

**PSYC 4350-02: CULTURE AND PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Spring 2018**

Instructor: Dr. Marie-Cécile Bertau  
Class Meetings: Tue-Thu 3:00 - 4:40pm, Anthropology Building  
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Office Hours: By appointment in person

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course has three main goals. **First**, we will examine how psychological is shaped and founded by the sociocultural and historical conditions of in any given setting. This means that psychological experience does not exist “as such”, but is sensitive to a cultural context, which is also defined by its social and historical dimensions. Hence, we speak of psychological experience *according to* specific socio-cultural and historical settings. **Second**, we will reflect on psychology as a cultural construct itself. This means to view psychology as the cultural product of a certain time and of a specific socio-cultural context: modern Western culture, starting with the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a cultural product of a specific culture, psychology has its own biases; it has a specific gaze and attitude toward cultures that are non-Western. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a reflection about this fact started, and we will talk about psychology in this respect. **Third**, we will discuss language as a pervasive phenomenon for human beingness, existing in many different forms across all cultures. It is important to become aware of the cultural power of language as closely related to our psychological experiences. These three major goals are found in the following course themes.

**COURSE THEMES**

**Diversity in Psychological Functioning:** Most studies in psychology are based on a limited range of the world's people: typically, young, middle-class, college students of European descent living in Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) settings. One theme of the course is to consider what happens when the same studies are conducted with more representative samples.

**The Cultural Foundations of Psychological Experience:** This theme refers to the extent to which patterns of psychological experience—like the *fundamental attribution error*, teenage rebellion, or romantic love—are not “just natural”, but instead are products of particular constructions of reality. A major goal of the course is to make visible this cultural context of experience, not just for *exotic* patterns of people in “other cultures”, but also for the *familiar* patterns observed in North American settings and routinely reported in Psych textbooks.

**The Cultural Foundations of Psychological Science:** To what extent is Psychological Science, itself, a cultural product? Although scientists often imagine themselves to be detached, neutral observers of a universal, objective reality, the third theme of the course concerns the extent to which theory and practice in Psychology (and other social sciences) reflect particular—and potentially variable—constructions of reality (e.g., concepts like *person*, *child*, and *relationship*).

**Language:** Language is a pervasive activity taking many forms in speaking and listening, writing and reading; it is the key means of human meaning-making. It is by this activity that we communicate and understand each other, ourselves, and our common reality. By this very particular symbolic means, we negotiate, establish, and also change our common socio-cultural specific reality, and we transmit it through generations. It is therefore important to address the role and effects of language for cultural experience. Language will hence be addressed throughout the course in complement to different topics. How language is interwoven with psychological experience will specifically be illustrated by the notion of “the self”, its conceptual variations and its different cultural enactments (“practicing to be a self” in different socio-cultural communities).

## ASSIGNMENTS, REQUIREMENTS, GRADING

### Required Readings:

#### **Textbook:**

The required textbook is Heine, S. (2016). *Cultural Psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). New York: Norton. If you choose to use a different edition of this textbook, **you are responsible for any differences between your version and the 2016 edition.**

#### **Additional Texts:**

In addition to the textbook, supplemental readings for the required **reading assignments** will be available to you via the course website on Course Den. See below for details.

### Four Modules Making up Your Grade:

- 1) Midterm Exam
- 2) Final Exam
- 3) Course Participation – consisting of 7 Reading Assignments and Attendance
- 4) Journal Entries – consisting 4 Journals in written form

### Overall Grading Scheme Consisting of the Four Modules:

<b>Grading Scheme:</b>	(possible 400 points)	<b>Grading Scale:</b>
Midterm Exam	15% (max. 60 pts)	A = [360-400] pts
Final Exam	45% (max. 180 pts)	B = [320-360] pts
Course Participation	20% (max. 80 pts)	C = [280-320] pts
Journal Entries	20% (max. 80 pts)	D = [240-280] pts
		F = <240 pts
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Total	100% (max. 400 pts)	

### **Module 1) Midterm (15%) and 2) Final Exam (45%):**

There will be 2 exams: a **midterm exam on March 13** and a **final exam on April 26**.

The midterm exam is considered your practice, for this reason it is less weighted than the final exam.

**Make up exams.** The examination dates should be considered firm. I expect everyone will take the examinations as they are scheduled. In rare circumstances and with **appropriate documentation**, you may be permitted to take a make-up exam. **In the event that you cannot attend either of the scheduled examination periods, it is your responsibility to contact me in timely fashion (i.e., no later than one week before the exam) to make an alternative arrangement.** Please note that the following events are NOT acceptable reasons for requesting a make-up exam: *participation in a wedding, travel, oversleeping, and minor illness.*

**Missing the final exam.** If you miss your final exam, and prior arrangements have not been made, you may receive a grade of F on that exam, and this may affect your final grade in the class. If you miss your exam due to an emergency, please contact the Psychology office at (678) 839-6510 or go to Melson Room 123 as soon as possible to complete the application: “Missed Final Exam: Verification of Emergency”. This form will need to be approved by the chair for an incomplete grade which may allow you the time to make up your exam or complete your final assignments. This application will require documentation and authorization from you to verify your emergency.

**Exam content.** Exams will include short text passages from texts that were addressed in class, or very similar texts. These extracts are to be analyzed in terms of information. Extracts can also display transcribed conversations, which are also to be analyzed in several respects. Exams will also include short questions about core terms, such as “holistic thinking”, to be defined or explained.

### **Module 3) Course Participation (20%): 7 Reading Assignments + Attendance**

#### **Reading Assignments:**

- As mentioned, there will be required supplemental **reading assignments** in addition to the textbook. These readings will be available to you via the course website on Course Den. In some cases, you will be given exact reading instructions: please follow these in order to facilitate our common working in class. **These readings are mandatory.** They serve as classroom collaborative work. Assignments couple a preparatory reading and a class work.

#### **Required Tools:**

- 1 pencil and some white paper (a half sheet at least)
- Purpose: you will be asked to hand in a **short key sentence to each reading you prepare** at the beginning of class. This key sentence is not copied from the text you read, it grasps some core idea or interesting aspect you can bring to class discussions. It is a genuine part of the preparatory reading.
- **Any reading assignment thus consists of:** reading beforehand, thinking about a short key sentence, writing down this sentence in class and handing it in in person, and taking

part in the class activities (small group discussions mostly); you might be asked what sentence you chose to write down.

- **Each reading assignment has a specific flag (see list of assignments):** this flag + your sentence + your name and signature are to be written down. Write legibly! Any illegible writing will not be accepted.

Example:

**R-MK, Sarah Desert, *SDesert***

**SENTENCE**

### **Attendance:**

Knowledge does not sit there waiting to be discovered; instead, we must actively create it. So this course requires you to **participate** in the knowledge-construction process. Class attendance is a form of participation that deserves special mention. **Attendance is a requirement.**

Because I recognize that things happen and people sometimes need to miss class, you can have up to 3 absences without comment or penalty. **If you have more than 3 absences, this will hit on your course participation grade.**

### **Scoring of attendance:**

0-3 times missing = 10 pts (100%)

4-6 times missing = 5 pts (50%)

7+ times missing = 0 pts (0%)

Besides class attendance, you are expected to be involved in **class activities**. Students should come to class prepared (see the preparatory **reading assignments**), make thoughtful contributions to class activities, and show interest in and respect for others' views. Classroom activities and assignments will not be accepted late except in the case of university approved absences.

**Course Participation thus includes all reading assignments + attendance.**

### **Module 4) Journals:**

In order to ensure your engagement with and reflection of course material and topics, I require you to post **4 journal entries** (dates below). The point of these journal entries is to provide you with the opportunity to practice and demonstrate critical engagement with course materials. You will not only be asked to engage with texts, but also to reflect your own cultural experience.

These journal entries should be minimum 1 page, maximum 1,5 page in length (1,5 spaced, 12pt). **Please submit all Journals to Course Den into the appropriate folder.**

When grading your entries, I will be looking for evidence of:

- 1) Timely submission
- 2) Thoughtful and thorough engagement with the subject
- 3) Clear arguments, critical thinking and analysis
- 4) Formal correctness (spelling, phrasing, references in case there are some)

**Grading scheme:** (possible 40 points)

Timely submission	10
Engagement	10
Clarity	10
Formals	10

**Grading Scale:**

A = [36-40] pts
B = [32-36] pts
C = [28-32) pts
D = [24-28) pts
F = <24 pts

## **COURSE SCHEDULE, WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Topic 1: What is Culture, what is Cultural Psychology? (Heine, chpt. 1)**

Jan 09 **Tue** Introduction to course

Jan 11 **Thu** Heine chapter 1 (pp. 4-10, to end of 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph; 18-33)

Summary chapter 1

### **Topic 2: Culture and Socialization, Part 1 (Heine, chpt. 5)**

Jan 16 **Tue** Brains (161-162), language acquisition (163-167) *Living Language*

Jan 18 **Thu** Acquiring culture (168f.), childhood experiences, parenting style (172-184)

### **Topic 3: Culture and Socialization, Part 2 (Heine, chpt. 5)**

Jan 23 **Tue** Developmental transitions (186-191) *Developmental Tasks and Transitions*

Jan 25 **Thu** Education (191-196) “*school language*”

Summary chapter 5

### **Topic 4: Acculturation (Heine, chpt. 7)**

Jan 30 **Tue** Acculturation (258-260), When people move, acc. strategies (260-270)

Feb 01 **Thu** different-unequal (272-278), multicultural people (287-290): Bhatia (2012, p. 115-118 + 126-128)

**Journal Entry #1** writing a short summary and appreciation of Bhatia (2012) **DUE by this day, February 1.** Bring your paper to class, we will work with it!

In class: critical reflection on the notion of acculturation, small group discussion Bhatia (2012), whole class results.

Summary chapter 7

**Journal Entry #2:** “The voices of my cultures” (self-description linking back to theoretical notions of this week).

**DUE BY: February 8, 2018**

**Topic 5: Self in Culture (Heine, chpt. 6)**

Fe 06 **Tue** Who am I (205-209), independent vs. interdependent self (210-215)

**Reading Assignment 1: preparatory reading of Markus & Kitayama** (1991, abstract, Intro, 226+ 227: normative imperatives), class conversation

Fe 08 **Thu** individualism vs collectivism + **chapter 3**, 91-97 cultures become more individualistic; gender (224-229)

Summary chapter 6

**Topic 6: Becoming a Self in Culture and Language Activity**

Feb 13 **Tue** Ross et al, 2016

**Reading Assignment 2: preparatory reading of Ross et al**, small-group discussions, whole class results

Feb 15 **Thu** Demuth et al, 2011

**Reading Assignment 3: preparatory reading of Demuth et al**, small-group discussions, whole class results

**Topic 7: Conversation as Cultural Activity**

Feb 20 **Tue** Keating & Egbert, 2006

**Reading Assignment 4: preparatory reading of Keating and Egbert**, small-group discussions, whole class results

Feb 22 **Thu** Turkle, 2011 (“Audrey”, pp. 189-194)

**Reading Assignment 5: preparatory reading of Turkle**, small-group discussions, whole class results

**Journal Entry #3:** Make a brief (!) interview with two persons: one from your own generation, one from an older generation. Ask the persons about how they think that the frequent presence of mobile devices in social settings influences their face-to-face interactions: is there a change? What do they experience? Write down what the persons said in a comprehensive way. This journal entry should have 2 pages.

**DUE BY: March 1, 2018**

**Topic 8: Thinking as Conversational-Cultural Activity**

Feb28 **Tue** Heine, chpt. 9, pp. 374-377; Raven Matrices; Students' experience (in pairs), small group exchanges

Mar2 **Thu** Mercer & Sams (2006); Thinking Together

**Reading Assignment 6: preparatory reading of transcribed conversations in Mercer and Sams**, small-group discussions, whole class results + mc: thinking-and-speaking with others and ourselves: a culturally situated and culture developing activity

**Midterm Exam**

**Mar 13 Tue: Midterm Exam Review**

**Mar 15 Thu: Midterm Exam**

\*\*\*\* *SPRING BREAK MARCH 19-23* \*\*\*\*

**Topic 11: Cognition and Perception in Cultures (Heine, chpt. 9)**

Mar 27 **Tue** analytic/holistic thinking, attention, understanding others' behavior, reasoning styles, toleration of contradiction (349-372)

Mar 29 **Thu** linguistic relativity (382-397)

**Reading Assignment 7: reading Humboldt (1999): the idea of the world view.** Small-group discussions and whole class discussions

Summary chapter 9

\*\*\*\* Apr 03 **Tue** Scholars' Day, **no classes 1-4pm** \*\*\*\*

## **Topic 12: Emotion and Culture (Heine, chpt. 10)**

Apr 05 **Thu** def. emotion (404-408); cultural-emotional experiences (408-422)

Apr 10 **Tue** emotion and language (424-426), cultural variations (426-439)

### **Summary chapter 10**

**Journal Entry #4:** Take Demuth et al (2011, 78-79; 81-82). Describe precisely what happens between mother and infant; How does each mother manage the negative affect expression of her child?

**DUE BY: April 17, 2018**

**\*\*\*\* Apr 12 Thu: SPARC whole day, no class \*\*\*\***

## **Topic 10: Motivation and Culture (Heine, chpt. 8)**

Apr 17 **Tue** self-esteem + enhancement (301-313): Max Weber (316-322)

Apr 19 **Thu** agency and control (322-337); motivation to fit in/stick out (337-342)

### **Summary chapter 8**

## **Final Exam**

**Apr 24 Tue Review of Final Exam**

**Apr 26 Thu Final Exam**

## **Overview of Reading Assignments and Journals**

### **Assignments**

1. preparatory reading of Markus & Kitayama (1991, abstract, Intro, 226+ 227: normative imperatives) + class activity **flag: R-MK**
2. preparatory reading Ross et al (2016) + class activity **flag: R-R**
3. preparatory reading Demuth et al (2011) + class activity **flag: R-D**
4. preparatory reading Keating & Egbert (2006) + class activity **flag: R-KE**
5. preparatory reading Turkle (2011) + class activity **flag: R-T**
6. preparatory reading of transcribed conversations in Mercer & Sams (2006) **flag: R-MS**
7. reading in class: Humboldt (1999) + class activity **flag: R-H**

## Journal Entries

1. **Journal Entry #1** writing a short summary and appreciation of Bhatia (2012), due by February 1
2. **Journal Entry #2**: “The voices of my cultures”, due by February 8
3. **Journal Entry #3**: Make a brief (!) interview with two persons, due by March 1
4. **Journal Entry #4**: Take Demuth et al (2011, 78-79; 81-82). Describe precisely what happens between mother and infant; How does each mother manage the negative affect expression of her child? Due by April 17

**Do not forget references when you mention an author in a journal! Use APA format**

In your text e.g., “Miller (1965)” and at the end of your journal:

Miller, S. (1965). Psychology’s future. *Theory & Psychology*, 3(2), 34-56.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Accessibility.** Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. To make an appointment, please contact Counseling & Career Services in 123 Row Hall, or call 678-839-6428. For additional information, visit the following website: [http://www.westga.edu/counseling/index\\_8884.php](http://www.westga.edu/counseling/index_8884.php). Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities should also contact me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

**Civility.** We should work together to create a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. While we may sometimes disagree with each other on topics discussed in class, it is important that we remember that appreciating diversity in perspectives is an important part of the learning process. With that said, all opinions are welcome. However, disagreements should be directed at an argument and not the person. It is expected that everyone will be treated with respect. **If you ever feel that you are not being treated with respect in the classroom, please let me know.**

**Cell phones and other noisy things.** Cell phones, pagers, iPods, headphones, etc. are not to be in use while in class or during exam days. Please refrain from texting, instant messaging, gaming, and emailing while in class. It is distracting to the instructor as well as to those around you. If you require an exception to this rule, come and talk to me about your situation asap. If any of these issues becomes a problem, you will be excused from the class.

**Academic and Personal Integrity:** As outlined by the University of West Georgia Honor Code, “West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity.” Violations of this policy will be met with sanctions and ignorance of its provisions is not an acceptable excuse. Make sure to read the university policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty in your student handbook. Plagiarism involves the use of others’ words and/or ideas without giving them proper credit, which includes passing another person’s paper off as your own and failing to cite a source. If you copy a student’s paper or copy a paper off the internet, you will get caught. Plagiarism software can detect copied papers and copied text. You are responsible for knowing how to properly cite sources with APA formatting.

**Communication Policy.** As the instructor, I will endeavor to reply to all messages that conform to conventional standards of polite, respectful correspondence within 48 hours. I will reply to other (i.e., less than polite) messages as circumstances permit. Please note that I reserve the right (and have the responsibility) to purge offensive or excessively aggressive posts to Course Den. Although it should go without saying, please refrain from attacking, harassing, or threatening either fellow students or instructors via the Course Site (or any other means, for that matter).

**Intellectual Property Rights.** Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and notes presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, course materials may not be modified and **must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person**, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

**Note: The syllabus contains a lot of essential information about the course so please make sure to read it carefully and revisit it regularly during the semester. In addition, all students must review the following information about university policies:**

[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common Language for Course Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common%20Language%20for%20Course%20Syllabi.pdf)

#### **REFERENCES TO ADDITIONAL MATERIAL (SUPPLIED ON COURSE DEN AS PDF)**

Bhatia, S. (2012). Acculturation and the dialogical formation of immigrant identity: race and culture in diaspora spaces. In H.J.M. Hermans & Th. Gieser (Eds.), *Handbook of Dialogical Self Theory* (pp. 115-131). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Demuth, C., Keller, H. & D Yovsi, R. (2012) Cultural models in communication with infants: Lessons from Kikaikelaki, Cameroon and Muenster, Germany. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 10(1), 70-87.

Humboldt, W., von (1999). *On Language: On the diversity of human language construction and its influence on the mental development of the human species* (M. Lonsonsky, Ed., P. Heath, Transl.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Partly online:  
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/vhumboldt-wilhelm.htm>

Keating, E. & Egbert, M. (2006). Conversation as cultural activity. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 169-196). Malden (MA): Blackwell.

Markus, H. R. & Kitayama, Sh. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224-253.

Mercer, N. & Sams, C. (2006). Teaching children how to use language to solve maths problems. *Language and Education*, 20(6), 507-528.

Ross, J., Yilmaz, M, Dale, R., Cassidy, R., Yildirim, I., & Zeedyk, M.S. (2016). Cultural differences in self-recognition: the early development of autonomous and related selves? *Developmental Science*, 1–13.

Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone together. Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. New York: Basic Books.