

**Psychology 381**  
**Psychology of Culture**  
Lecture: T Th 10:50-12:05  
Fall 2023  
Prerequisite: PSY 101

Professor: Jill M. Norvilitis  
Office: BUCK A 261  
Office Hours: T Th 1:40-2:55  
e-mail: norviljm@buffalostate.edu

***This is a service-learning course.***

**Text:**

Heine, S. J. (2020). *Cultural Psychology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Norton.

[You may choose either an eBook or a hard copy. The least expensive eBook that I have found is directly from the publisher. The least expensive hard copy that I have found is from Amazon.]

You can find a link for the textbook on Brightspace.

**Course Description:**

Welcome to Psych of Culture! I hope that you enjoy this course as much as I do. So much of psychology is based on Americans with the assumption that the rest of the world looks just like we do. We will be challenging that idea this semester. We will explore the dimensions along which culture varies and the issues involved in conducting cross-cultural research. In addition, we will examine the specific differences and similarities between cultures in areas such as the self and personality; conformity, obedience, and aggression; attachment and child-rearing; abnormal psychology and culture-bound syndromes; and interpersonal and group relations. Although some of the class will be lecture-based, our class time together will incorporate discussions, in-class activities, and lots of examples.

In addition to the great things you will be learning in class, you will also be participating in a volunteer/service learning experience. You will spend about 12 hours working with refugees and other immigrants through either the Community Academic Center or Jewish Family Services. Both of these are fantastic opportunities for you to learn about another culture firsthand while providing a valuable service to a population in need.

Thus, in this class we will explore what is universal and what is culture-specific in psychology, and we will examine the role of culture and psychology in our community.

The Student Learning Outcomes for the course are as follows:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the dimensions along which cultures vary and the implications of this for understanding cultural differences.

2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, and prejudice of people from other cultures.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how well Western psychological principles and research hold up in other cultures.
4. Students will gain first-hand experience with people from another culture.
5. Students will apply the information from the first three objectives to their understanding of the people with whom they have been matched.
6. Students will articulate insights into their own cultural values and biases and how these differ from those in the group(s) served in the service-learning experience.

### **How to Communicate with Me:**

I am looking forward to getting to know all of you! The two best ways to do that are to either visit my office or email me. My office hours will be Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:40-2:55. You can just drop by to say hello or come with questions. I may be in my office at other times as well. If my door is open and I am not meeting with someone, come on in! You can also email me. If you email me during the week, I will get back to you within 24 hours. If you email me on the weekend, I will get back to you on Monday morning. Finally, we can schedule appointments to meet through Zoom if you aren't able to meet in person.

### **Service-Learning Component:**

I have chosen two fabulous programs for our service-learning this semester. They are quite different from each other, but I am confident that you will have a great experience with either one. In class, you will sign up to choose one of these projects. Both of these projects will help you apply the concepts (See SLOs 1-3) that we are discussing in class (See SLOs 4-6).

- The Community Academic Center, which is housed on our campus, holds a Global Youth Leader program every year. This program targets high school students who are either immigrants or first-generation Americans. The program meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month from 10-12 in Caudell Hall. Youth leaders meet to talk about all sorts of topics ranging from success in college to race and social justice issues.

Students in this service-learning project will attend the program in September, October, and November. In September, they will actively participate in the discussions, but will not lead the session. In October and November, the students involved will work with the program director to identify a topic, prepare a lesson/session on it, and present it to the students. Through this, PSY 381 students will learn more about the experience of being a refugee, immigrant, or first-generation student and will help the youth leaders gain more skills for success.

- Jewish Family Services is one of four refugee resettlement agencies in Buffalo that works with refugees during the first months that they are in the United States. One of the needs that this population has is to learn how to use the bus to attend appointments, go to the grocery store, or go to the laundromat.

Students in this service-learning project will work in teams of 3. Each team will be assigned two families/couples/individuals and will meet with each twice. At the first visit, students will introduce themselves and learn more about the individual need: Where do they need to go?

What level of knowledge do they have about the bus? What vocabulary needs do they have? Then, the team will plan the second visit: check out bus schedules, identify vocabulary needs, etc. At the second visit, the team will actually go through all of this with the family, teaching them to plan an effective trip and riding the bus with them. Remember that all BSU students can receive free bus passes, so there is no cost involved with this. Through this, PSY 381 students will learn about the challenges of being a new refugee in our community.

Once the service-learning groups are formed, I will create discussion boards in Brightspace so that you can easily communicate with one another. I will also periodically set aside time in class for groups to meet to plan.

Students in this course who have been convicted of a felony must review the college policy at <https://deanofstudents.buffalostate.edu/admission-persons-prior-felony-convictions> and contact the dean of students before participating in the community engagement experience.

### **Student Evaluation:**

- 60% Exams**
- 20% Journal entries/completion of service learning**
- 20% Reaction paper**

*Examinations:* Three exams will be administered during the course to assess mastery and application of the course material. The exams will be composed of multiple choice and short essay-type questions based on the textbook and lectures. The exams will not be cumulative and will be worth a total of 60 percent of your final grade. Review sheets will be distributed one week prior to the exam. No make-up exams will be given, except under extreme circumstances and with written documentation. There is also a no credit/partial credit/full credit world geography assignment to be completed before the first exam. Students who do not complete the assignment will have 20 points taken off of their first exam grade. Students who do not complete the assignment well (for example, not identifying large numbers of countries) will have 10 points taken off. Students who complete the assignment correctly will not have their exam grades adjusted at all. This assignment will be explained in class.

*Service Learning:* The remaining 40 percent of the grade will be based on the service-learning component.

- *Journal Entries:* Twenty percent of the grade will be based on four 3-page journal entries. Each of the journal entries will answer two questions: 1) What happened at the most recent session? and 2) How does your interaction/task fit with what has been discussed in class since the last journal entry? For this second question, you will choose one topic from class and apply it to your experience. For instance, if we discussed ethnocentrism in class, you might choose to write about how your own ethnocentric lenses affect your view of the family. The due dates for these entries are noted on the class schedule. The goal of the journal entries is to help you document your progress in your service-learning project, to reflect on what happened at the session, and to actively apply concepts that you are learning in class.

For students at the CAC GYL program, you will write a journal entry after each session and between sessions one and two about your group planning meeting to prepare for your

upcoming presentations. For students in the JFS program, you will write one journal after each meeting with a family.

- *Reaction Paper:* Twenty percent will be based on a 6- to 8-page paper about your experience and the psychological needs of refugees and asylum seekers. I will provide you with several articles. You will choose three or four of these to use for your paper and you will find one or two on your own (for a minimum of five articles altogether). Your reaction paper will discuss what you have learned about the psychological adjustment of refugees, both from what you have observed and what you have learned from the articles. You must use APA style for citations and references, but you may write this paper in the first person. **The paper is due on November 21.** Students are welcome to submit drafts ahead of time for feedback. If you would like me to review a draft of the paper, I need to receive it at least one week prior to the due date. The goal of this paper is somewhat different from the journal entries. This paper requires you to do a deep dive into the issues facing refugees as they go through the acculturation process and then to think critically about what those with whom you have worked this semester have faced. We will talk more in class about this assignment and how it will be graded.

You can expect to receive all grades back within a week of the exam or the assignment.

### **Class Attendance Policy:**

*Service-Learning Attendance Policy:* You are expected to attend all sessions for your assigned project. If you miss a session, you will receive a zero on the corresponding journal assignment. If you miss two or more sessions, your course grade will also be lowered by one grade per additional session missed.

*Class Attendance Policy:* Although attendance and participation are not mandatory, attendance will be kept and it will be taken into account when determining borderline final grades (i.e., whether a 79.4% is a C+ or B-). I encourage everyone to attend regularly to get the most out of our in-class discussions and activities that are designed to reinforce the content in the class.

### **Respect for Diversity:**

In this class, we will be encountering a variety of values and experiences from around the world. All students are expected to demonstrate respect and tolerance for other students, the clients with whom we work, and the cultures and practices we discuss in class.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is based on the principles of honesty and individual responsibility for actions. Violations of academic integrity include cheating on exams, plagiarism, falsifying data, or engaging in behavior that inhibits someone else's academic performance. This type of behavior will not be tolerated and may result in failure of the course. If you are unclear about the policy regarding academic integrity at BSC, you are encouraged to read the college's official policy, which can be found at <http://academicstandards.buffalostate.edu/misconduct>. Cheating in this class will result in either failure of the exam or assignment or failure of the class, depending on the severity of the infraction.

**Accommodations:**

Students who need accommodations to complete the requirements and expectations of this course because of a disability are invited to make their needs known to the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) Office, E. H. Butler Library 160, (716) 878-4500, email [sas@buffalostate.edu](mailto:sas@buffalostate.edu) or complete their request by filling out the Initial Accommodation Request form.

Students registered with SAS should use the Accommodate Portal to submit their "Semester Request" (Letter of Accommodation) every semester. This letter informs faculty of the student's academic accommodations.

### Tentative Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading Due</u>	<u>Topic</u>
8/29	Ch. 1	A Psychology for a Cultural Species
8/31	Ch. 2	Culture and Human Nature
9/5		The Lost Boys
9/7		Service-Learning Orientation Session; <b>Attendance mandatory</b>
9/12	Ch. 3	Cultural Evolution
9/14	Ch. 4	Methodology of Cross-Cultural Research
9/19	Ch. 5	Development and Socialization
9/21		Development and Socialization continued; <b>Session 1 Journal due</b>
9/26		<b>Exam 1</b>
9/28	Ch. 6	Self and Personality
10/3		Self and Personality continued; <b>Session 2 Journal due</b>
10/5	Ch. 7	Living in Multicultural Worlds
10/10		<b>Fall Break—no class</b>
10/12		Living in Multicultural Worlds continued
10/17	Ch. 8	Motivation
10/19		Motivation continued; <b>Session 3 Journal due</b>
10/24	Ch.9	Cognition and Perception
10/26		Cognition and Perception continued
10/31	Ch. 10	Emotion
11/2		<b>Exam 2</b>
11/7	Ch. 11	Attraction and Relationships
11/9		Attraction and Relationships continued
11/14	Ch. 12	Morality and Religion; <b>Session 4 Journal due</b>
11/16	Ch. 13	Physical Health
11/21		Physical Health continued; <b>Paper due</b>
11/23		<b>Thanksgiving Break—no class</b>
11/28	Ch. 14	Mental Health
11/30		Mental Health continued
12/5	Ch. 15	Organizations, Leadership and Justice
12/7		Service Learning Wrap Up

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 12 at 9:40 in our regular classroom**