Psychology and Cultural Diversity / Difference
-Fall 2010-

Instructor: Leswin Laubscher, Ph. D.
Office: Rm 215, Rockwell Hall
Office Hours: Mon. (16h30 – 17h30); Wed.
(10h00 – 11h00); or by appt.

Welcome to Psychology and Cultural Diversity/Difference. It is my hope that you will find this course exciting, stimulating, and enriching – both academically and (inter)personally.

Course Objectives

This course is framed by an examination of the interplay between culture and mind. From this broad orienting ground, two general objectives figure - first, to explore major theories, trends, and research in the areas of cultural and cross-cultural psychology, the social psychology of diversity and difference, as well as the psychology of prejudice, racism, and power. The second course objective attempts personal growth in the challenge to examine prejudice, power, privilege and stereotype reflexively and introspectively as it pertains, especially, to the social and cultural aspects of difference discussed in class.

Course Format
The material will be covered through a combination of lectures, discussions, audio-visual presentations, role-plays, written assignments,
experiential class activities, and student presentations. It is my wish and expectation that everyone, instructor and students, will participate actively and take joint responsibility for the success of this class.

**Readings**

All required article readings are available on the Blackboard web space. While there are no required texts for purchase, I will recommend a number of texts throughout the semester, most of which are rather readily available.

**Students with Disabilities and/or Special needs**

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations. Please contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services (Room 309, Student Union and/or at telephone 396.6657) as soon as possible. Accommodations cannot be granted retrospectively.

**Assignments / Projects / Evaluation**

**Article Summaries**

Each student will select a reading to summarize and facilitate class discussion on.

**Final Project: “An auto-ethnography of difference”**

For the final project, you are to write an auto-ethnography that addresses issues, theories, and/or experiences examined in class, or stirred up by class conversations and readings. Whereas additional information will be provided in class, the expectation is for a paper that is as courageously reflexive and introspective as it is academically rigorous and insightful. The following readings will frame the methodological expectations:


• In addition, I expect you to read at least ONE of the following dissertations:

• [Two of the dissertations above are accessible via ETD, while I will make the third available as a pdf file on Blackboard. Pay particular attention to what makes the dissertation an autoethnography in preparation for your own]

I hope you will find the course meaningful and enriching. I look forward to learning with, and from, you. Welcome and good luck.
This schedule is a guide only, and we are certain to modify it as issues present themselves, or when discussions spill over. A number of supplemental readings will also be added, and uploaded to Blackboard, as I come across new articles or as you share readings with me.

**Week 1:**

*Introductions; Course overview; introducing the question of culture.*

*Culture is only true when implicitly critical, and the mind which forgets this revenges itself in the critics it breeds. Criticism is an indispensable element of culture (Theodor W. Adorno)*


**Week 2:**

*Mainstream Psychology studies Culture*

*Without culture, and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect, is but a jungle. This is why any authentic creation is a gift to the future (Albert Camus)*


*Week 3:*

**Studying Culture: Alternatives (especially cultural psychology)**

The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you; they are unique manifestations of the human spirit*"* (Wade Davis)


*Week 4:*

**Race & Ethnicity – Essentialist approaches, and alternatives**

At bottom, to be colored means that one has been caught in some utterly unbelievable cosmic joke, a joke so hideous and in such bad taste that it defeats all categories and definitions (James Baldwin)

• Sue, D. & Sue, D. (1999). *Counseling the culturally different* (Selection). New York: John Wiley


**Week 5:**

**Race & Ethnicity Continues**

  In this country American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate (Toni Morrison)


• Fanon, F. (1967). Black skin, white masks (Selection). New York: Grove press


**Week 6:**

**Race & Ethnicity Continues -- (Whiteness Studies)**

  An identity is questioned only when it is menaced, as when the mighty begin to fall, or when the wretched begin to rise, or when the stranger enters the gates, never, thereafter, to be a stranger... Identity would seem to be the garment with which one covers the nakedness of the self: in which case, it is best that the garment be loose, a little like the
robes of the desert, through which one's nakedness can always be felt, and, sometimes, discerned. This trust in one's nakedness is all that gives one the power to change one's robes. (James Baldwin)


- Sue, & Sue. Counseling the culturally different (Selection)


*Week 7:*

**Sexual Orientation: The mainstream and Essentialism**

A person's sexuality is so much more than one word "gay." No one refers to anyone as just "hetero" because that doesn't say anything. Sexual identity is broader than a label (Gus Van Sant)


**Week 8:**

**Sexual Orientation continues: Alternatives**

One cannot serve this Eros without becoming a stranger in society as it is today; one cannot commit oneself to this form of love without incurring a mortal wound (Klaus Mann)


**Week 9:**

**Sexual Orientation: Queer Theory**

Why can't they have gay people in the army? Personally, I think they are just afraid of a thousand guys with M16's going: 'Who'd you call a faggot?' (Jon Stewart)


**Week 10**

**Social Class**
In every one of those little stucco boxes there's some poor bastard who's never free except when he's fast asleep and dreaming that he's got the boss down the bottom of a well end is bunging lumps of coal at him (George Orwell)


- Pegueros, R. M. (1995). Todos Vuelven: From Portrero Hill to UCLA. In Barnes-Dews & Law (Eds.), This fine place so far from home: Academics from the working class, pp. 87-105. Temple University Press


Week II

Social Class continues

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force (Karl Marx)


**Week 12:**

**Identity in the diaspora; hybridity; pastiche**

*For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.* (Hebrew Bible - Judges 8:24)


• James Clifford. Diasporas


**Week 13:**

**Video Presentation**
The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one’s own country as a foreign land.
(G. K. Chesterton)

*Week 14:*

Performing difference & diversity; Conclusions;
What’s Next?

An ounce of action is worth a ton of theory.
(Friedrich Engels)

Philosophers have only interpreted the world the world in various ways; the point is to change it
(Karl Marx)