

INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology 3162
Fall 2009

Karen Seeley
Office: 415-M Milbank
ks411@columbia.edu

Monday 2:10-4:00
318 Milbank Hall
Office hrs: Mon 1:15-2:00
or by appointment

Description:

The field of psychology makes timeless and universal claims about human behavior and consciousness. Yet psychology is rooted in particular cultural and historical circumstances, studies an extremely narrow segment of the world's population, and promotes conceptions of the mind and notions of normality that are specific to parts of the modern west. As a result, there are growing concerns that psychological concepts and research are irrelevant to other societies, as well as to American minority communities.

In this course, we explore cultural approaches to psychology. We begin by critically examining the cultural specificity of psychology's conventional assumptions and procedures. We then turn our attention to varying societal models of human behavior and mind. Drawing on recent work in clinical psychology, critical psychology, cultural psychology and cultural anthropology, we consider alternative constructions of the self, personality, human development, and mental and physical disorder. In conclusion, we explore new possibilities for integrating cultural perspectives into psychology.

Requirements:

1. Midterm paper: 10 page reaction paper (instructions follow). Due Oct. 26 (35%)
2. Final research paper, 12-15 pages, to be presented in class. Due Dec. 14 (45%)
3. Lead class discussion on one article (details follow). (10%)
4. Regular class attendance and participation. (10%)

Readings:

1. Course pack, available at Broadway Copy, 3062 Broadway (121 St.), 864-6501. (CP)
2. Other articles are available at CLIO online. (**)
3. Fadiman, A. 1997. *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. NY: Noonday Press.
Available at the Columbia University Bookstore and on reserve at Barnard Library.

SYLLABUS

September 14: Introduction

PART I: THE CULTURE OF PSYCHOLOGY

September 21: Contextualizing psychological theories and concepts

- Bettelheim, B. 1990. Freud's Vienna. In *Freud's Vienna*, 3-17. NY: Vintage. (CP).
Danziger, K. 1998. Putting intelligence on the map. In *Naming the mind: How psychology found its language*, 17-35. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (CP).
Ingleby, D. 1995. The interplay between science and culture. In N. Goldberger & J. Veroff (Eds.). *The culture and psychology reader*, 108-123. NY: NYU Press. (CP).

September 28: Holiday – no class

October 5: Producing psychological knowledge

- Graham, S. 1992. "Most of the subjects were white and middle class": Trends in published research on African-Americans in selected APA journals, 1970-1989. *American psychologist* 47(5), 629-639. (**).
Greenfield, P. 1997. You can't take it with you: Why ability assessments don't cross cultures. *American psychologist* 52(10), 1115-1124. (**).
Shweder, R. & Sullivan, M. 1993. Cultural psychology: Who needs it? *Annual review of psychology* (44), 497-523. (**).

PART II: CULTURE & THE SELF

October 12: Cultural selves

- Cheung, F., Leung, K., Fan, R., Song, W., Zhang, J. & Zhang, J. 1996. Development of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology* 27(2), 181-199. (**).
Roseman, M. 1990. Head, heart, odor, and shadow: The structure of the self, the emotional world, and ritual performance among the Senoi Temiar. *Ethos* 18, 227-250. (**).
Zhang, E. 2007. The birth of *nanke* (men's medicine) in China: The making of the subject of desire. *American ethnologist* 34(3), 491-508. (**).

October 19: Culture & human development

- Anderson-Fye, E. 2004. A "Coca-cola" shape: Cultural change, body image, and eating disorders in San Andres, Brazil. *Culture, medicine & psychiatry* 24, 561-595. (**).
Stern, P. 1999. Learning to be smart: An exploration of the culture of intelligence in a Canadian Inuit community. *American anthropologist* 101(3), 502-514 (**).
Yafeh, O. 2007. The time in the body: Cultural construction of femininity in ultraorthodox kindergartens for girls. *Ethos* 35(4), 516-563. (**).

October 26: Bicultural & biracial experience

- Perez-Foster, R. 1996. The bilingual self: A duet in two languages. *Psychoanalytic dialogues* 6(1), 99-121. (**).
Seeley, K. 2000. Seduction: Jun. In *Cultural psychotherapy: Working with culture in the clinical encounter*. 113-127. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson. (CP).
Williams, T.K. 1996. Race as process: Reassessing the 'What are you?' encounters of biracial individuals. In M. Root, (ed.). *The multiracial experience: Racial borders as the new frontier*, 191-210. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications. (CP).

November 2: *Midterm holiday--no class*

PART III: CASE STUDY

November 9: *Body & spirit*

Fadiman, A. 1997. *The spirit catches you and you fall down*, chapters 1-7.

November 16: *Migration & trauma*

Fadiman, A. 1997. *The spirit catches you and you fall down*, chapters 8-13.

November 23: *Narrative psychology*

Fadiman, A. 1997. *The spirit catches you and you fall down*, chapters 14-19.

November 30: *Presentations*

December 7: *Presentations*

December 14: *Presentations & conclusion*