

SOCM17-116 Culture and thinking

Aim of the course

One of the most significant achievements of cultural and cross-cultural psychological and pedagogical research in the past few decades has been the accumulation of the ever richer knowledge about the diversity of the evolution, development and operation of cognitive development, learning and social behavior. Proceeding systematically from perception to the most complex learning and social processes, the course discusses the differences and similarities as regards these phenomena in East-Asian and Euro-American cultures as well as in cultures of the Arabic countries.

Learning outcome, competences

knowledge:

- Knowledge and understanding of the main characteristics of the values of different cultures
- Knowledge of the main achievements of modern cultural psychology
- Understanding of the interrelation between thinking, social behavior and culture.
- Knowledge and understanding of theoretical and applicational aspects of social integration and acculturation.

attitude:

- Openness to accepting the values of other cultures
- Recognition of cultural differences, the importance of individual cultural identities and the complexity of everybody's identity
- Acceptance of the fact that the co-existence of cultures may lead to conflicts in every field of social life, which can be peacefully solved by mutually constructive process of negotiations in pluralistic societies.
- Seeing cultural diversity an opportunity with valuable assets that can be used for the purpose of social integration and development.

skills:

- Ability to take into account basic human rights, the characteristics of values and belief systems of different cultures as well as the process of value change.
- Ability to reflect on the hidden assumptions of one's own culture, to identify and critically relate to one's own prejudices and ethnocentric views as well as to help promote this self-reflection in others.
- Ability to put theoretical knowledge in practice and to work efficiently in intercultural organizations and to win partners' co-operation

Content of the course

Topics of the course

- General introduction. The two cultural areas and the independence and interdependence.
- Perception and thinking across cultures. Analytic and holistic approaches.
- Emotion, motivation, and control.
- Social behavior.
- Learning, cognitive development and socialization.
- Communication and conflict resolution. Face and morality.
- Psychological well-being and coping.
- Patterns of acculturation of East-Asian and Arabic groups.

Learning activities, learning methods

Interactive lecture, experiential learning, films, work in groups and dyads.

Evaluation of outcomes

Learning requirements, mode of evaluation, criteria of evaluation:

requirements

- active participation in the class
- following materials of the course, reading literature

mode of evaluation:

- written tests and written assignments to be uploaded on the e-learning platform of the course during the semester, (50%) (dates to be designated at the beginning of the course)
- oral or written exam (50%): based on lecture materials and readings

criteria of evaluation:

- understanding the topics and connections between different topics, concepts discussed in the course, the capacity to place them in a broader background.
- capacity to apply the knowledge acquired in the course

Reading list

Compulsory reading list

- Bond, M.H. (ed.) (2010) *The Oxford handbook of Chinese psychology*. Oxford University Press
- Dwairy, M. – Achoui, M. (2006): Introduction to three cross-regional research studies on parenting styles, individuation, and mental health in Arab societies. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 37(3), 221-229.
- Gregg, G. S. (2005): *The Middle East: a cultural psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Kim, U, Yang, K-S. & Hwang, K.-K.(eds.) (2006) *Indigenous and cultural psychology: Understanding people in context*. Springer Series on International and Cultural Psychology. New York: Springer
- Markus. H. & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the Self: Implications for cognition, emotion and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98, 224-253.
- Nisbett, R. E. (2003) *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently...and Why*. The Free Press, New York, NY.
- Sidanius, J. – Kteily, N., – Levin, S. – Pratto, F., – Obaidi, M. (2016): Support for asymmetric violence among Arab populations: The clash of cultures, social identity, or counterdominance? *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 19(3), 343-359.
- Talhelm, T.et al. (2014) Large-Scale Psychological Differences Within China Explained by Rice Versus Wheat Agriculture. *Science*, 344, 603-608.