PSY321
Cultural Psychology
Course Syllabus

In-person sessions will be held on Mondays from 1:00pm-4:00pm in SS1087. An Online synchronous option will be available for students who cannot attend in person.

Getty Images/iStockphoto. Alt text: Image of earth with many arms reaching out toward it

Instructor and Teaching Assistant Information

Instructor:
Amanda Sharples, Ph.D.
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Instructor Office hours:
In person, SS4091 Mondays from 12:00pm-1:00pm (Starting January 15th).

Teaching Assistant:
Tayler Wells
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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 several 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

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 understanding 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 be in-person and will include lectures, question and answer periods, activities, and group discussions that will allow for a more in depth exploration of the content. These will all be facilitated by the professor. Online synchronous options will be provided via the zoom link below.. The lecture portion of these sessions will be recorded and provided on the course web-page. Zoom Invite Link: https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/82824271813. Password: culture.

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.

This Document

This is the course syllabus and contains all the important details regarding this course; what you will learn, what you will need, how you will be evaluated, available resources, and the schedule for the course. The course syllabus is a contract between you and I, which means that we both agree to abide by its terms. On day one of the course, we will go through the syllabus together and make any changes we mutually agree on.

Course Resources

Readings: All readings for this course, which include chapters and journal articles, will be made available on the Quercus site under the 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 readings.

Quercus: All course materials will be made available on the Quercus website. You are advised to regularly check the announcements section of the Quercus website because you are 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 allows you to let me know if I am going through the material too quickly, 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..

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 me or the TA. Before emailing, however, please check the course syllabus as most of the important information about the course can be found here. If you have a question that may require a longer explanation, please come to office hours instead of emailing as it will be easier for me to explain this in person and it will allow you to ask follow-up questions

Sharing Course Materials: Lectures, slides, assignment instructions, course assessments, and rubrics are the intellectual property of the instructor. Students are free to use all lecture videos, slides, and other materials for their use, however, they are NOT permitted to share any course material without the explicit permission of the instructor. Uploading course materials to the web or shared server is expressly prohibited. I do not want to discover that a student has put any of my materials into the public domain or has sold my materials. If I discover this has happened, I will contact the university and they will assist me in asserting my rights in these matters.

Course Evaluation

Component	Date	Weight
Quizzes	Throughout the term (3 total)	24% (8% each)
Participation (In class or synchronous sessions)	Throughout the term	5%
Paper Outline	February 5th	12%
Final Paper	April 1st	33%
Scientific Communication Piece	March 18th	26%

Participation: Part of your grade will be allocated to participating in weekly discussions. You can participate in person *or* online via zoom. Attending each lecture and contributing a thoughtful question or response to a question will help you earn full marks.

Paper - Outline and Final Paper 45%: 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 2-3 pages, double-spaced. Do not go over the 3 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 5 pages, double-spaced. Do not go over the 5 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 a particular area (can think of a specific theory or area of research) that would benefit from being examined through a cultural approach and the implications of that. You must come up with an original and thoughtful 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 statement 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 2-3 pages, double-spaced. Do not go over the 3 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 5 pages, double-spaced. Do not go over the 5 page limit - we will not read past this point.

Scientific Communication Assignment 26%: For this assignment, you will have to select a recently published paper (this must be a topic related to cultural psychology) and communicate the findings to a general (non expert) audience. You may choose one of the following three forms - 1. A blog post (1000 - 1500 words - 1500 word max). 2. A recorded podcast (12-15 minutes long) 3. A YouTube video (also 12-15 minutes long).

Some things you must include: you must include information about one recently published study (years 2022-2023). 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 may 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 class 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 and short answer style questions. These quizzes will be completed online and you will have 72 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 60 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 goals one and two.

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: I understand life gets challenging and things may come up that make it difficult for you to complete your work on time. 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 most course assignments (Proposal, Scientific Communication Assignment, 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. Please contact me in advance to the due date unless this is not possible.

      Specific Medical Circumstances. If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca. For information on the Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Ensuring Transparency in Grading: Your proposal, popular 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 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 carefully review and consider your feedback before contesting your grade for an assignment or test. Your course instructors and TAs work very hard to mark course assignments 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 me or the TA know and we will re-calculate your grade immediately.

Using AI: Artificial Intelligence programs like ChatGPT are becoming more common and this has prompted discussions surrounding how they may impact student learning and academic integrity. I have been learning about the pros and cons of using these tools and allowing students to use these tools for assessments and think that these tools may work as a good starting point (e.g., for brainstorming) or summarization, but they should be used carefully. For this course, you may use generative AI programs for the Scientific Communication Piece and Final Paper so long as you appropriately cite the program, so that I know where and how this was used. I also recommend that you discuss your experience using this tool in the reflection you submit with your final paper. For the quizzes, you should be submitting work in your own words only and **not** using generative AI to help you complete these quizzes.

Final grades: While I encourage you to focus on what you are learning in the course rather than on any particular grade you receive, I understand the importance of grades to students and their future pursuits. There are times when a grade we obtain does not align with our goals (I have been there!). Grading is not a perfect process, but your final grade should be a fairly accurate representation of your engagement and performance in the course. Moreover, you are given many opportunities throughout the course to seek help, to work on assessment related activities in class, and to contest grades if you feel they do not adequately reflect the quality of your work. I encourage you to be proactive and seek help throughout the course if there is a particular grade you are working towards. I do not make changes to final grades in the course for the reasons noted above and the fact that requests for final grade increase can lead to systemic biases in academic systems.

Academic Resources

Accessibility Needs: It is very important to me that students with diverse learning needs feel supported in this course. There is no one-size-fits all approach to course design, so I do my best to build in accessible course policies. For example, all students have a 24 hour extension on assessments as noted above under policy on lateness, and you can also approach me if you need additional support. I understand that some students may have accessibility needs, but may not have the documentation to get specific accommodations. I hope that by having these broader policies those students feel supported in this course. I will do everything in my 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.

Religious Accommodations: As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of cultural and religious traditions. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity due to a religious observance, please let me know as early

in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice, so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Writing: A key set of skills you are developing as a student are your communication skills, including written communication. Understanding how to communicate clearly 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.

English Language Resources: For anyone who would like to advance their understanding and command of English, there are many supports available at UofT: https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academicadvising-and-support/english-language-learning

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.pd

Mental Health and Well-being: 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 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 and 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 seek assistance from your Teaching Assistant or from me to help learn what supports are available.

COURSE SCHEDULE MAY BE FOUND ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

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	Jan 8	Introduction - What is culture?	
L2	Jan 15	Research Methods in Cultural Psychology	
L3	Jan 22	Cultural Learning and Evolution	
L4	Jan 29	Development and Socialization	Quiz 1 available online. Available Tuesday, Jan 30 at 12:00pm until Friday, Feb 2 at 12:00pm
L5	Feb 5	Self, Personality, Motivation	
L6	Feb 12	Cognition and Perception	Proposal Due
	Feb 19	*No Class - Family Day*	
L7	Feb 26	Multiculturalism	
	Mar 4	No lecture - session focused on Scientific Communication Assignment	Quiz 2 available online. Available Tuesday, Mar 5 at 12:00pm until Friday, Mar 8 at 12:00pm
L8	Mar 11	Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships	
L9	Mar 18	Morality and Religion	*Scientific communication piece due*
L10	Mar 25	Physical and Mental Health	Quiz 3 Available online. Available Tuesday, Mar 26 at 12:00pm until Friday, March 29 at 12:00pm.
	Apr 1	No Class - work on final paper	*Final Paper Due (remember you have the 24-hour extension)*

Reading List

L1.

Syllabus (We will go through this together in class)

Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine, and Ara Norenzayan. "Most people are not WEIRD." *Nature* 466, no. 7302 (2010): 29-29.

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. *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.

Coard, S. I. (2022). Race, discrimination, and racism as "growing points" for consideration: attachment theory and research with African American families. *Attachment & Human Development*, *24*(3), 373-383.

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.

Arshad, M., & Chung, J. M. (2022). Practical recommendations for considering culture, race, and ethnicity in personality psychology. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *16*(2), e12656.

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.

Krys, K., Vignoles, V. L., De Almeida, I., & Uchida, Y. (2022). Outside the "cultural binary": understanding why Latin American collectivist societies foster independent selves. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *17*(4), 1166-1187.

Recommended:

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

L6.

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

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.