PSYC 379 Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology

George Mason University  Spring 2006
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CLASS MEETS: Tuesdays 4:30-7:10 p.m. Room: Krug Hall 210
OFFICE HOURS: Tue; 4:00-4:30; 10:00-10:30 Thompson Hall 131, 703-993-1349

PURPOSE: To introduce the field of cross-cultural psychology and its contemporary applications. To develop a broader point of view on psychology. To explain contemporary psychological knowledge and its applications from a cross-cultural perspective. To provide students with a useful set of critical-thinking tools with which to analyze and evaluate psychology of various ethnic, national, and religious groups. To help develop professional skills necessary for any successful professional.

REQUIREMENTS:
• The final grade will be based on five exams and one term paper (a written homework assignment). The exams—February 7, February 28, April 4, April 25, May 9 (the final)—will consist of short-answer and multiple-choice questions.
• The term paper (written assignment) is due: April 25th or earlier. The topics for the written assignment and further instructions will be handed out in class. You will have to choose one topic.

GRADING:
The exams: 100 points (20 points each); the term paper: 10 points. One extra point is added to your total point score if you turn in your paper before the deadline. Three points are deducted if the paper submitted late. No papers are accepted after 05/02. Make-up tests (if you could not take an exam at the scheduled time and for a legitimate reason) will be administered on April 4 and April 25. You can take only one make-up test and one point is deducted automatically for a make-up exam. You must follow the University honor policy.

To receive a(n):
A+ you must earn at least 107 points  A you must earn at least 103 p. A- you must earn at least 100 p. B+ you must earn at least 97 points  B you must earn at least 93 p. B- you must earn at least 90 p. C+ you must earn at least 87 points  C you must earn at least 83 p. C- you must earn at least 80 p. D you must earn at least 70 points

http://classweb.gmu.edu/eshiraev

For the term paper, select one of the exercises: 4.3. on page 124; 5.3. on page 155; 6.2. on page 177; 8.1. on page 234; 9.1. on page 265; 10.3. on page 292; 11.1. on page 315; 12.1 on page 323
Your term paper is graded according to the following general criteria (specific requirements are in the assignments and they may differ): Format: 1,500 words or more, single or double-spaced. Turn in the original and keep a copy for your files. Style: Make an introduction, in which you describe briefly the goal of your paper. Use psychological terms. Generalize your thoughts in a conclusion. Validity: You have to use facts to support your ideas and suggestions. The assignment should contain references (include name, year, title of article or book, journal title; city/state and publisher if you cite a book; include an Internet address if you are referring to the Web). Reasoning: Break up your paper in several paragraphs. Each paragraph should represent a particular idea, explanation, or description.

Last day to add: February 7th; Last day to drop: February 24th If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
Course description and schedule


**Topic 3. Critical Thinking in Cross-Cultural Psychology.** The Evaluative Bias of Language: To describe is to prescribe. Differentiating Dichotomous Variables and Continuous Variables: Black and white, or shades of gray? The Similarity-Uniqueness Paradox: All phenomena are both similar and different. The Barnum Effect: “One Size-Fits-All” descriptions. The Assimilation Bias: Viewing the world through schema-colored glasses. The Representativeness Bias: Fits and misfits of categorization. The Availability Bias: The persuasive power of vivid events. The Fundamental Attribution Error: Underestimating the impact of external influences. The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: When expectations create reality. Correlation Does Not Prove Causation: Confusing “what” with “why,” Bi-Directional Causation and Multiple Causation: Causal loops and compound pathways. The Naturalistic Fallacy: Blurring the line between “is” and “should”. The Belief Perseverance Effect: “Don’t confuse me with the facts!” “To metathink or not to metathink?” Other topics discussed in class. Video materials.

**Test 1. February 7**


**Test 2. February 28**


**Test 3. April 4**


**Test 4. April 25**


**Test 5. Final. May 9**