GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS
Course: PSYC 375: Cross-Cultural Psychology
Credits: 3 Credits
Instructor: S. Passeri

Office Hours: I am available to see students individually by appointment. Please contact me at: siliapasseri@yahoo.it

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 in 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 METHOD:
The method used in this class includes lectures; individual and group presentations of readings, group and individual in-class and out-of-class activities and data collection, class discussions, and questionnaires.
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: Cultural Interview report: each student will interview a person of Italian culture, turn in a typed report (2-3 pages) and discuss the findings in class. Final Paper & Presentation: students are required to make a group presentation that more closely examines a relevant issue in the area of cross-cultural psychology in which the group is interested. One week after the presentation, the final paper (3000 words, 8-10 pages, double-spaced, Times, 12 Font) will be due. The group should use a current event in the local or international media, a book or a movie, that exemplifies one or more principles in cross-cultural psychology. The sources for the paper and presentation need to be primarily from peer-reviewed journals (e.g., Journal of Personality and Social Psychology). The paper needs to be written in APA Style, including references. The paper will be graded according to content and organization.

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:
-Journals articles assigned weekly.