Course Description:

Welcome to Mental Health & Culture! This course is an advanced seminar in cross-cultural clinical/counseling psychology, where we will explore the impact of culture on the prevalence, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health and illness. In this course, “culture” is broadly defined and includes (but is not limited to) gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. Topics include mental illnesses that disproportionately affect members of one or more gender, ethnic group, or social class; ethnic and other cultural differences in mental health help-seeking behavior; non-Western indigenous ways of healing; psychotherapy research with underserved populations; and multicultural competence in psychosocial service delivery.

This is a primarily discussion-based course that requires every member of the class to be actively engaged during every class session. As such, I look forward to seeing each of you shape the course experience in a unique and meaningful way.

Note: This course satisfies one advanced seminar requirement for the Psychology major. It also contributes to the Women’s & Gender Studies (WGST) program.

Course Goals:

This course requires you to do a lot of critical thinking, reading, and writing. During our time together, I hope that you will:

- Develop increased knowledge of the impact of culture on mental health.
- Remain open and flexible to multiple definitions of culture.
- Learn to compare and contrast different psychological theories and practices.
- Improve your ability to evaluate scientific research in the field of cross-cultural clinical/counseling psychology.
- Understand and appreciate the historical, social, and cultural context of psychotherapy.
- Engage in thoughtful, sophisticated reflection on the ethical issues in this field.
- Refine your skills in written and oral communication about mental health and culture.
- Approach controversial, emotional, or personal issues in a respectful and scholarly manner.
- Contribute to an active learning environment for yourself and your fellow scholars.

Course Requirements:

- 20% Class participation
- 10% Discussion points/questions (8 sets during the semester) & discussion facilitation
- 10% Short papers:
  1. Culture and mental health paper (8%)
  2. Indigenous healing practices paper (12%)
- 20% Take-home exam
- 30% Research project:
  - Poster presentation (8%)
  - Final paper (22%)
Readings:

Readings for this course will consist of primary source literature from the field of cross-cultural clinical/counseling psychology.


