

PSY321

# Cultural Psychology

## Course Syllabus

Online Lectures released Mondays and in-person activities Wednesdays from 12:00pm-2:00pm (**in person class will typically run no longer than 2 hours** as we will be using a flipped classroom model described under Class Structure below). An Online synchronous option will be available for students that cannot attend in person.



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### Instructor and Teaching Assistant Information

**Instructor:**

Amanda Sharples, Ph.D.  
[amanda.sharples@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:amanda.sharples@mail.utoronto.ca)

**Instructor Office hours:**

Online Tuesdays. Please book through the calendar on the Quercus site.

**Teaching Assistant:**

Xiao Min Chang  
[xiaomin.chang@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:xiaomin.chang@mail.utoronto.ca)

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### Course Description and Learning Objectives

This course will examine the role culture plays in various psychological processes. We will examine how culture intersects with a number of topics in psychology including development, personality, motivation, perception, relationships, morality, and health. Across topics, there will be a focus on practicing critical thinking, gaining an understanding of psychological research methods, and applying psychological findings to everyday life. Students will emerge from the course with an understanding of theory and research in the field of cultural psychology.

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## Learning Objectives:

1. *Knowledge:* By the end of this course, you should be able to name and apply theories in the area of cultural psychology. Moreover, you should understand key research methods used in the study of cultural psychology.
2. *Application:* By the end of this course, you should understand how culture has impacted your life and you should be able to apply findings in cultural psychology to your life and current social problems.
3. *Scientific Thinking:* By the end of this course, you should have a better understand of common research methods used in psychology, and you should be able to think of ways to empirically examine research questions in the area of cultural psychology.
4. *Communication:* By the end of this course, you should have improved your ability to construct arguments and to communicate your thoughts verbally and in writing.
5. *Professional Development:* By the end of this course, you should have improved your time-management skills and ability to respond appropriately to constructive feedback.

**Class Structure:** This course will use a flipped classroom approach. This means that students will be provided with lecture videos and readings prior to class (by Mondays at 12pm). In class time will be focused on question and answer periods, activities, and small group discussions that will allow for a more in depth exploration of the course content. These will all be facilitated by the professor. Online synchronous options will be provided via a zoom link that will be made available before the start of class. Asynchronous videos will be roughly 1 hour of content per lecture and in class or synchronous sessions will be roughly 1-2 hours each week.

**Discussion Participation:** In the class discussions, you will have the opportunity to express your opinion and learn your classmates' opinions on topics and readings. This provides an interactive component of the course that is meant to be engaging for students. During discussions, please remember that some of your classmates may have opinions that are different from your own. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates' opinions, and be respectful in language and when sharing your opinions.

**Note about prerequisites:** It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met *all* prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you may be removed.

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## Course Resources

**Readings:** All readings for this course, which include chapters and journal articles, will be made available on the Quercus site under library reading list. The citations for these readings may be found in this syllabus after the lecture schedule. I will provide reading guides for all readings that include the key questions you should be able to answer after completing the reading.

**Quercus:** All course materials will be made available on the Quercus website, including lecture slides, announcements, and supplementary materials. You are advised to regularly check the announcements section of the Quercus website because you are solely responsible for staying on top of all course announcements made through Quercus.

**Ongoing feedback:** I've created a survey that students can fill out anonymously after each class to provide me with feedback on lectures. This gives you the opportunity to let me know if I am going through the material too quickly, if there is a particular concept you are really struggling with, if there is something that could be improved about the structure of each class, etc. The link to this survey is available on Quercus. I can't promise that I will be able to touch on every concern expressed in the feedback surveys. I will be looking for common concerns being expressed by students.

**How to get help with the course:** The fastest way to get help with the course is to attend one of the weekly online office hours. If you have a short question that can be answered via email, then please email myself or the TA. Before emailing, however, please check the course syllabus as most of the important information about the course can be found there. If you have a question that may require a longer explanation, please come to office hours instead of emailing as it will be much easier for me to explain this in person and it will give you the opportunity to ask follow-up questions

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## Course Evaluation

Component	Date	Weight
Quizzes	Throughout the term (3 total)	15% (5% each)
Participation (In class or discussion board)	Throughout the term	8%
Paper Outline	May 18	15%
Final Paper	June 20	35%
Media Assignment	June 6	27%

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**Participation:** Part of your grade will be allocated to participating in weekly discussions. You can participate in person *or* on the online discussion board (a board will be made available for each module). If participating on the online discussion board, you should contribute at least 1 thoughtful question and 1 thoughtful response to a question each week.

**Paper - Outline and Final Paper 50%:** For this course, you will have to complete a final writing assignment. You will have the option of one of two assignments to choose from:

**Option 1:** (recommended for students interested in research): This will be a funding proposal (also called a program of study), which will be modeled after the funding proposals typically completed for graduate scholarships. In your funding proposal, you will include a program of proposed research (2-3 studies) that addresses an issue in cultural psychology. You can write the proposal on any topic related to the focus of the course.

**Outline:** Before submitting the final paper, you will submit an outline. This will allow you to get feedback on your research question and study designs before submitting your final proposal. For the outline, you must include a description of the research question, bullet point summary of some past research on this issue, and a brief description of studies you are proposing (design and variables) and the hypotheses for each study. This should be about 1.5-2 pages, double-spaced. Do not go over the 2 page limit – we will stop reading past this point.

**Final Paper:** The final paper should include an introductory paragraph where you make an argument for the real-world relevance of the research you are proposing, 2-3 paragraphs summarizing past research on the topic, 2-3 paragraphs outlining the studies you are proposing to fill the current gaps in the literature (be clear about the study design and your hypotheses), and 1-2 paragraphs reiterating the theoretical and practical implications of your line of research. This should be a total of 3.5-4 pages, double-spaced. Do not go over the 4 page limit - we will not read past this point.

**Option 2:** (recommended for students not interested in research): This will be an essay with an argumentative thesis statement where you critically analyze a topic we discussed in the course. Specifically, I want you to think about how cultural lens has been neglected in a particular area (can think of a specific theory and come up with an original thesis (point of view/argument) related to this topic. You must use past research to support your argument.

**Outline:** Before submitting the final paper, you will submit an outline. This will allow you to get feedback on your thesis and the supporting research. For the outline, you must include your thesis as well as a bullet point summary of some past research on this issue and how you will connect this to your argument. This should be about 1.5-2 pages, double-spaced. Do not go over the 2 page limit – we will stop reading past this point.

**Final Paper:** The final paper should include an introductory paragraph where you provide some background on what you will be discussing and state your thesis, 3-4 paragraphs summarizing past research on the topic and connecting this research to your thesis, and 1 closing paragraph where you provide a conclusion or take home message for your paper. This should be a total of 3.5-4 pages, double-spaced. Do not go over the 4 page limit - we will not read past this point.

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**Pop Science Assignment 27%:** For this assignment, you will have to select a recently published paper and communicate the findings to a general (non expert) audience. You may choose one of the following three forms - 1. A blog post. No more than 1000 words. 2. A recorded podcast (15-20 minutes long) 3. A YouTube video (also 15-20 minutes long).

Some things you must include: you must include information about one recently published study (years 2021-2022). You must connect these findings to statistics from other (e.g., opinion poll) data. You must include visual elements (for a podcast, this can be a design for your podcast home page). You must include links for any papers or data you discuss (these do not have to be in APA style).

You can be creative with the format and what you decide to discuss (e.g., a fictional interview, applying the work to a real-world issue, etc). I will provide a few concrete examples on the Quercus site under this assignment, so you have a sense of what this might look like. Ultimately, I want you to be creative while also demonstrating an ability to present research and theory in cultural psychology to a lay audience. I will discuss this more in a video that will be posted under this assignment on Quercus and provide you with a rubric describing how you will be evaluated.

**Quizzes:** Throughout the course you will have to complete 3 quizzes using multiple choice/matching/fill in the blank style responses. These quizzes will be completed online and you will have 48 hours from the time they are made available to write the quiz, but once the quiz starts it will be timed and you will have 40 minutes to complete it. These will test your general knowledge of the course material including readings and lectures and are meant to make sure you are keeping up with the course content. They are primarily assessing learning goal 1.

**A few important details:** For the final paper, when you are summarizing past research, you must include citations for at least 5 papers published in peer-reviewed journals (we will discuss this in class). The paper should be written in APA style. Both the proposal and the final paper should be handed in on Quercus by 11:59pm on the day they are due, and should include a full reference list.

More details on these assignments will be provided in class.

**Policy on Lateness:** The Covid 19 pandemic has impacted all of our lives in various ways, and I understand that some of you may be facing many additional stressors as a result of this. I understand this and I am happy to support you and work with you so that you can successfully complete this course and have a positive learning experience. For the proposal outline, media assignment, and the final paper, **you do not need to contact me** so long as your assignment is submitted within **24 hours of the due date**. Following this, a 2% late penalty may apply. If you are concerned about meeting a deadline or need assistance making a plan for getting work completed, please contact me as soon as you can so we can work this out together.

**Ensuring Transparency in Grading:** Your proposal, pop science assignment, and final paper will be marked by the TA and I. Marking these types of assignments can be challenging and somewhat subjective. In order to make this process as fair as possible, I will be creating a detailed rubric for myself and the TA to use when grading these

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assignments. I will provide you with a copy of these rubrics at least one week before the assignment is due. This should provide you with a clear understanding of how you will be graded before you submit your assignment.

**Contesting your grade:** Please think carefully before contesting your grade for an assignment or test. Your course instructors and TAs work very hard to mark course assignments and exams as fairly as possible. If you have concerns about how an assignment was graded, you need to submit an official re-grade request form explaining why you think your assignment should be re-graded. This can be found on Quercus under “course materials.” You must send this to the person that graded your assignment (either myself or the TA) within 2 weeks of receiving your grade. We will review your request but reserve the right to remark the entire paper, which means you could lose marks in other sections.

If there has been a calculation error, please just let myself or the TA know and we will re-calculate your grade immediately.

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## Academic Resources

**Accessibility Needs:** Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course, and we will do everything in our power to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed in the course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060; [accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://accessibility.utoronto.ca).

**Writing:** One of the key skill-sets you are developing as a student are your communication skills, including written communication. Understanding how to communicate clearly and concisely is essential for many career paths. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them develop these skills. For more information on campus writing centers and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>. More info on writing resources available at U of T will be posted on Quercus. I highly recommend that you make use of these. Moreover, I’m more than happy to give you feedback on your writing during my office hours, so feel free to stop by.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** Academic misconduct will be taken very seriously in this class. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported through the official university channels. Please refer to the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for more information about what constitutes academic misconduct and how academic misconduct will be dealt

with: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>

**Resources for Distressed Students:** As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation, financial concerns, family worries and so forth. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. All of us benefit from support and guidance

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during times of struggle; there is no shame in needing help or in asking for help. There are many helpful resources available through your college Registrar or through Student Life ([studentlife.utoronto.ca](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca) and [www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed](http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed)). An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources and do not hesitate to seek assistance from your Teaching Assistant or from me to help learn what supports are available.

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## Course Schedule

I will try my best to stick to this outline, but changes may be made. Changes will be announced on Quercus. All readings can be found in the reference list following this page.

Lecture	Date	Topic	Notes
L1&2 Asynchronous Lectures	May 9	Introduction and Research Methods in Cultural Psychology	
In person meeting	May 11	Activities: Introductions and how to create a thesis statement or program of research	
L3&4 Asynchronous Lectures	May 16	Cultural Learning and Evolution and Development and Socialization	
In person meeting	May 18	Activities: How environments shape identity	<i>Proposal Due</i>
L5 Asynchronous Lecture	May 23	Self, Personality, Motivation	Quiz 1
In person meeting	May 25	Activity: Communicating science to non-scientific audience and worksheet to prepare media assignment	
L6&7 Asynchronous Lecture	May 30	Cognition and Perception Multiculturalism	
In person meeting	June 1	Activities: defining wisdom(cognition) and cultural appropriation (multiculturalism) through examples	Quiz 2
L8 Asynchronous Lecture	June 6	Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships	<i>Scientific communication piece due June 6</i>

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In person meeting	June 8	Activity: Reflecting on global perspectives to relationships, love, and marriage	
L9&10 Asynchronous Lecture	June 13	Morality and Religion Physical and Mental Health	
In person meeting	June 15	Activites: Applying the biopsychosocial model	Quiz 3 Final Paper due June 20

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## Course Schedule

### L1.

Syllabus

### L2.

Leung, A. K. Y., & Cohen, D. (2011). Within-and between-culture variation: individual differences and the cultural logics of honor, face, and dignity cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*, 507-526

### L3.

Muthukrishna, M., Shulman, B. W., Vasilescu, V., & Henrich, J. (2014). Sociality Influences cultural complexity. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences, 281*, 20132511.

Santos, H. C., Varnum, M. E., & Grossmann, I. (2017). Global increases in individualism.



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*Psychological Science*, 28, 1228-1239.

Talhelm, T., Zhang, X., Oishi, S., Shimin, C., Duan, D., Lan, X., & Kitayama, S. (2014). Large-scale psychological differences within China explained by rice versus wheat agriculture. *Science*, 344(6184), 603- 608.

**L4.**

Keller, H. (2018). Universality claim of attachment theory: Children's socioemotional Development across cultures. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115, 11414-11419

Fu, A. S., & Markus, H. R. (2014). My Mother and Me: Why tiger mothers motivate Asian Americans but not European Americans. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40, 739-749.

**L5.**

Boucher, H. C. (2021). Social class and self-concept consistency: Implications for subjective well-being and felt authenticity. *Self and Identity*, 20(3), 406-422.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98, 224 – 253

Ruby, M. B., Falk, C. F., Heine, S. J., Villa, C., & Silberstein, O. (2012). Not all Collectivisms are equal: Opposing preferences for ideal affect between East Asians and Mexicans. *Emotion*, 12, 1206-1209.

**L6.**

Varnum, M. E., Grossmann, I., Kitayama, S., & Nisbett, R. E. (2010). The origin of cultural

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Differences in cognition: The social orientation hypothesis. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 19, 9-13.

de Oliveira, S., & Nisbett, R. E. (2017). Culture changes how we think about thinking: From “Human Inference” to “Geography of Thought”. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12, 782-790.

Kung, F. Y. H. & Grossmann, I. (in press). Wisdom across cultures. In O. Braddick (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**L7.**

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, 46, 5-34.

Benet-Martínez, V., Lee, F., & Cheng, C.-Y. (2021). Bicultural identity integration: Components, psychosocial antecedents, and outcomes. In M. J. Gelfand, C.-y. Chiu, & Y.-y. Hong (Eds.), *Handbook of advances in culture and psychology* (pp. 244–284). Oxford University Press.

**L8.**

Schug, J., Yuki, M., & Maddux, W. (2010). Relational mobility explains between-and within-culture differences in self-disclosure to close friends. *Psychological Science*, 21, 1471-1478.

Balzarini, R. N., & Muise, A. (2020). Beyond the dyad: A review of the novel insights gained from studying consensual non-monogamy. *Current Sexual Health Reports*, 1-7.

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**L9.**

Feinberg, M., & Willer, R. (2015). From gulf to bridge: when do moral arguments facilitate Political influence? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(12), 1665-1681.

Podcast: Creating God, *Hidden Brain*:

<https://www.npr.org/2018/07/16/628792048/creating-god>

**L10.**

Dere, J., Sun, J., Zhao, Y., Persson, T. J., Zhu, X., Yao, S., ... & Ryder, A. G. (2013). Beyond "somatization" and "psychologization": Symptom-level variation in depressed Han Chinese and Euro-Canadian outpatients. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00377

Lehman, B. J., David, D. M., & Gruber, J. A. (2017). Rethinking the biopsychosocial model of Health: understanding health as a dynamic system. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 11, e12328.