J. D., Trapnell, P. D., Heine, S. J., Katz, I. M., Lavalley, L. F., & Lehman, D. R. (1996). Self-concept clarity: Measurement, personality correlates, and cultural boundaries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 141–156.

**May 23 – Lecture 6:** If we have been shaped by our culture, what happens when we move between cultures? What does it mean to live in a global world?

*Objectives: To understand the ways that people adjust when moving between cultures and incorporate multiple world-views. To understand the difficulties that cultural minority group members may experience.*

### Reading

- Chapter 7: Living in multicultural worlds

### Group 4 presentation

Greenwald, A. G., McGhee, D. E., & Schwartz, J. L. K. (1998). Measuring individual differences in implicit cognition: The implicit association test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1464 – 1480.

### Group 5 presentation

Frantz, C. M., Cuddy, A. J. C., Burnett, M., Ray, H., & Hart, A. (2004). A threat in the computer: The Race Implicit Association Test as a stereotype threat experience. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 1611–1624.

### **\*\* May 23 – May 25 – Midterm \*\***

## WEEK FOUR

**May 28 – Lecture 7:** Are our motivations, or what we strive for in life, reflections of our cultural values and perspectives?

*Objectives: To understand how motivations reflect cultural values and differ between cultures. To understand how feelings of agency differ between cultures and relate to independent and interdependent self-views.*

### Reading

- Chapter 8: Motivation

### Group 6 presentation

Osman, J. L. & Sobal, J. (2006). Chocolate cravings in American and Spanish individuals: Biological and cultural influences. *Appetite*, 47, 290–301.

**May 30 – Lecture 8:** Is the way we see the world impacted by our cultural experience?

Objective: *To understand that some aspects of cognition and perception are culturally variable. To understand that cognition and perception are not independent of cultural factors, as is commonly suggested. To understand how aspects and cognition are related to other aspects of the self.*

#### Reading

- Chapter 9: Cognition and perception

#### Group 7 presentation

Pica, P., Lemer, C., Izard, V., & Dehaene, S. (2004). Exact and approximate arithmetic in an Amazonian Indigene group. *Science*, 306, 499–503.

### WEEK FIVE

**June 4 – Lecture 9:** Do we experience emotions in the same way? If not, in what ways do our emotional experiences differ?

Objectives: *To understand some of the controversy regarding the universality of emotions. To understand that some aspects of emotional displays and emotional experiences vary between cultures. To understand that variable aspects of emotion are, at least in part, related to self-concepts and cultural values.*

#### Reading

- Chapter 10: Emotions

#### Group 8 presentation

Ekman, P. & Friesen, W. V. (1971). Constants across cultures in the face and emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 17, 124–129.

#### **\*\* June 4 – Outline due by end of class \*\***

**June 6 – Lecture 10:** Is beauty in the eye of the culture? Are we attracted to similar qualities in our sexual/romantic partners regardless of culture? Are their similarities in what we look for in friends regardless of culture?

Objectives: *To understand that some characteristics will be considered attractive across cultures because they are tied to reproduction. To understand that the nature and foundation of interpersonal romantic and non-romantic relationships may vary across cultures. To understand that the basis of our relationships may be different across cultural contexts.*

#### Reading

- Chapter 11: Interpersonal attraction and close relationships

#### Group 9 presentation

Dixon, B. J. & Vasey, P. L. (2012). Beards augment perceptions of men's age, social status, and aggressiveness, but not attractiveness. *Behavioral Ecology*, 23, 481–490.

#### Group 10 presentation

Semenyna, S. W., & Vasey, P. L. (2017). Bullying, physical aggression, gender-atypicality, and sexual orientation in Samoan males. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 46, 1375–1381.

### **WEEK SIX**

**June 11 – Lecture 11:** Can culture affect our bodies and our physical health? Are mental health conditions culturally variable? How do our cultural values shape health treatment?

*Objective: To understand that culture can impact the genes. To understand how culture can impact physical health. To understand that physical health treatment differs between cultures. To understand how culture can impact mental health. To understand that some mental health disorders are observed cross culturally. To understand that some mental health disorders are found only in a defined region or are expressed in culturally specific ways. To understand that mental health treatment differs between cultures.*

#### Reading

- Chapter 13: Physical Health
- Chapter 14: Mental Health

#### Group 11 presentation

Yeh, C. J. (2003). Age, acculturation, cultural adjustment, and mental health symptoms of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese immigrant youths. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 9, 34–48.

**June 13 – Lecture 12:** Does culture shape what we perceive as being fair and just?

*Objective: To understand that cross-cultural variation exists in the social importance and purpose of spiritual beliefs. To understand that, although all cultures engage moral reasoning, perspectives on morality differ both within and between cultures. To understand that, although all cultures are concerned with fairness, perceptions of fairness differ between cultures.*

#### Reading

- Chapter 12: Morality, religion, and justice

#### Group 12 presentation

Haidt, J., Helena Koller, S., & Dias, M. G. (1993). Affect, culture, and morality, or is it wrong to eat your dog? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 613–628.

**\*\* June 18 – Last day to write the final exam \*\***