

PSYCHOLOGY 232
Cross-Cultural Psychology (GS, US, IL)

Discourses of Gender: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

Rome and Florence, Italy
March 2013
Penn State Brandywine

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COURSE SYNOPSIS

Cross-cultural psychology examines how human thought and behavior are shaped by sociocultural factors. It raises questions such as, are psychological concepts universal or specific to each culture? Can we use the same research design and interpretations across cultures? How do we study different cultures to avoid biases of interpretation? How do we study different cultures with respect and sensitivity? Do psychological concepts “travel”? And finally, how can we use cross-cultural psychology to promote intercultural understanding and world justice?

In this course, students will have the opportunity to learn the theories and practices of cross-cultural psychology by focusing on the development of gender roles and gender experiences in the context of two countries: the United States and Italy. This course will expose students to a historical-cultural analysis of gender and gender practices, including representations of marriage, work-family role distribution, ideas surrounding gender equity and feminism, and the role of gender discourses in the building of an equitable society.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Recognize the cultural influence on human behavior, communication, attitudes and values in both Italy and the United States.
- Understand and apply basic concepts in women’s and gender studies.
- Understand and embrace the participant-observer approach in ethnographic research in regards to the study of another country and its inhabitants; in this case, Italy and the Italians.
- Understand psychological models of cultural influence on socialization and compare/contrast ethnotheories in Italy and the United States.
- Explore the connections between personal experiences and political, theoretical, historical, legal, and economic debates.

COURSE TIMELINE

<u>Timeline:</u>		
March 2, 2012	10:00 a.m.	All Pre-Trip Assignments are due in Angel
March 8		Travel to Florence
March 9-11		Immersion experience in Florence:
March 11-12		Immersion experience in Orvieto
March 13-15		Immersion experience in Rome
March 15		Return to the United States.
May 9	10:00 a.m.	Final paper due in Angel

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Crawford, M. (2006). *Transformations: Women, gender, and psychology*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Severgnini, Beppe (2006) *La Bella Figura: A Field Guide to the Italian Mind*. New York, N.Y: Broadway Books.

Passerini, L. (1996). Gender relations. In D. Forgacs & R. Lumley (Eds.) *Italian cultural studies* (pp.144-159). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

15 women who changed Italy: <http://slowitaly.yourguidetoitaly.com/2012/03/15-women-who-changed-italy/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Pre-trip independent study

CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

What is cross-cultural psychology?

Matsumoto, D. (2002). Culture, psychology, and education. In W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sattler (Eds.), *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* (Unit 2, Chapter 5), (<http://www.wvu.edu/~culture>), Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington USA.

What can we study using cross-cultural psychology?

Realo, A., & Allik, J. (2002) The nature and scope of intra-cultural variation on psychological dimensions. In W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sattler (Eds.), *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* (Unit 2, Chapter 8), (<http://www.wvu.edu/~culture>), Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington USA

What are the practical and ethical challenges of doing cross-cultural research?

Goodwin, R. (2002). Conducting cross-cultural psychological research in changing cultures: Some ethical and logistical considerations. In W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sattler (Eds.), *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* (Unit 2, Chapter 10), (<http://www.wvu.edu/~culture>), Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington USA.

Short Assignment 1. (10% of final grade)

- a) Complete the Culture-Specific and Culture-General Assignment (see APPENDIX)
- b) Complete the Core Cultural Values and Culture Mapping Inventory
http://www.carla.umn.edu/maxsa/documents/Cultural%20Values_MAXSA_IG.pdf
(Use last two pages 225-226)

Compare your results to the results of a friend from a different culture/ethnicity/religion. Discuss the meaning of the differences you and your friend identified in your answers in a 2-3 page essay.

GENDER

What is gender and why should we study gender?

Crawford, M. (2006). Chapter 2: Gender, status, and power. In *Transformations: Women, Gender, and Psychology*, pp. 24-58. Boston, McGraw Hill.

Judith Lorber: *The social construction of gender*. Excerpt from: *Paradoxes of Gender* (Chapter 1) by Judith Lorber (1994). Yale University Press.

http://www.meac.org/Resources/ed_services/SG_WEB/SeeingGender/PDFs/SocialConstructionOfGender.pdf

Intersectionality; Diversity of gender identities.

Intersectionality: A tool for gender and economic justice (2004). Women's Rights and Economic Change, 9.

http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/wpp/flf/pdf/AWID_intersectionality.pdf

Sayed, A., Chappals and gym shorts: An Indian Muslim woman in the Land of Oz. (2002), pp. 203-214. In Hernández, Daisy, & Rehman, Bushra (Eds.). *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*. New York: Seal Press.

Short Assignment 2: My social identities. This short paper (2-3 pages) provides an occasion for you to consider how the various social identities you inhabit, including GENDER, influence your self-definition, experiences of privilege and/or discrimination, goals, and style of coping. In short, how do the intersections among the social identities and social locations influence your life experience? You can use Sayeed's essay as a template. I encourage you to write this short paper about yourself. However, you may also focus on the life of a parent, friend, or a character portrayed in the media. This paper will contribute 10% to your final grade.

The meanings of gender: Modern sexism.

Anderson, K.J. (2010). "Feminists are men-haters": Backlash myth-making. In K.J. Andersen, *Benign bigotry: The Psychology of subtle sexism*, pp. 129-192.

Short Assignment 3: Complete The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. Review your scores on ASI, AMI, HS, and BS: do they seem to correlate with each other? Discuss your beliefs regarding Hostile and Benevolent Sexism (2-3 pages). This paper will contribute 10% to your final grade.

THE MEANINGS OF GENDER IN ITALY

READINGS:

Best, D. L., et. al. (1994). Parent-child interactions in France, Germany, and Italy: The effects of gender and culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 25(2), 181-193.

Poggio, B. (2000). Between bytes and bricks: Gender cultures in work contexts. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 21(3), 381-402.

Bono, Emilia Del, Massimiliano Bratti, and Daniela Vuri. (2005). "New Mothers' Labour Force

Participation in Italy: The Role of Job Characteristics. *LABOUR: Review of Labour Economics & Industrial Relations*. 19:79-121.

Larsen, Trine P. 2004. "Work and Care Strategies of European Families: Similarities or National Differences?" *Social Policy & Administration*. 38:654-677.

Passerini, L. (1996). Gender relations. In D. Forgacs & R. Lumley (Eds.) *Italian cultural studies: An introduction*.

BBC News (2006). Italian women shun "mamma" role. Retrieved from:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/europe/4739154.stm>

The Global Gender Gap Report (2011). <http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-gender-gap>

Tarnopolsky, M (2012): What happened to feminism in Italy?
<http://www.theflorentine.net/articles/article-view.asp?issuetocId=6840>

Beccalli, Bianca, "The Modern Women's Movement in Italy," *New Left Review*, #204 (March-April '94), 86-112.

WALKING TOURS:

Several walking tours will highlight monuments and destinations focusing on the role of women in Italian history. Among these may be (schedule permitting): A statue of Saint Catherine of Siena, outside Castel sant'Angelo, Rome; The Judith Slaying Holofernes painting by Artemesia, Uffizi gallery, Florence; Piazza del Campidoglio, Rome, a site of the recent campaign to end violence against women; Casa De Bambini, Rome, the original "Children's House" founded by Maria Montessori in 1907; the European Brain Research Institute, founded by a Nobel prize laureate Rita Levi-Montalcini; [Casa Internazionale delle Donne](#) (The International House of Women) Via della Lungara, 19, Rome.

GUEST LECTURES:



Rita D'Amico

Institute of Cognitive Science and Technology, National Research Council, Rome

"The family material inheritance in the south of Italy: cultural issues, psychological and gender aspects"

Material inheritance in families has mainly been approached from a legal and economic perspectives. However, recently different factors are gradually taken into consideration. For example, although egalitarian inheritance laws have had a dramatic impact on the family inheritance process, cultural patriarchal attitudes persist and limit women's inheritance rights, especially in the south of Italy. Moreover, psychological factors, such as the quality of the

relationship between parents and children, the belief that part of the inheritance should be left to those who care for elderly parents, and other cultural beliefs may influence the process of transmitting material inheritance. The talk will discuss the results of a qualitative exploratory study, based on 40 semi-structured interviews.

Rita D'Amico Rita D'Amico is a social and clinical psychologist, with a qualification in psychotherapy. She worked for years to develop a theoretical and methodological approach that builds a bridge between social and clinical psychology. Within this perspective, she has carried out many research projects investigating, among others, the following topics: the origin of guilt in couple relationships, in friendships and in siblings; the complex connection between love, power and dependency in the context of marriage; issue of family violence and stalking; racism and discrimination perceived by migrant women in the region of Abruzzo (Italy); the evolutionary origin of stigmatization and the function of social exclusion of people with epilepsy; the conditions influencing women's and men's academic career advancement (in collaboration with Prof. S. S. Canetto (Colorado State University, USA), attitudes of young people towards love over the internet (cross-cultural study); psychological issues within the relationship between brothers and sisters. Member of the IARR (International Association for Relationship Research) since 1990, she has coordinated the Group for the Study of Interpersonal Relationships at the ISTC – CNR for several years. From 1997 to 1999 she was a member of the Working Group "Culture of diversity and women's studies in Italian universities", coordinated by the Minister for Equal Opportunities, Prof. L. Balbo.



Donata Francescato

Professor of Community Psychology, University Sapienza Rome,

“Gender and Community Psychology in the Context of Italy”

The decrease in the socio-political empowerment of European youth is particularly troublesome for Community Psychology, which is becoming all over the world mostly a female profession (Mebane, 2008; Vazquez Rivera, 2010). CP unites clinical psychology's traditional concern with the welfare of the individual with an interest in the legislative and political processes that create the conditions in which individuals live. However, the increasing feminization of psychology students may make it harder to get them interested in CP. Women's cultural heritage pushes them toward the ‘caring professions’, while the same cultural heritage coupled with the present individualistic Weltanschauung pushes them toward the ‘privatization’ of social problems, and furthers their interests toward clinical psychology. In spite of changes promoted by feminism, Italian women, for instance, are still less likely than men to be actively interested in politics or to become activists in political parties and movements, and much less likely than men to occupy top positions in most fields (Gelli, 2009; Mebane, 2008) Moreover, in most Italian degree programs, psychology majors are offered dozens of subjects related to clinical topics, yet very few require students to take courses like contemporary history, sociology, economics, political psychology or gender studies, which could provide opportunities for students to understand the relevance of politics to their professional careers and their personal lives.



Caterina Arcidiacono

Prof of Community Psychology

Coordinator of the Phd Doctoral Course in Gender Studies Federico II University, Naples President of ECPA

Location: “Gender inequalities and obstacles to the active presence of women in Italian urban areas”

Gender inequalities and obstacles to the active presence of women are two still very widespread problems in urban areas.

Prosperity in cities does not necessarily lead to a more equitable distribution of resources between men and women. Women contribute significantly to the economic wealth of cities, but tend to benefit less from the wealth they generate. To accelerate the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, increased gender equality, empowerment of women and youths is essential; the economic well-being of women and gender equality in a broad sense are closely connected to all development-related themes. Both ownership or control of productive activities (such as land and dwellings) have the advantages, among others, of accelerating development, contributing to overcoming poverty and reducing inequality”.

Post-trip assignment:

Final paper: This 7-10 page paper will be the culmination of your learning in the course. You will consult with your instructor during the trip on how to best complete the project. On your return, you will explore and elaborate on the themes identified in your pre-trip proposal. Use specific examples, quotes from readings, visual illustrations (e.g., photos from your trip), and other materials, to support your arguments. Identify what was most helpful to you in learning about your topic, such as specific films, texts, personal experiences, etc. Identify what particular challenges you experienced when completing your project. The paper must use APA or MLA style and will include a reference list. This paper will contribute 40% to your final grade.

COURSE POLICIES

Grading

10%	Short Assignment 1
10%	Short Assignment 2
10%	Short Assignment 3
10%	Project Proposal
10%	Community Contribution Grade
50%	Final Paper

Your Community Contribution Grade: In addition to completing papers, projects and workshops, 10% of your grade will be a Community Contribution grade, reflecting your overall contributions to your travel abroad community. In general, your Community Contribution grade will reflect *what you do to make this trip an effective and exciting intellectual experience for your community of fellow travelers*. A key component of this grade will be four required community meetings over breakfast, in which you meet with your colleagues and instructor to share your experiences and insights. Here are some other factors that will impact your Community Contribution grade: Have you collaborated with one of your colleagues in locating and visiting a museum, performance event, historic sight, etc.? Have you discovered opportunities of sites to visit to meet your course requirements, and shared them with your colleagues (perhaps at a breakfast meeting)? Please note that activities that detract from the traveling community's intellectual experience carry penalties. For example, failing to follow instructions from the travel agent or the instructors in the program (including instructors of courses other than your own) could result in a 0 for your Community Contribution grade. Likewise, violation of Penn State University's Code of Conduct, excessive drunkenness, or violation of the country's laws or customs will be met with severe penalties. In addition to a 0 in Community Contribution, additional penalties may be assigned to you and your academic record by the university's Judicial Affairs office.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to act with civility and personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their own efforts. An environment of academic integrity is requisite to respect for self and others and a civil community. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another persons' work as one's own, using Internet sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, "ghosting" (taking or having another student take an exam), stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty, etc. Academic dishonesty violates the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromises the worth of work completed by others. A student should avoid academic dishonesty when preparing work for any class. If charged with academic dishonesty, students will receive written or oral notice of the charge by the instructor. Students who contest the charge should first seek resolution through discussion with the faculty member or the campus Director of Academic Affairs. If the matter is not resolved, the student may request a hearing with the University College Committee on Academic Integrity at the campus. Sanctions for breaches of academic integrity may range (depending on the severity of the offense) from F for the assignment to F for the course. In severe cases of academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, stealing exams or "ghosting" an exam, students may receive a grade of XF, a formal University disciplinary sanction that indicates on the student's transcript that failure in the course was due to a serious act of academic dishonesty. The University's statement on Academic Integrity from

which the above statement was drawn is available at:

<http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html>

Note about academic integrity and the papers and essays for this course: Your paper or essay must be 100% your own work. The penalty for academic integrity violation, even for just a portion of a paper or essay, is a 0 for the paper and possibly also an F or XF for the course, depending on the severity of the violation, as determined by the instructor.

NOTE TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Note to students with disabilities: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is Penn State's policy to provide reasonable academic adjustments for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability-related need for modifications in this course, contact Sharon Manco, 610-892-1461, 127 Vairo Library, sam26@psu.edu. This notification should occur by the end of the first week of the semester. Students may visit www.equity.psu.edu/ods/ for complete information.

Appendix A

Culture-specific and culture-general assignment

Culture-Specific and Culture-General Learning

Imagine students preparing to come study in the U.S. There would be some *culture specific* things that would be helpful to know – common greetings, what expectations teachers have of students, and maybe something about patterns of friendship. Of course, you say, but there are so many variations, how would we prepare the students for these? We could do so by helping them understand the ways cultures can differ, so when they encounter a visible difference they can better get at what's underneath this difference. They would be learning the culture from an insider's perspective, and they could begin thinking about how to adapt. This is *culture general* learning (i.e., principles that apply regardless of the setting). In your own preparation, you'll need a balance of culture-specific and culture-general learning.

Differentiating Cultural from Personal and Universal

It was really hard to tell in the beginning if something was cultural or just personal. I remember one time asking my host parents out to dinner at what for me was kind of an expensive restaurant. When we were getting ready to go I was a little frustrated when I saw my host father's brother and his family had arrived to join us. I didn't say anything because I know family is important in Mexico and what would I say anyway?

When the bill came I figured that my host father would help out – after all, he was the one who invited his brother and his brother's family. As it turns out, I got stuck with the bill and felt really taken advantage of. I had found Mexicans to be so generous and then this really made me think my host father was a jerk. ~ Kelly Lavin, Mexico

Kelly's experience brings up an issue that can be challenging: How do you sort out what's normal cultural behavior and what's not. In this case, is the host father really a "jerk," or is he following some cultural rule or norm? How can you figure this out?

Let's start with some definitions from the *Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook*:

Cultural: refers to what a group of people have in common with each other and how they are different from other groups.

Personal: refers to ways in which each person is different from everyone else, including those in the same group.

Universal: refers to ways in which all people in all groups are basically the same. (Storti and Bennhold Samaan, 1997.)

Some important points to remember:

- Personal preferences exist everywhere. Oftentimes a preference may very well have cultural and historical roots. The longer you are in the country the better you can distinguish between what is cultural

and what is more personal.

- When something is cultural, this means there is a recognizable pattern of behavior. When you have learned the patterns, then you know when something is out of the norm. You'll be better able to know, for example, when someone is being unusually friendly.
- Awareness of cultural patterns also helps you figure out your own perceptions of events and your adaptation strategies.

Kelly found out several weeks later that an invitation to one family member is, in fact, an invitation to other family members who know about the upcoming event. This became clear when she saw her host father in a similar situation when people who she knew hadn't been directly invited showed up to the restaurant, and he paid the bill for everyone.

She also learned something important about distinguishing between a universal (in this case, hosting a social event) and culturally specific patterns – the details that differ between cultures during such events.

Differentiate cultural from personal and universal

Read the list of behaviors below. Indicate if you think the behavior is universal, cultural, or personal. If you feel that there is more than one answer, think of some examples to show how this may be true (you don't have to write these down).

U = Universal

C = Cultural

P = Personal

1. ___ Eating with chopsticks
2. ___ Women walking five steps behind men
3. ___ Walking rather than riding the bus
4. ___ Feeling sorry after accidentally stepping on someone's foot
5. ___ Respecting your elders
6. ___ Making a slurping sound when eating soup or noodles
7. ___ Wearing warmer clothing when it is cold
8. ___ Being depressed after the death of a loved one
9. ___ Sleeping with a light on
10. ___ Shaking hands with someone you first meet

(Adapted from Storti and Bennhold Samaan, 1997).

From Maximizing Study Abroad: A Students' Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use

By R. Michael Paige, Andrew D. Cohen, Barbara Kappler Mikk, Julie C. Chi, & James P. Lassegard