Course syllabus

Course title | Culture and Psychopathology: Cross-cultural perspectives and practice
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Instructor | Stefan Baker - Systemic Psychotherapist MA Cantab; MA Lon; MA Tavistock/UEL
Contact details | stefan.s.baker@gmail.com
Affiliation | Warszawski Ośrodek Psychoterapii i Psychiatrii (WOPiP)
Akademicki Centrum Psychoterapii i Rozwoju (ACPIR)
Course format | Seminar
Number of hours | 15
Number of ECTS credits | 2 (total 60hrs)
  - Class Attendance: 15hrs
  - 10min Presentation: 2hrs preparation
  - Reading 28hrs (4hrs/Seminar)
  - Essay 15hrs
(The Reflective Learning Log has no hours allocation as it is to be completed as part of the process of reflection alongside the other elements of the course, e.g. whilst reading and in response to the seminar sessions).

Brief course description | This course will examine different dimensions of how Culture affects our understanding of psychology and psychopathology, the challenges of cross-cultural practice, and the relevance of culture to the field of mental health and psychological research. The course aims to increase awareness and develop understanding around the topics covered through open-minded study, personal reflection and lively discussion. Texts will draw from cultural theory, psychology and clinical practice, inviting students to consider fundamental questions with far-reaching implications for psychopathology, research, and everyday clinical interventions. Students should be willing to critically reflect on the values and discourses informing their own perspectives and respect those of others. We will aim to cultivate a climate of respectful listening and curiosity, sensitive challenge, and personal reflection.

Full course description | Each week the chosen texts will aim to link theory to practice, examining cultural discourses around norms, race and ethnicity, mental illness, and cross-cultural practice and research, amongst other topics. Relevant theoretical issues and practical dilemmas concerning universalism versus relativism, colonialism and otherness, power, difference and racism will be explored. Each week students will be required to familiarize themselves with at least one text and take part in a discussion of the ideas explored in each seminar topic. Students will be grouped into reading and discussion groups and allocated specific readings in each group. Classes will involve student presentations, close critical reading of the texts, and structured discussion. Students will be able to explore
particular topics in more depth through their presentation and essay, and the weekly reflective log will offer a context in which students can reflect on the personal impact of texts and the ideas encountered. This Seminar course requires a commitment to reading the minimum assigned materials and interrogating the potential biases of existing perspectives on the topic areas.

| Learning outcomes | Critical thinking; an introductory understanding of the far-reaching influence of culture on psychology as a discipline and how psychopathology is understood; treatment and practice implications of cultural factors; an insight into some of the intersections between Psychology, Sociology, and Anthropology; self-reflexivity, i.e. a developing awareness of how factors such as culture, race, gender and our own specific contexts may affect how we think, perceive, and are perceived by those around us. |
| Learning activities and teaching methods | Classroom sessions will last 90 minutes and be comprised of student presentations and analysis and discussion of reading materials and topics. Where possible and appropriate, some experiential reflections will be explored to bring to life the topics covered. Where relevant, some video material may be presented for discussion. |
| List of topics/classes and bibliography | **WEEK 1: Introduction to the course: Social Constructionism (45mins).**  
  
**WEEK 2: Constructions of the Other**  
  
**WEEK 3: Race and Racism**  
WEEK 4: Stereotypes and Prejudice

WEEK 5: Culture & Attachment

WEEK 6: Family, Kinship and Genograms

WEEK 7: Refugees and Violence

WEEK 8: Cultural & Relational Reflexivity
Krause, I.-B. (2012). Culture and the reflexive subject in systemic


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment methods and criteria</th>
<th>Written Essay, 2,500 words - 50%</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will be required to write an essay on a question inviting exploration of one of the topics covered and the implications for psychology, psychopathology, mental health, and psychotherapy. The essay will require students to explore a given topic in more depth and situate the ideas in the wider landscape of psychology and psychopathology. Students will be invited to demonstrate a reflective capacity regarding how their own personal context may influence their perspective. The essay will require formal referencing to APA standard.</td>
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**Classroom Presentation - 20%**

Maximum 10 minute presentation in pairs exploring the issues covered in one of the papers from the weekly topics, and offering up some points or questions for class discussion. Students will be asked to provide fellow class members with a summary sheet to accompany their presentation, including questions for discussion. Students will be assessed for critical evaluation of the material, their consideration of potential implications for how we think about psychopathology, and how thoughtfully they frame the points for discussion. Further guidelines will be provided.

**Classroom Participation – 10%**

Classroom participation will be assessed for level of engagement with the material and for showing sensitivity regarding power and difference. This means developing an awareness of how one’s own contributions to the seminar influence the overall learning experience. Students will need to demonstrate that they are familiar with the material discussed in each seminar. Students should be mindful of voice entitlement and aim to foster equality of voice in the seminars so that there is an opportunity for everyone’s perspective to be heard, as well as expressing their own. Discussion questions and group exercises will promote this.

**Reflective Learning Log – 20%**

The reflective learning log is an informal collection of personal reflections on the material covered and the experience of participating in the seminar course. It is not assessed according to length or formal presentation, but should be maintained throughout the duration of the course and demonstrate a level of
personal engagement with the topics covered, as well as some reflections on students’ personal responses to them. Guideline length – 1 side of printed notes for each topic/seminar.

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<tr>
<th>Attendance rules</th>
<th>Absence maximum: 2 sessions, at least 1 of which must be supported by medical/documentary evidence. Presentation compulsory.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
<td>Completed introductory course on psychotherapy</td>
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<td>Academic honesty</td>
<td>Students must respect the principles of academic integrity. Cheating and plagiarism (including copying work from other students, internet or other sources) are serious violations that are punishable and instructors are required to report all cases to the administration.</td>
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<td>Basket</td>
<td>NA, course is part of the specialization Clinical Psychology – Track Psychotherapy</td>
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<td>Remarks</td>
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