PY 915: CULTURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

Fall, 1995
Tuesday, 4:30-6:30
Campion 306

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Office Hours: Tues 12-2 pm, Wed 3-5 pm, and most Mondays 4-6 by appointment. Please sign up on sheets on my office door.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar was developed to foster critical, cultural reflection-in-context and a deeper understanding of its implications for action. We will begin by reflecting on our own social situatedness as social scientists in the United States at the turn of the 20th and 21st century. We will then explore selected strategies for "thinking culturally" about psychological processes and social contexts. These discussions will resource our subsequent examination of selected studies drawn from the growing psychological and anthropological literatures on (1) culture and self, and (2) structural or organized violence and culture. Narratives, life stories, testimonies, and ethnographic studies will form a core from which we will seek to understand contemporary theorizing about these themes. We will pay particular attention to underlying assumptions, implicit or explicit definitions of culture or sub-culture, and strategies for making meaning of psychological and cultural processes. We will be resourced by our own experiences, the assigned readings, guest speakers and films, and the writings of social scientists about their own experiences as researchers. The literature reviewed will help us approximate a process of theorizing subjectivity and to develop ways of thinking about "subjectivity in social analysis." Finally, implications for intercultural collaboration in research, clinical or community practice, and action will be discussed.

REQUIRED READING


NOTE: These books can be purchased in the BC Bookstore and are on reserve in O'Neill Library. Additional articles, as specified with an * in class syllabus. Full references are given the first time a book is cited. Subsequently, chapters or articles are referenced by first author only. Copies of these materials are available in Campion 201A, School of Education. If you want an individual packet of the readings you are responsible for assembling it. Your options are to xerox the articles individually or to collectively organize a system for copying materials.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE

1. This course is designed as a seminar and it is expected that everyone will actively participate in class discussions. The class structure relies heavily on student's informed contributions and, therefore, on students having read the relevant materials BEFORE the class in which they will be discussed. To facilitate this process I will ask each of you to work individually or in pairs, facilitating our discussion of some of the assigned readings. You must submit 2 - 3 questions to focus our discussion no later than the friday preceding the tuesday on which you will facilitate the discussion. In addition, writing assignments have been organized to maximize meaningful class discussion. (Class participation: 20% of final grade)

2. CHOOSE A or B:

OPTION A: Student who choose this option will be responsible for preparing six (6) 3-5 page reflection papers on the readings for the week. These papers should not merely summarize the readings. Their purpose is to help you to reflect on and write critically about the issues raised by the week's readings. They should provide you with an opportunity to systematize and integrate your reading, focus on issues of particular interest or concern, and raise questions that might further understanding. These papers are due in the class in which the readings will be discussed. You should make two copies of your paper, turning one in and keeping one for yourself. You may choose to submit your papers on any Tuesday between September 12 and November 28. However, NOTE WELL: NO papers will be accepted after November 28; no more than ONE paper can be submitted PER WEEK; and you must submit SIX papers in all.
OPTION B: Students who choose this option will be responsible for keeping an INTELLECTUAL/ACADEMIC JOURNAL throughout the semester. You may constitute the journal in whatever way you like - that is, as a learning log, field notes, reflections - but you MUST include both your reflections on (1) weekly reading and (2) your more personal encounter with these readings. You are encouraged to include your reflections on specific questions that emerge for you in the class discussions. The journal must be submitted twice (2 times) during the semester (OCTOBER 17 AND NOVEMBER 28). The reflection papers or the journal will be evaluated by the professor on a three point scale, excellent, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. (SEE ATTACHED HANDOUT FOR CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION; THESE MAY BE AMENDED DURING THE FIRST CLASS SESSION. At the end of the semester these will be converted to a letter grade that will constitute 35% of your final grade)

3. Each student will be responsible for a more in-depth research paper (18-25 pages, double-spaced, APA style) on a topic of her or his choosing. You have considerable flexibility in selecting your topic although it must be related to the general theme of the course, that is, culture and psychology, and must be approved by the professor. Brief (no longer than one typed page) descriptions of your proposed paper topic are due in class as early in the semester as possible but no later than Tuesday, October 3. You are encouraged to select an area for more in-depth reading and reflection that will facilitate the particular objectives of your graduate education. You may select ONE of the following two options:

OPTION A. A review of the literature AND a theoretical re-framing of your research question in light of that review. The goal here is to select an area for reading and reflection that is of ongoing concern but which you have heretofore examined or thought about within the context of a predominantly white, Western context. For example, (1) if you have been concerned about psychological consequence of returning to school for older white women and programs which facilitate their successful re-entry, it is suggested that you examine this literature as it bears on the experiences of, for example, immigrant, non-English speaking women, and then reframe your research question taking this literature into consideration. Or, (2) if you are studying contemporary psychological theories of the self you should review the literature on culture and self, critically assessing its implications for your research agenda. Or, (3) if you are interested in violence against women and children here in the United States it is suggested that you explore the intersection of culture and family violence within a U.S. "sub-culture," or within a non-U.S. context and the implications for conceptualizing the "problem" of family violence and subsequent proposals for intervention, etc.

OPTION B. Development of a model for intercultural collaboration in research, educational or clinical-community practice, or community-based
Those who have been or are currently working in a community or educational context may use this as an opportunity to:
(a) critically evaluate previous work in light of cultural psychology and propose an alternative strategy for research and/or action, or
(b) critically evaluate a social issue or social problem faced by the community or educational institution within which you are working and propose an intervention strategy that incorporates your understanding of the centrality of culture within this process.

For example, (a) if you previously coordinated a youth project among African-American residents in an urban community that has recently received a group of Amerasian youth and a seemingly unrelated escalation of urban violence, how would you design a project that seeks to respond to all of the youth within this community? Or, (b) you work in a community based mental health center in an area into which have recently moved a large number of Central American refugees. You must develop an intervention program for outreach into this community within a state where mental health resources have been viciously cut and with a basically non-English speaking population whose legal status is questionable at best.

(Note: This option is NOT available to students who are not currently working in (or recently retired from) a community program or project or an educational institution. That is, you cannot develop a hypothetical program for a hypothetical community. Finally, it is assumed that your paper will include a review of the literature relevant to the particular form and content of the model proposed.)

All students will present their final paper, "poster style", during one of the two last class sessions, December 5 or 12. The "work in progress" includes an extended abstract of at least 2 but no more than 4 pages, a partial bibliography, and a series of questions or problems that you would like to discuss with class participants. These must be submitted the week prior to your presentation. Details concerning these presentations, that is, what constitutes "poster style" and the specific date on which you will present, will be determined in relationship to numbers of students opting for each alternative. Final Papers are due, Tuesday, December 12 at 4:30 PM (Paper and Presentations (ie, paper topic and final poster): 45% of final grade)

Deadlines will be strictly enforced. They may be renegotiated before the due date of the assignment, if necessary, but not after the due date.
COURSE OUTLINE

MAKING MEANING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES ACROSS/WITHIN CULTURES

September 5: OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

September 12: POSITIONED SUBJECTS: WHO & HOW, SPEAKING FROM THE HOMEFRONT

hooks, b. Chapters 1-10
Rosaldo, R. Introductions September 19: MAKING AND REMAKING MEANINGS
Bruner, J. Chapters 1-2
Rosaldo, R. Chapters 1-3

September 26-October 3: MULTIPLE STRATEGIES FOR THINKING CULTURE

NOTE: PAPER TOPICS ARE DUE OCTOBER 3, 1995 AT 4:30 PM

THINKING THROUGH CULTURES: THEORIZING THE SELF, SUBJECTIVITY AND IDENTITY
October 10: APPROACHES TO THINKING ABOUT CULTURE & SELF

Sampson, E. E. Chapters 1-4
*Hsu, F.L.K. The Self in Cross-cultural Perspective. (pp. 24-55). In DeVos, et. al.

October 17: LANGUAGE, SUBJECTIVITY AND IDENTITY

Bruner, Chapter 3

THINKING THROUGH CULTURES: THEORIZING THE SELF AND WRITING THE OTHER

October 24: Thinking critically about models of self and identity in USA psychology

Bruner, J. Chapter 4
hooks, b. Chapters 13,14
Rosaldo, R. Chapter 4
Sampson, E.E. Chapters 5-6
*Smith, M.B. (1985). The metaphorical basis of selfhood. In Culture and Self, Chapter 3, (pp. 56-88)
October 31: Theorizing gender and ethnic identity "at home" and abroad
Lancaster, R. Introduction and Part 1
Sampson, E. E. Chapters 7-10
*Ganguly, K. (1992) Migrant identities: Personal memory and the
*Liebkind, K. Ethnic identity - Challenging the boundaries of social
by Glynis M. Breakwell. San Diego, CA: Academic Press. (pp. 147-185)

November 7: Writing the other: Gender, race and culture
Lancaster, R. Parts 2 & 3
Rosaldo, Chapters 6,7,8,9

THINKING THROUGH CULTURES: GIVING VOICE OR HEARING INTO
SPEECH? RESPONDING TO/WITH SURVIVORS OF DOMINATION AND
TERROR

November 14: PSYCHOLOGICAL SCARCITY IN NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL:
CHILD DEATH AND (M)OTHER LOVE

Scheper-Hughes, N. Death withouth weeping: Daily life in Northeast Brazil.
The New Internationalist, No. 254, April 1994
*Scheper-Hughes, N. Mother love and child death in Northeast Brazil. In
Cultural Psychology: Essays on Comparative Human Development (Ed by
J.W. Stigler, R.A. Shweder, & G. Herdt), 1990, New York:Cambridge U Press,
pp. 542-565.
*Scheper-Hughes, N. The violence of everyday life. In The making of
psychological anthropology II. (Ed by M.M. Su·rez-Orozco, George and
132-157).

November 21: PRACTICING SOCIAL SCIENCE IN LIMIT SITUATIONS OF
TORTURE, TERROR AND WAR
*Su·rez-Orozco, M. Doing psychological anthropology at the Fin de SiÉcle. In
The making of psychological anthropology II. (Ed by M.M. Su·rez-Orozco,
George and Louise Spindler), 1994, New York: Harcourt Brace College
Publishers. (pp. 158-194.
*Jenkins, J.H. (1991). The state construction of affect: Political ethos and
mental health among Salvadoran refugees. Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry,
15, 139-165.
*Lykes, M. B.(IN PRESS). Meaning making in a context of genocide and
silencing

November 28: TOWARD A LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY: TERROR, IMPUNITY,
AND TELLING TRUTHS
hooks, b. Chapters 15, 21-23
Rosaldo, R. Epilogue
Weschler, L. Entire book

December 5 & 12: PRESENTATIONS - POSTER STYLE
FINAL PAPERS DUE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12 BY 4:30 PM

PLEASE SIGN UP TO FACILITATE DISCUSSION AT LEAST ONCE DURING THE SEMESTER. REMEMBER, YOU MUST SUBMIT AT LEAST THREE QUESTIONS TO FOCUS YOUR DISCUSSION TO ALL SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS NO LATER THAN THE FRIDAY PRECEDING THE CLASS IN WHICH YOU WILL FACILITATE DISCUSSION. YOU MAY SIGN UP IN PAIRS, IF YOU LIKE.

September 12: POSITIONED SUBJECTS: ...SPEAKING FROM THE HOMEFRONT

1.________________________________________
2.________________________________________

September 19: MAKING AND REMAKING MEANINGS

1.________________________________________
2.________________________________________

October 3: MULTIPLE STRATEGIES FOR THINKING CULTURE-II

1.________________________________________
2.________________________________________

October 10: APPROACHES TO THINKING ABOUT CULTURE & SELF

1.________________________________________
2.________________________________________

October 17: LANGUAGE, SUBJECTIVITY AND IDENTITY

1.________________________________________
2.________________________________________

October 24: Thinking critically about self and identity ...
October 31: Theorizing gender and ethnic identity...

1.________________________________________
2.________________________________________

November 7: Writing the other: Gender, race and culture

1.________________________________________
2.________________________________________

November 14: PSYCHOLOGICAL SCARCITY IN NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL: CHILD DEATH AND (M)OTHER LOVE

1.________________________________________
2.________________________________________

Last Revised: 8/28/2003