OVERVIEW

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to the study of culture and human behavior in general, and culture and mental health in particular. Although attention will be given to cross-national research and to research of the major U.S. racial/ethnic groups (i.e., Asian Americans, African Americans, American Indians, and Latinos), the focus will be on social and cultural processes. Three specific aims of this course are (a) to familiarize students with how social and behavioral scientists study social and cultural processes in mental health related areas, (b) to help students identify social and cultural processes in their daily lives, and (c) to guide students to think critically about the role of culture, race and ethnicity in human behavior. The instructor believes that understanding in one area (research or daily lives) will help advance understanding in the other area.

This course fulfilling USC’s Diversity Requirement by focusing on several different forms of difference largely under the rubric of culture. The emphasis is on ethnicity, race, and nationality and to a lesser extent, social class and language. Students will learn about culture, ethnicity and race in several ways, including how behavioral scientists conceptualize and measure culture, ethnicity and race, and how they study the relationship of these constructs to mental health problems, to disparities in use and quality of mental health care, and to how clients’ are evaluated and treated in the mental health care system. In addition, we will examine how acculturation and racism relate to mental health.

MECHANISMS TO MEET COURSE OBJECTIVES

Lectures, class exercises, readings, and an optional paper will expose students to the scientific study of culture and mental health. Students will benefit most from the class if they keep up with the readings and regularly attend class. The following evaluations will be conducted:

1. **Two in-class exams** (a midterm and a final) will be given. Brief identification and short essay questions will be used for each exam. These exams require in-depth knowledge of the course material. The final exam will not be cumulative. Please note that exams will be distributed at the beginning of class. No exams will be distributed after 15 minutes into the exam and there will be no make-up exams.

2. There will also be **4 short quizzes** given throughout the semester. They will be comprised usually of 10 multiple-choice questions reflecting the key points of the prior lectures and reading. Students generally find the quizzes to be much easier than the midterm and final. They will be held at the beginning of the class and should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. The three highest grades will comprise students’ final Quiz grade. There will be no make-up quizzes.
3. To help students recognize cultural processes in people’s daily lives, students will be required **to write and present three critical cultural papers**. For the first two papers, students will be instructed to draw from experiences in their daily lives and consider the cultural basis to their or other’s behavior. For the third paper, students will be instructed to watch a videotaped narrative from the archives of USC’s Shoah Foundation Institute (http://dornsife.usc.edu/vhi/). A representative from the Shoah Institute will meet with us and guide us regarding how to access the narratives to be used for this assignment. These 3 papers should be no more than one page, single-spaced. They will be required for 3 separate weeks. There will be no opportunities to make-up the papers.

Students will be assigned to small groups to present and discuss their papers. Each group will be asked to nominate one paper to be presented orally to the class. Writing, reading, and discussing these papers should enhance students' skills in recognizing social and cultural processes in their daily lives. The hard copies of the papers will be turned in immediately after the group meetings. Attending the group meetings is also a required part of class; missing a group meeting cannot be made up.

4. **Optional paper**. Students will have the option to write a 10-page research paper. To do so, a one-paragraph proposal must first be submitted on line to Blackboard before class on February 8th. Papers will be accepted only if the topic is first approved by the instructor or teaching assistant (TA). On March 7th an introduction and the summary and critique of one research study will be due. Students are required to submit the intro and summary to Blackboard before class. It will give the instructor/TA an opportunity to give the student feedback early enough to be incorporated in the final draft. Although this early version will not be graded, it is required. Only those students who submit the intro and summary on time will be permitted to submit a final paper. The completed paper will be due April 9th via Blackboard prior to the beginning of class. The submission of late papers will be penalized.

**GRADING**

**Individual critical cultural papers** will be graded on a 4-point scale: 0 (Did not turn in), 1 (Poor: Needs significant improvement), 2 (Good: Needs minor adjustments), and 3 (Excellent: Meets all criteria). The specific criteria to achieve an excellent score will be distributed and discussed later. For now it is important to know that a “0” will be reserved for papers that are not turned in or are turned in late. Students are required to submit their critical culture papers to the course Blackboard prior to 8:00 am of the day they are due. No extensions will be given for the papers. The grade for these assignments will be based on the number of times the student presents their paper to their group (0 to 3 points) and the number of points each student receives for their papers (0 to 9 possible points). The maximum number of possible points is 12. Points will be assigned the following percentage points: 12 = 100%; 11 = 95%; 10 = 90%; 9 = 85%; 8 = 80%; 7 = 75%; 6 = 70%; 5 = 65%; 4 = 60%; 3 = 55%; 2 = 50%; 1 = 45%; and 0 = 0%.

An extra point will be given to those individual students whose paper is nominated by their group to be presented to the whole class AND who present their paper to the whole class. Students can only earn a total of two extra points across the three papers.
The final course grade will be based on students’ grades for the tests, quizzes, journals, and the optional paper. Two distributions will be used to derive the final grade depending on whether the student writes the optional research paper.

ASSIGNMENTS’ PROPORTION OF GRADES

| Assignments                  | Percentage
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC Papers &amp; presentations</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 exams</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CC Papers &amp; presentations</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 exams</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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COURSE GRADING

- **A**: 93 - 100%
- **A-**: 90 - 92.9%
- **B+**: 87 - 89.9%
- **B**: 83 - 86.9%
- **B-**: 80 - 82.9%
- **C+**: 77 - 79.9%
- **C**: 73 - 76.9%
- **C-**: 70 - 72.9%
- **D+**: 67 - 69.9%
- **D**: 63 - 66.9%
- **D-**: 60 - 62.9%
- **F**: Below 60%

COURSE POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating will not be tolerated. Professor Lopez will report to the Dean of Students any violation of the ethical codes. Students can refer to the following guides that spell out ethical violations:

INCOMPLETES

IN Incomplete is assigned when work is not completed because of documented illness or other “emergency” occurring after the twelfth week of the semester (or the twelfth week equivalent for any course that is scheduled for less than 15 weeks).

Definition of emergency: A situation or event which could not be foreseen and which is beyond the student’s control, and which prevents the student from taking the final examination or completing other work due during the final examination period. Also note that as defined above, a student may not request an IN before the end of the twelfth week; the rationale is that the student still has the option to drop the course until the end of the twelfth week (or twelfth week equivalent). The grade of IN exists so there is a remedy for illness or emergency which occurs after the drop deadline.

DISABILITY POLICY STATEMENT

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for
approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Phones, blackberries, and similar devices must be turned off or placed away during class. Likewise, you should not use instant messenger or similar chat programs during class. Also, students’ laptop use should be restricted to class-related material.

BLACKBOARD

Professor Lopez and the Teaching Assistant will use the University’s Blackboard system to post grades and to post copies of any assignments or announcements that we hand out in class. We will also use your email address in the University system to send out messages. Note that Blackboard relies on your University email account. You need that account to log in and email will be sent to that address.

TEXTS


Other readings can be downloaded from Blackboard

READING ASSIGNMENTS

| Wk  | Jan 9 | Introduction                        |
|     | Jan 11 | History & Challenges                |
| Wk 2 | Jan 16 | *Martin Luther King Holiday*        |
|     | Jan 18 | Theoretical Concepts                |
| Wk 3 | Jan 23 | Methodological Approaches          |
|     | Jan 25 | Culture Matters/                   |
|     |       | Introduction to *Journal*          |
| Wk 4 | Jan 30 | *Quiz 1*                           |
|     |       | DSM and Culture                    |
|     | Feb 1  | Psychopathology I: Child (Eating Disorders) |
|     |       | *Journal 1*                        |
| Wk 5 | Feb 6  | Psychopathology II: (Eating Disorder & Anxiety) |
|     | Feb 8  | Psychopathology III: Adult (Depression) |
|     |       | *Paper Proposal Due*               |
Quiz 2
Psychopathology IV: Adult (Schizophrenia)  
Disparities in Mental Health Care 
Journal 2

Feb 15

Quiz 3
Intervention I: Conceptual Issues and Treatment Domains  
Intervention II: Application to Cases & Training 

Feb 28

Quiz 4
Acculturation/Ethnic Identity  

Apr 11

Quiz 5
Cultural Neuroscience  
Professional Directions: Overview 

Apr 25

May 7

FINAL EXAM  11 am - 1 pm
READING LIST


in mental health: policy implications. Health Affairs, 27, 393-403.


