



PSYC 300 Experiencing Multicultural Psychology

Course Syllabus
Fall Semester 2026

Instructor: Eyal Rosenstreich, PhD

Coordinator: Stefano Console, MA

Credits: 1

Contact Hours: 15

Prerequisites: None

Meeting Days & Time: 5:45pm (unless otherwise specified—refer to definitive schedule in Moodle)

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Type: Core course of the Multicultural Psychology Program (MPP)

Course Fee: Included in the MPP program fee

Course Description

In this mandatory one-credit course, Multicultural Psychology Program (MPP) students participate in a series of experiential learning activities designed to complement their coursework. These activities and related assignments provide hands-on experiences, allowing students to see ideas put into practice. This semester, we will have five workshops led by researchers who will share their stories and insights.

Combining practical activities and critical reflection on these experiences offers MPP students opportunities to engage in co-curricular activities with the University of Perugia students. These activities connect key topics and concepts to practical, applied situations and include community-based learning and field experiences, such as the MPP Capstone, that link classroom learning to real-world problem-solving. Additionally, you will learn about applying to graduate school and how to put together an impressive application.

Toward the end of the course, students will participate in a transformative Capstone Trip for the Multicultural Psychology Program. This trip provides a hands-on opportunity to explore and engage with multicultural psychological topics in real-world contexts. Through immersive, cultural, and interactive experiences, students will gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding cultural diversity and social identity. The capstone trip aims to enhance critical thinking skills, foster cross-cultural competence, and encourage reflective integration of multicultural psychology concepts. The experiential nature of the trip allows students to apply their knowledge in authentic settings, promoting personal growth and a heightened awareness of the psychological nuances inherent in diverse environments.

Learning Objectives

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

- *Describe* the main concepts of Psychology, Education, and Business learned in the class's co-curricular activities;
- *Apply* concepts learned in the classroom to experiences in co-curricular activities, as part of discussions, but also brainstorming novel applications of those ideas for the US context;
- *Identify* possible research questions that emerge from co-curricular activities and *determine* which methodological approach would be most appropriate for carrying out research to assess causation;

- *Predict* several tasks that they would need to do in order to put together a strong application for graduate work (either at the MA or PhD level).

Laptop/Smartphone Policy

I depend on my computer and my telephone for much of what I do. That said: An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result, you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, I have a physical notebook policy whenever possible (when we do Google Drive Tickets, for example). I ask you to bring your computers but leave them in your bags and phones in your pockets, and use a regular notebook. There are three exceptions: 1) if you have an accommodation; 2) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer; and 3) if we have an in-class activity that requires you to use your computer.

Course Materials

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course's shared Google Folder is the primary location for all readings.

Assessments

Attendance	50%
Course Journal Entries	50%

Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A	90% - 92%	<u>Excellent</u>
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	Satisfactory
B	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	
C	73% - 76%	

C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Please note: decimal and centesimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

Attendance (50%)

Attendance is mandatory. No make-ups are offered for missed meetings. There will be **eight meetings in total**, including workshops, a welcome aperitivo, and briefing sessions. To receive full credit for attendance, students must participate in **seven out of the eight meetings**. Attendance at the Lake Trasimeno and Capstone field trips does not count toward this assessment.

Students are expected to arrive at meetings punctually and be prepared to actively contribute to the discussions.

Course Journal Entries (50%)

Students will respond to course journal prompts throughout the semester. These open-ended questions will be based on workshops, the Capstone, courses at Umbra, and any other experiences during the semester abroad that can be better explained from a multicultural psychology perspective. Submission deadlines for all course journal entries will be available on the MPP Moodle page.

Extension & Submitting Late Work

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment but the final project. Students must email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

Attendance & Lateness Policy

Attendance **in person is mandatory**. All students are allowed **one unexcused absence**, which does not need to be justified and may only be used for workshops, aperitivos, or briefing sessions. Because this is a one-credit course with a limited number of class meetings, each additional unexcused absence will result in a **5% deduction from the final grade**.

This policy does not apply to field trips. **Attendance during field trips is especially important**, and there are no allowed free unexcused absences for the Lake Trasimeno Day Trip or the Capstone Trip.

Missing the **Lake Trasimeno Day Trip**, unless for a very serious reason that is promptly communicated to Umbra staff, will lower the student's final grade by **half a letter grade** (i.e., a final grade of A would be lowered to A-).

Missing the **three-day Capstone Trip**, even partially, unless for a very serious reason that is promptly communicated to Umbra staff, will lower the student's final grade by **one full letter grade** (i.e., a final grade of A would be lowered to B+).

Each incident of tardiness, including late arrivals to or early departures from class, will result in a **1.5% deduction from the final grade**.

Excessive absences (**three or more**) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the number of absences and late arrivals for each course and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss a class meeting, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or meeting with the professor during office hours.

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness include death in the immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, and medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled.

Absences due to illness may be excused by the Director **only if medical certification is provided**.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period, when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during an 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.

Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for generating content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism. Should the Institute become aware of a student's use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the Umbra's policy and demonstrate appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set to silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices can only be used during class lectures and discussions for note-taking, if the student has specific academic accommodation.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

Welcome Aperitivo

Wednesday, September 9 at 5:45pm in the Library & Aperitivo

With Eyal Rosenstreich, PhD, Stefano Console, MA, & Zachary Nowak, PhD

Kick off the Multicultural Psychology Program with our Welcome Orientation Meeting and Aperitivo! Connect with fellow students and faculty, learn about the semester's exciting activities, and enjoy a relaxed, informal setting. Share ideas, ask questions, and start building your community—all while savoring delicious refreshments in a welcoming atmosphere.

WEEK 2

Workshop: Beyond Comfort Zones

Monday, September 14 at 5:45pm in the Library

With Marco Bagli, PhD

This workshop will delve into what culture is, its stages, and its impact on individuals. Through interactive play reading, participants will experience and discuss the emotional and cognitive aspects of culture shock, enhancing their understanding of intercultural communication and empathy for those undergoing such experiences.

Assignments:

Readings:

- [Ting Toomey S., Chung, L.c., What is culture shock, in Understanding Intercultural Communication, Oxford Press, New York, 2012](#)
- [Winkelman, M. \(1994\). Cultural shock and adaptation. Journal of Counseling & Development, 73\(2\), 121-126.](#)

WEEK 4

Visit and Dinner at the Caritas Organization

Monday, September 28 at 5:30 in the Umbra courtyard. A light dinner will be offered in the Soup Kitchen.

Caritas is a Catholic-based philanthropic organization; one of the institution's primary goals is helping people culturally on the margins—whether because they are immigrants to Italy or because they are from disadvantaged parts of Italian society—integrate into broader Italian society. This integration comes through things like their free shared meals but also through educational programs. Caritas is run like a business, with an eye to maximization of return for money invested in its projects, and an emphasis on grant-writing for its funding. We'll speak with one of Caritas's directors and examine the operations with an eye not only to education but also to how the charity is organized.

Assignments:

Readings:

- Pusceddu, Antonio Maria. "The Moral Economy of Charity: Advice and Redistribution in Italian Caritas Welfare Bureaucracy." *Ethnos* 87, no. 1 (January 1, 2022): 168–87.

WEEK 5

Workshop: Educational Approaches in Italy

Monday, October 5 at 5:45pm in the Library

With Luisa Ercolanelli, PhD

In this workshop, students will explore the rich diversity of educational approaches in Italy, from internationally renowned philosophies such as Montessori and Reggio Emilia to the Italian public education system and its relationship to educational models around the world. Drawing on concepts of multiculturalism, developmental psychology, child wellbeing, inclusion, creativity, and student-centered learning, the workshop will examine how different educational approaches influence children's development and learning experiences. It will also prepare students for a mini field trip to an innovative school, equipping them with the knowledge and critical perspective needed to observe and reflect on educational practices in context.

Assignments:

Readings:

- TBA

Field trip: Experiencing Innovative Education

Friday, October 9 at 7:30 am TBA

During this field visit, students will explore an innovative school near Lake Trasimeno, where they will observe contemporary educational practices in an authentic learning environment. The visit provides an opportunity to connect the concepts discussed in the workshop with everyday classroom experiences, engage with educators, and reflect on how child-centred, inclusive, and community-oriented approaches support learning and wellbeing in practice.

Assignments:

Readings:

- Hewett, M. V. (2001). Examining the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 29(2).

WEEK 9

Workshop: The Psychology of Food

Monday, November 2, 17:45 pm in the Library

With Clelia Viecegli, PhD

Is taste simply *sensation* (the word *sentire* in Italian means, among other things, *to hear, to smell, and to taste*) or is tasting food more an exercise in culturally-mediated perception? To what extent do expectations come into play for our psychological experience of food? Dr. Clelia Viecegli, the chair of Umbra's program in Food, Sustainability, & Environment (FSE), will lead a workshop to explore this topic.

Assignments:

Readings:

- Smith, John L. "Non-Biological Perspectives." In *The Psychology of Food and Eating: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Method*, edited by John L. Smith, 27–47. London: Macmillan Education UK, 2002.

WEEK 10

Workshop: Getting into Grad School (and the psychological impact of it)

Zachary Nowak, PhD & Eyal Rosenstreich, PhD

Monday, November 9, 12:30pm, Library

This workshop will provide students with valuable insights into the application process, emphasizing the importance of aligning research interests with faculty and the practical strategies for admission. The workshop also highlights the challenges of graduate studies, including financial constraints, and job prospects, encouraging students to evaluate their goals carefully.

Assignments:

Readings:

- Luppi, A. I., Newton, C. C., Folsom, L., Galliano, E., & Romero-Garcia, R. (2021). Ten simple rules for aspiring graduate students. *PLOS Computational Biology*, 17(8), 1-10.
- Mullen, A. L., Goyette, K. A., & Soares, J. A. (2003). Who goes to graduate school? Social and academic correlates of educational continuation after college. *Sociology of education*, 143-169.
- Bain, S., Fedynich, L., & Knight, M. (2011). The successful graduate student: A review of the factors for success. *Journal of Academic and Business Ethics*, 3, 1-9.

WEEK 11

Pre-departure Briefing

Wednesday, November 18, 12:30 pm in the Library

We'll have a brief but important meeting on the upcoming Capstone Trip. Gain insights into the itinerary, and key themes such as multicultural psychology, disability, and community care, and prepare for yet another transformative learning experience abroad.

MPP Capstone Trip to San Patrignano, Mantova and Venice

Thursday, November 19-Saturday, November 21

Important Note: You will receive the itinerary at the beginning of the week.

The Capstone explores diverse psychological and social interventions in multicultural contexts. Topics include the development of community-based mental health care following the closure of psychiatric hospitals in Italy, the therapeutic benefits of equine-assisted interventions for children with autism, and psychotherapeutic approaches to treating youth addiction. Through experiential learning and critical analysis, students will deepen their understanding of these transformative models while strengthening their cross-cultural competence and practical problem-solving skills.

Assignments:

Readings:

- Barbui, C., Papola, D., Saraceno, B., (2018). Forty years without mental hospitals in Italy. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 12(43).
- Schianchi, M. (2014). Associations of people with disabilities in Italy: A short history. *Modern Italy*, 19(2).
- Sissons, J. H., Blakemore, E., Shafi, H., Skotny, N., & Lloyd, D. M. (2022). Calm with horses? A systematic review of animal-assisted interventions for improving social functioning in children with autism. *Autism*, 26(6), 1320-1340.

WEEK 12

Capstone Debriefing and Farewell Aperitivo

Monday, November 23, 5:45pm in the Library

We'll reflect on the Capstone Trip's key moments and insights, as well as discuss the larger program and your suggestions for improving it.