

# GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: PSYC 375: Cross-Cultural Psychology  
Credits: 3 Credits  
Instructor: S. Passeri



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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The field of cross-cultural psychology is the scientific study of similarities and differences in individual psychological functioning in various cultural and ethno cultural groups; it examines the relationship and the ongoing changes between psychological variables and socio-cultural, ecological and biological variables.

As our world becomes smaller, due to the ease of international travel, immigration, globalization of business, etc., it is very important that we understand how individuals from other cultures think, feel, and behave, and to understand the forces, beliefs and motivations that underlie their behaviour. It is essential to examine all the topics on psychology from a broad cultural perspective.

This course introduces the student to the research and theoretical foundations of cross-cultural psychology. To this end, the course focuses on the influence of culture upon individual human behaviour, examining factors leading to socio-cultural similarities and differences in action, thought, emotion, personality and behavioural norms. Included is an examination of culture shock and the influence of culture in group interaction.

A section of the course will be dedicated to the exploration of the theoretical issues underlying social stereotyping and prejudicial attitudes as well as the consequences that stereotypes and prejudice have for those who are targeted by them. Our discussion will be applicable to a variety of groups (e.g., race or ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) and should have implications for a broad range settings (e.g., educational, organization, clinical, etc.).

The students' cross-cultural experience in Florence will be used, through experientially-based activities, to explore the principals and issues of cross-cultural psychology and intercultural communication.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To introduce cross-cultural theoretical frameworks.
- To examine the concepts and processes necessary for cross-cultural research.
- To help students understand behavioural differences in individuals among various cultural groups.
- To help students understand their own cultural backgrounds and the dynamics of their cross-cultural experience, through the exploration of the Italian culture, thus to discover cultural and psychological variations which are not present in their own cultural experience.
- To improve intercultural communication.
- To help students understand and think critically about the various manifestations of prejudice in our society and help them apply the psychological perspectives for reducing prejudice to our everyday life.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Student will attend class, complete all readings and participate in class discussion. Each student will lead class discussion for one half-hour time slot during the semester and provide feedback on classmates' work.

There will be two exams over the course of the semester. The first exam, will be given mid-semester, based on material covered up to that point. The final exam will be comprehensive and require the student to draw from knowledge gained over the semester from class notes, assigned readings, class presentations, and class discussions.

There are also two assignments for this class. The first one is a cultural interview report. Each student will interview a person of Italian culture and discuss the findings in class. In the second assignment, each student will read a book chosen from a list of possible selections, and write a report. Students are also responsible for a 15 minute presentation of the psychological concepts and issues presented in the book.

## **COURSE GRADE:**

The course is scored on a 500 (100%) point scale, as follows:

Mid-term exam	100 points (20%)
Final exam	150 points (30%)
Book project	100 points (20%)
Cultural interview report	100 points (20%)
Attendance and Participation	50 points (10%)

## **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Textbook:

-Matsumoto D., Juang L., (2008). *Culture and Psychology*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Thompson Wadsworth

Supplemental readings from:

-Ward, C., Bochner, S., Furnham, A. (2001). *The Psychology of Culture Shock*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Routledge.

-Journals articles assigned weekly.

Novels will be assigned at the beginning of the semester.