



PSYC 100: Experiencing Multicultural Psychology
Course Syllabus
Fall 2020

Instructors: MPP Faculty

Credits: 1

Contact Hours: 15

Prerequisites: None

Class Hours: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Course Fee: TBA

Course Description

In this mandatory one-credit course, students in the Multicultural Psychology Program (MPP) engage in a series of experiential learning activities designed to complement their coursework. Activities and related assignments are designed to give students hands-on experiences through which they can witness ideas being put into practice. The combination of on-the-ground activities combined with critical reflection on their experiences gives students in the Multicultural Psychology Program opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities through which key topics and concepts are related to practical and applied situations and to engage in community-based learning and similar field experiences that connect classroom learning to real world problem-solving.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- *summarize* how the series of co-curricular course activities supplemented and integrated with their classroom and community-engaged learning;
- *articulate* how the combination of co-curricular, community-engaged, and classroom experiences could be pursued in graduate work or be put into action in the service of real-world problem solving.
- *compare* the research questions and methodologies across the psychological approaches represented in their classroom work.
- *create* a final presentation that will articulate a comparative approach to issues facing the scholars interested in a multicultural approach to psychology.
- *articulate* how various community and institutional projects they have seen this semester can promote multicultural awareness.

Course Materials

Readings

Course readings will be made available online.

Assessment

Group preparation of a multicultural presentation	20%
Reflection journal	40%
Active participation in all required course activities	20%
Active participation in class discussions	20%

Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Course Requirements

Final grades are based on the following:

Group preparation of a final presentation (40%)

Students will prepare a final presentation that will articulate a comparative approach to issues facing the scholars interested in a multicultural approach to psychology.

Reflection Journal (40%)

Students keep a reflection journal throughout the semester. In some cases, they are given prompts that focus on specific topics and related activities. In other cases, they are asked to reflect on their own experiences and observations and to connect them to course topics. Journals are collected before Spring break and at the end of the semester.

Active participation in all required course activities (20%)

There are several required activities throughout the semester. Attendance is mandatory but merely attending these activities does not guarantee a good grade; rather, students are evaluated based on their active participation in each activity.

Active participation in class discussions (20%)

Active participation in class discussions is an important component of final grades. Students are expected to come to class meetings prepared to contribute to these discussions by completing any assigned readings and reflecting on specific course activities.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance and participation in all course activities is mandatory. Because this is a one-credit course with limited class meetings, students are allowed one "free" absence, which do not need to be justified. It is the students' responsibility to save this absence in case of real necessity (sickness or any

other unforeseen circumstances that may prevent students from being in class or attending a required activity). Each additional absence, unless for a very serious reason, will lower the students' grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

If students miss class or a required class activity, they are responsible for obtaining notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class. Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in. Presence during mandatory course activities is especially important for student performance in class. Missing a required activity, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to the professor and the Academic Director in a timely manner, will lower students' final grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Classroom Policy

Please refrain from computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices during class time or during course activities. Active class participation is part of students' final grades. Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Week 1

Welcome Orientation Meeting and Aperitivo

With Gabriella Klein, PhD, John Dennis, PhD, Doris Kessenich, M.A., Philippa Stannard, M.F.A., and Mounia Drissi, Ph.D

Week 3

Workshop: Emotions & Culture

With **John Dennis, PhD**

Are facial expressions associated with emotions universal or culture-specific?

In this Multicultural Psychology Program workshop, we will discuss Dr. Paul Ekman's research that finds very strong evidence for the universality of some facial expressions and how and why cultural influences these expressions.

Universal facial expressions are considered "basic" emotions - happy, sad, fearful, anger, surprised, and disgusted - that form the foundation for all secondary and tertiary emotions - like happily disgusted or angrily surprised.

Ekman's research in the 1970's in New Guinea on facial expressions formed the building blocks for his subsequent research on "micro-expressions" - which are facial expressions that last for only a fraction of a second and can indicate someone's true emotions. Ekman's micro-expression training has been taught to the FBI, CIA, Scotland Yard and various other forensic specialists around the world - and if you've seen the TV show "[Lie to me](#)" or Pixar's "[Inside out](#)" you've seen Ekman's research.

Following this workshop, you will have a better understanding of emotional facial expressions, micro-expressions and basic emotion detection.

Week 5

Workshop: Barnga - Experiencing a Mini Culture Shock

With **Gabriella Klein, PhD**

Barnga is a simulation game for intercultural awareness that uses normal playing cards to show what happens when suddenly rules are changing, and one doesn't know the new rules.

The main learning objectives are: to realize that different cultures perceive things differently and/or play by different rules; to use this awareness to try and adapt to a new set of rules; to raise awareness of our reactions in conflict and communication styles, and to experience a mini culture shock.

This workshop consists of an initial game activity, a listening exercise with cultural implications, and a simulation of an interaction with intercultural implications

Week 7

Field Trip to Florence

With **Doris Kessenich, MA**

1. Visit to the [National School for Accompanying dogs for the blind and disabled person](#). The school is the only national one in Italy and it is run by the region of Tuscany. It is a center of excellence recognized all over the world for its services to the blind. In Europe, no other country has a governmental school for dogs who accompany blind and disabled people. Students will have a general explanation on how guide dogs are raised and trained and will simulate an obstacle course guided by a dog.
2. Visit to the city center of Florence using [Kimap](#), a navigator that allow people with cognitive or physical disabilities to find the most accessible path to reach museums and places of interest.
3. Lunch at [I ragazzi del sipario](#), a restaurant run by an association that works to create occupation and long term employment for juveniles with mental

disabilities.

Week 9

Workshop: Understanding hate-oriented communication

With **Gabriella Klein, PhD**

This workshop revolves around the EU project *RADAR Guidelines. Understanding hate-oriented communication and tools for anti-hate communication strategies in an intercultural dimension*, carried out in 2016 by professors Gabriella Klein and Koffi Dossou. The first part will be an introduction to the topics of discrimination, stereotypes, racism, sexism, and xenophobia in today's mass media. The second part consists of a group activity in which students will identify discriminatory, stereotypical, and xenophobic messages in selected newspaper articles, TV talk shows, and advertisements.

Week 11

Workshop: Uncomfortable Truths

With **John Dennis, PhD**

Comfort = happiness. Comfortable is the routine. Our culture tells us that when we feel comfortable, we are happy. Yet all this comfort might just be making us miserable. Enjoying the fruits of your labors – and that's often a comfortable experience, but, feeling uncomfortable, is a sign one is moving through the unknown, achieving the difficult, and learning the new. Feeling uncomfortable is fundamental for improving performance, enhancing creativity and deep learning.

If you think about the important things in life - autonomy, health, wisdom and love - obtaining those things requires a constant embrace of the uncomfortable.

1. Autonomy requires one to engage in things like learning – go from not knowing something to knowing something – which can be painful, convincing someone that you have something to offer them (i.e., get paid for work) and that what you offer will increase in value as you gain more experience and learn more– which is not easy.
2. Health requires one to maintain an honest assessment with what you need to maintain good health (both mind and body) and move away from those things that might feel quite good but aren't in your long-term interest.
3. Wisdom requires fundamentally a high level of brutal honesty that informs you of exactly what you know and what you don't know. It's character to take on the challenges of life head on.
4. Love, requires a true assessment of what you think, do and feel – if who you are – is not admirable (not flawless mind you), but given the context you are doing all you can to think, do and feel in the most correct way possible, then you will never find love. Love of the other, truly does start with love of the self. That self-love isn't some self-affirmation mantra, like Al Franken's SNL character [Stuart Smalley](#) "I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and gosh darn it, people like me," but it is an honest assessment of all your flaws, with a constant eye towards, what can I improve, what can I do better. That process is one that requires a massive embrace of the uncomfortable.

This workshop will help you have a better understanding of how feeling uncomfortable is a sign of personal growth and offer students an opportunity to approach the uncomfortable within the study abroad experience.

Week 13

End-of-Semester Reflective Workshop and Celebratory Dinner

With Gabriella Klein, PhD, John Dennis, PhD, Doris Kessenich, M.A., Philippa Stannard, M.F.A., and Mounia Drissi, Ph.D

Bibliography

- Caruana, S, Klein, G.,(eds.): *Intercultural Communication in Bureaucratic-Institutional Contexts* (Proceedings of the Final Conference of the European Project SPICES – Social Promotion of Intercultural Communication Expertise and Skills, Conversari; Studi linguistici del CLA. Didattica, vol. 2. Perugia: Guerra Edizioni, 2008.
- Eckman, P., *Emotions Revealed, Second Edition: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communication and Emotional Life*, New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2007.
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- Klein, G., Caruana, S., *Intercultural communication in institutional-bureaucratic settings: Case studies from the SPICES Project*, in: MRER - Malta Review of Educational Research, Special issue on Culturally Responsive Education 6, 1: 98-117, 2008.
- Thiagarajan, S, Thiagaraja, R., *Barnha: A Simulation Game on Cultural Clashes*, Boston: Nicholas Brealey, 2006.