



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title:	Cultural Psychology: Czech and American Perspectives
Course code:	PSYC 3007 PRAG
Programs offering course:	Business, Arts and Sciences, Central European Studies, Communication, New Media, and Journalism
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3.00
Contact hours:	45.00
Term:	Fall 2023

Course Description

Cultural psychology examines how our psychology (perception, emotion, judgment, attitudes, personality, etc.) and our culture (the distribution of values, practices, beliefs, institutions, and human-made physical environments within which each of us uniquely develops) complement each other. This course adopts a comparative approach to explore topics such as personality, cognition, emotion, the relationship between language and thought, acculturation, and others, providing Czech and American perspectives.

Arguably, unlike any other species in earth's history, humans come into the world ill-prepared to survive in any particular physical environment; yet, thanks in large part to social and cultural systems, we are able to adapt across an extreme range of habitats. The basic question to examine here is to what extent people in all cultures share the same psychology and to what extent our psychology differ along with our distinct cultures. Taking advantage of living in Prague, students explore some of these ideas through field research.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- assess how a wide variety of psychological processes often thought to be shared across our species - ranging from perception to emotion to personality to mental health to morality - may depend on cultural systems;
- critically discuss the assumed generality of psychological theories based primarily upon Western contexts that fail to take culture into account;
- conduct field research on an elementary level;
- analyze how culture and psychology complement each other in a specific selection of countries and regions, with a special emphasis on the Czech Republic;
- critically reflect upon how culture might affect its own psychology;
- critically discuss the Czech people and their culture, and through reflection gain new insights into American people and culture.

Course Prerequisites

While there are no formal prerequisites, this is a demanding course. In addition to extensive class discussion and writing, it requires careful reading, the courage and discipline to put yourself into unfamiliar settings, and talk to and observe people you do not know who may not speak English. Although students do not need a background in psychology or anthropology, being comfortable to think and discuss high-level psychological, cultural and social concepts is an advantage.

Methods of Instruction

This is a seminar style course. Most of the learning will depend on the students' active engagement with the materials presented. Students will be required to read a selection of texts prior to every class, to do their own thinking and writing about those texts, and to actively engage with other students in discussing them, with guidance from the instructor.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Assessment and Final Grade

1.	Summary / critique of the readings	20%
2.	Weekly Field Research	20%
3.	In-class presentation	10%
4.	Midterm Exam	10%
5.	Final Paper	20%
6.	Participation	20%
	TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Summary / critique of the readings

Students will have the task to write a summary or critical response to each assigned reading. Directions for submission will be provided in the assignments section of Canvas. Summaries and critical responses should have sufficient depth to demonstrate the text was read carefully. Critical responses should convey sufficient background from the text such that the response stands on its own without the instructor needing to refer to the original text to understand the student's response. At the same time, the critical responses should be *about* the arguments and evidence in the texts, not about more general issues outside the text that were not a major theme of the text itself. These assignments should NOT be a minimum of 250 words, double-spaced. If there is more than one assigned reading, a separate response should be written for each reading.

Weekly Field Research

During the 2nd class meeting, students will choose one or two cultural or subcultural groups in Prague and a cultural-psychological research question associated with that group. During the semester, students should spend at least 1 hour—ideally 2 hours—each week, observing members of this group, taking field notes, and eventually conducting interviews with members of that community. Field notes and/or interview transcripts for that week—with names and identifying information changed to protect informants' anonymity—should be submitted by Sunday evening and will be discussed during the following week. Directions for submission will be provided in the assignments section of Canvas. The first set of field notes is due at the end of the 2nd week and the last set is due at the end of the 11th week. This leaves a total of 10 sets of field notes.

In-class presentation

Starting in the fifth week and continuing through the 11th week, each student will have one 15-minute, in-class presentation of his or her cultural or sub-cultural group, explaining the basics of who that group is, why the student finds that group interesting, an initial cultural-psychological question or hypothesis about that group, and why that cultural-psychological question or hypothesis should be meaningful/important to a wider audience.

Midterm Exam

There will be an essay-style midterm exam during which students will need to write about important cultural-psychological topics covered in this course, and how those themes connect to the field research and to the students' home culture.

Final Paper

Students should write a final paper based on their observations and findings from the field research (summarizing key information about their group, describing what's interesting about them from a cultural-psychological perspective), and extending those observations to develop a concrete research question and hypothesis that still needs to be resolved, that was developed in the process of conducting field research, and that could be tested. The paper should include a research proposal, and describe concrete methods that could be used to test the hypothesis (an experiment, a survey, a future field study). The paper should be at least 2500 words long, double spaced, not including references, cover page, abstract, etc. We will talk about the paper requirements in more detail during class.

THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM IN THIS COURSE.

Participation

Active participation is very important in this class. Students are expected to attend every class, to arrive on time and to stay until the end, to present their own—and actively discuss other students'—field notes, and to regularly contribute to discussions about the readings and course content. During class, students will be asked to

summarize the readings or to describe their critical responses to them. Students will also selectively read one another's field notes (before class) and actively discuss that material in class. CIEE has its own attendance policies that may affect your final grade (attached to this syllabus), but your participation grade will also be affected by attendance to the extent that missed classes affect your participation in class discussions and activities.

CIEE Prague Participation Policy

Assessment of students' participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. Students are required to actively, meaningfully and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and all types of in-class activities throughout the duration of the class.

Students are responsible for following the course content and are expected to ask clarification questions if they cannot follow the instructor's or other students' line of thought or argumentation.

The use of electronic devices is only allowed for computer-based in-class tests, assignments and other tasks specifically assigned by the course instructor. Students are expected to take notes by hand unless the student is entitled to the use of computer due to his/her academic accommodations. In such cases the student is required to submit an official letter issued by his/her home institution specifying the extent of academic accommodations.

Class participation also includes students' active participation in Canvas discussions and other additional tasks related to the course content as specified by the instructor. If missing a class, the student is expected to catch up on the class content and to submit well-reflected and in-depth contributions to Canvas discussions on the particular topic or reflections to the instructor to ensure that his/her absence from the class will not significantly affect his/her participation grade.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.

Attendance

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1 INTRODUCTION

cross-cultural, intercultural psychology, definition of basic concepts.

Class: 1.2 Designing cross-cultural research, sampling and interpretation.

How to choose your field research group.

Week 2

Class: 2.1 Similarities and differences in behavior across cultures,

Individual development: **Infancy and early childhood.**

Reading: Cross cultural psychology, page 20-31

Reading response 1 due

Class: 2.2 Adolescence and adulthood

Mating and partnership, parenting and the family, clinical examples.

Weekly field research notes 1 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 3

Class: 3.1 Social behavior

Culture as a social psychological construct, how to study a culture.

Reading: Cross cultural psychology, page 40-50

Reading response 2 due

Class: 3.2 Online course: Social representations,

Social values and culture, collectivistic and individualistic cultures.

Weekly field research notes 2 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Personality

Big five dimensions, the national character, does that exist?

Reading: Article Ivana Markova, the making of social representations

Reading response 3 due

Class: 4.2 Comparison of Czech Republic and America

Some non-western concepts, updates on field research.

Weekly field research notes 3 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 5

Class: 5.1 Cognition

General intelligence, comparative studies.

Reading: Cross cultural psychology, page 112-125

Reading response 4 due

In-class presentation 1

Class: 5.2 Language

linguistic relativity, universality.

Weekly field research notes 4 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 6

Class: 6.1 Emotion

Emotional components, culture and its influence on emotions.

Reading: The intercultural mind, cognition and language, page 172-189

In-class presentation 3

Reading response 10 due

Class: 6.2 Facial expressions, an excursion into human ethology, updates on field research.

In-class presentation 4

Weekly field research notes 5 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 7

Class: 7.1 Revision and Test

Midterm Exam Period

Class: 7.2 Acculturation

definitions and framework.

Reading: film on youtube about emotions from Yale professor

In-class presentation 5

Weekly field research notes 6 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 8

Class: 8.1 Guest speaker

Class: 8.2 Acculturation process

Dimensions of acculturation and assessment of acculturation.

Reading: Acculturation psychology, page 11-25

In-class presentation 6

Weekly field research notes 7 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 9

Class: 9.1 Cultural differences and suffering of identity

clinical examples, personal stories

Reading: Acculturation psychology, Acculturation in the US, page 311-329

In-class presentation 7

Class: 9.2 The false self

How to find roots in a multicultural world?

Preparing the field research for the final presentation.

In-class presentation 8

Weekly field research notes 8 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 10

Class: 10.1 Health and illness

psychopathologies across cultures.

Reading: Acculturation psychology, acculturation stress, page 43-55

In-class presentation 9

Class: 10.2 Psychotherapy

cross-cultural psychotherapy, multicultural psychotherapy.

In-class presentation 10

Weekly field research notes 9 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 11

Class: 11.1 Intercultural relations

multiculturalism, multiculturalism hypothesis.

Reading: Eating disorders, Eating disorders East and West, page 1 - 13

In-class presentation 11

Reading response 18 due

Class: 11.2 Group discussion

Group discussion about immigration based on all acquired knowledge.

Weekly field research notes 10 due on Sunday, 11:59 Prague time

Week 12

Class: 12.1 Final Project Presentation

Reading: Intercultural mind, Interculturality, page 191-205

Class: 12.2 Final Project Presentation

Week 13

Class: 13.1 Final Exam Week

Final paper submission

Class: 13.2 Final Exam Week

End-of-course discussion

Course Materials

Readings

- Berry, J. & Poortinga, Y. (2011). *Cross Cultural Psychology*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press
- Eibl-Eibesfeld, I. (2004). *Die Biologie des menschlichen Verhaltens*. Munich : Blank media
- Hofstede, G. (2002) *Exploring Culture*. Boston : Intercultural Press
- Juan, L. & Matsumoto, (2017) D. *Culture and psychology*. Boston : Cengage Learning
- Kaes, R. & et al. (2012). *Différence culturelle et souffrances de l'identité*. Paris : DUNOD
- Shaules, J. (2015). *The intercultural mind*. Boston : Intercultural Press
- Nasser, M., Katzman, M. (2001). *Eating disorders and Cultures in Transition*. New York : Brunner Routledge

- Sam, D., Berry, J. (2006). *Acculturation psychology*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press
- Further readings
- Bennis, W. & Medin, D. (2010). Weirdness is in the eye of the beholder: Comment on Henrich et al. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33, 85-86.
- Colapinto, J. (2007). The interpreter. *The New Yorker*, April 16.
- Fiske, A.P. (1992). The four elementary forms of sociality: Framework for a unified theory of social relations. *Psychological Review*, 99, 689-723.
- Geertz, C. (1972). Notes on the Balinese cockfight. *Daedalus*, 101, 1-37.
- Geertz, C. (1984/1974). "From the native's point of view": On the nature of anthropological understanding, In R.A. Shweder & R.A. LeVine (Eds.), *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, & Emotion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gladwell, M. (2008). *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Little, Brown and Co.
- Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*, 108, 814-834.
- Hašek, J. (1995/1923). *The Good Soldier Švejk: and His Fortunes in the World War*. New York: Penguin Classics. [literary source for film]
- Henrich J., Heine S.J., & Norenzayan A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33, 61-83.
- Kolman, L., Hofstede, G., & Dienes, E. (2003). Cross-cultural differences in Central Europe. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 18, 76-88.
- Medin, D., Bennis, W., & Chandler, M. (2010). Culture and the home-field disadvantage. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5, 708-713.
- Miller, J.G. (1984). Culture and the development of everyday social explanation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 961-978.
- Nisbett, et al. (2001). Culture and systems of thought: Holistic versus analytic cognition. *Psychological Review*, 108, 291-310.
- Norenzayan, A., & Heine, S.J. (2005). Psychological universals: What are they and how can we know? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 763-784.
- Rosaldo, R. (1989). Introduction: Grief and a headhunter's rage. *Culture & Truth*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Watters, E. (2010). The Americanization of mental illness. *The New York Times Magazine*, January 8.
- Wetzler, B. (2000). Is just like Amerika! *Outside*. November 1.

Online Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BT0kzF4A-WQ>

Media Resources

Films

Český mír