



PSYC*3350, Course Outline: Fall 2025

General Information

Course Title: Cross-Cultural Psychology

Course Description:

Throughout the world, peoples of different cultural backgrounds are increasingly coming into contact through travel, business, work, temporary and permanent settlement, and information and communication technologies. What happens as a result of their contacts can vary from mutual learning and appreciation to hostility and overt conflict. This course provides an examination of cultural differences and of individual and group relations within and between culturally diverse societies from psychological perspectives. The course focuses on two equally important issues. First, we will examine how psychology can help to understand and cope with the diversity of our world. Second, we will examine the validity and generalizability of psychological knowledge in a different cultural context. The aim is to facilitate an understanding of the broad cultural similarities and differences that exist across and within societies.

Credit Weight: 0.5

Academic Department: Psychology

Semester Offering: Fall 2025

Course format: Face-to-Face

Class Schedule and Location: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4:00 – 5:20 pm, MACN 113

Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Saghar Chahar Mahali

Email: schaharm@uoguelph.ca

Office location and office hours: Wednesdays 2:00 – 3:00 pm (virtually) and by appointment

GTA Information

Tiana Dou; Email: tianzi@uoguelph.ca

Roxana Golmohammad; Email: rgolmoha@uoguelph.ca

Office hours by appointment only

Course Content

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand that behaviour, cognition, emotions, and social norms are not universal but are shaped by cultural contexts.
2. Recognize how cultural misunderstandings and implicit biases develop and gain skills to critically evaluate cultural stereotypes.
3. Understand how culture influences various phenomena, including immigration, acculturation, identity, mental health, and communication.
4. Ability to locate, assess, and critically synthesize information on topics in cross-cultural psychology.
5. Collaborate respectfully and effectively with a partner to complete a course assignment.

Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Reflection Paper	October 10 th 11:59 pm	10%	LO # 1, 2, & 3
Culture Project Paper	November 4 th 11:59 pm	25%	LO # 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5
Online Quizzes	Throughout the semester	10% (1% each, the best 10 out of 12 quizzes)	LO # 1
Midterm	October 21 st 4:00-5:20 pm	25%	LO # 1
Final Exam	December 12 th , 11:30 am – 1:30 pm	30%	LO # 1

Lecture Content:

Date	Lecture Topic	Chapter	Quiz
September 4 th	Introduction	-	
September 9 th	Defining culture	1	
September 11 th	Classification of cultures	-	#1
September 16 th	Cross-cultural methodology	2	
September 18 th	Methodological concerns	2	#2
September 23 rd	Diversity and worldviews	3	
September 25 th	Culture and Gender	-	#3
September 30 th	Different communication patterns	4	
October 2 nd	Culture and intergroup relations	-	#4
October 7 th	Migration and acculturation	5	
October 9 th	Intergroup ideologies	-	#5
	No class scheduled, Fall Study Break		
October 16 th	Midterm review session	-	#6
October 21 st	In-class midterm exam	-	
October 23 rd	Stereotyping and prejudice	6	

October 28 th	Culture and social behaviour	-	#7
October 30 th	No Class: working on your culture paper		
November 4 th	Emotional expression across culture	-	
November 6 th	Culture and identity	7	
November 11 th	Culture and personality	-	#8
November 13 th	Culture and physical health	8	#9
November 18 th	Culture and mental health	9	
November 20 th	Psychological treatments across cultures	9	#10
November 25 th	Conclusions and prospects for future directions	10	#11
November 27 th	Final Review Session		#12

Additional Notes:

The final grade is based on a midterm, online quizzes, an essay, a reflection paper, and a final exam. The final exam is **NOT** cumulative. Lectures and reading assignments are examined in each test. All tests consist of multiple-choice items. Both exams will be written in class.

(1) Midterm

Chapters: 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5 and lecture materials.

(2) Final exam

Material includes Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, as well as all lecture content covered since the midterm.

(3) Culture Profile Research Paper (25%)

For this assignment, you will work in pairs with a classmate to research a culture that is different from Canadian culture. Using at least **five scholarly sources**, you will explore the group's traditions, norms, and psychological frameworks. You will then apply **one key concept from cross-cultural psychology** to help explain how culture shapes behaviour, social interactions, and worldviews.

Instructions:**1. Choose a Cultural Group for Analysis.**

- Select a specific cultural group other than Canadian culture.
- Focus on a well-defined subgroup (e.g., Persians, Chinese, Punjabi, Tamil immigrants, etc.).
- Avoid overly broad categories, such as “*Asian culture*”, “*African culture*”, or “*Middle Eastern culture*”, as these include many diverse and distinct communities. The goal is to encourage focused, in-depth research on the cultural characteristics of a clearly defined group rather than generalizations about large, diverse regions.

2. Define and describe the culture.

- Clearly define the cultural group you are studying.
- Describe at least two key elements of the culture: practices, traditions, norms, and/or values that shape the group's worldview.
- Support your description using peer-reviewed articles, academic books, or other credible scholarly sources.

3. Apply a cross-cultural psychology concept.

- Choose one of the frameworks listed below.
- Briefly define the concept, and then apply it to the culture you selected.
- Use scholarly research to explain how this concept is reflected in the group's beliefs, traditions, and everyday life.

- Support your analysis with **specific examples**, such as behaviours, rituals, social expectations, or communication patterns.

Concept	Sample Focus Areas
Power Distance	Respect for authority, family hierarchy, classroom or workplace roles
Uncertainty Avoidance	Risk-taking, attitudes toward rules or planning
Collectivism vs. Individualism	Family obligations, self-identity, independence vs. group loyalty
High vs. Low-Context Communication	Direct vs. indirect speech, conflict resolution styles
Emotion Expression Norms	Emotional regulation, public expression of sadness/anger/joy
Tightness vs. Looseness	Strength of social norms and consequences of deviance

4. Conclude your paper by explaining the broader significance of understanding these cultural characteristics.

- Discuss how these insights can inform cross-cultural communication strategies, enhance collaboration in multicultural settings, or contribute to the development of culturally sensitive policies and practices.

The essay has to be uploaded on CourseLink by **November 4th, 11:59 pm** (EST).

The approximate length of the essay is **6 to 10 pages** (not including title page and reference section). Papers submitted after the deadline will receive a penalty of **5% per day late** (including weekends). No paper is accepted after the last class, November 27th.

The pedagogical reasoning:

This assignment is designed to deepen your understanding of how behaviours, attitudes, and social norms vary across cultural contexts. By researching and analyzing a cultural group different from Canadian culture, you will critically examine your own cultural assumptions and explore how psychological and societal frameworks influence human thought and behaviour. Applying key

concepts from cross-cultural psychology will enhance your ability to recognize cultural differences and understand their broader implications, equipping you to engage more thoughtfully and respectfully with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

(4) Online quizzes (10%)

Twelve quizzes are administered online via CourseLink. Your final quiz grade is based on your best 10 scores out of the 12 quizzes. Each quiz is worth 1% of your final grade and includes five questions.

Ten quizzes correspond to the ten textbook chapters, and two quizzes focus on the midterm and final exam materials. Each quiz becomes available on the day we finish the corresponding chapter and remains accessible on CourseLink for 24 hours. For example, if we finish Chapter One on September 11th, the quiz will be available until 11:59 PM on September 12th. Please note that no make-up quizzes will be offered if you miss one.

The pedagogical purpose of these quizzes is to familiarize students with the format and content of questions that will appear on the midterm and final exams, as well as to help students assess their understanding of the course material in an ongoing, low-stakes format.

Grading and Deadlines

- Quiz grades will be updated on CourseLink weekly.
- It is your responsibility to regularly check your grades and inform the instructor as soon as possible if a mark is missing.
- You have until the last day of class to report missing quiz grades. After this deadline, no further changes will be made, and a score of zero will be recorded for any unreported quizzes.

(5) Reflection Paper (10%)

Cultural Detective: Observing the Everyday

In this reflection assignment, you will take on the role of a “cultural detective” to observe everyday human behaviour and interactions. The goal is to notice how people act, communicate, or interact in ways shaped by culture, and to reflect on your own assumptions and reactions. Unlike the major paper, this assignment is personal, experiential, and does not require research or citations. Through this exercise, you will gain insight into how culture shapes human behaviour and how your own cultural background influences the way you interpret the world around you.

Instructions:

1. Choose a Context:

- Select a public space (e.g., park, classroom, shopping area) or an online community (e.g., social media group, forum).
- Look for behaviours, interactions, or social practices that are different from what you typically expect or are familiar with.

2. Observe a Behaviour or Interaction:

- Pick one specific behaviour, interaction, or custom that caught your attention.

- Examples:
 - Greeting or farewell rituals
 - Use of personal space
 - Communication style (direct vs. indirect, formal vs. casual)
 - Emotional expression (laughing, apologizing, showing frustration)
- Describe this particular phenomenon without judging it as “weird” or “wrong.”

3. Reflect on Your Observations:

- Describe your initial reaction: Were you surprised, confused, amused, or curious?
- Consider your own assumptions: How might your cultural background have influenced how you interpreted what you observed?
- Reflect on what this observation taught you about cultural differences and human behaviour.
- Focus on your personal insight—there is no need to reference course materials or academic sources.

4. Write Your Reflection:

- **Length: 500–600 words, double-spaced, in Times New Roman, 12-point font.**
- Include:
 - Context and description of the behaviour
 - Your personal reactions and assumptions
 - Insights gained about culture and human behaviour

(6) Final examination date and time:

Format: In Person

Date: December 12th, 2025

Time: 11:30 – 1:30 pm

Location: TBA

Final exam weighting:

The format of the exam is multiple-choice items. Please familiarize yourself with [Examination Regulations](#)

Course Resources

Required Text:

Mio, J.S., Safdar, S., Barker, L.A., Domenech Rodriguez, M., D., & Gonzalez, J. (2022). *Cross-Cultural Psychology: Understanding Our Diverse Communities* (1st Canadian ed.). Toronto: Oxford University Press. <https://vimeo.com/696224924> (you may purchase online or hardcopy version of the textbook).

The cost of the required text for this course, is \$116.99 at the campus bookstore. Students are welcome to use second-hand copies of the textbook or purchase the textbook from alternate locations. The prices in other locations may differ from that at the bookstore and prices at the bookstore are subject to change.

Copies of the textbook will be available on Reserve in the Library for two hours.

Other Resources:

The lecture notes will be accessible through CourseLink. The lecture notes for each week are available at the end of that week. The results of examinations and the grades for all assignments will also be posted and regularly updated on CourseLink. All relevant course messages will be posted on CourseLink. You are responsible to check CourseLink on a regular basis to avoid missing messages that are posted and ensure the accuracy of your grades that are regularly updated on CourseLink.

Course Policies

Grading Policies

If you miss the midterm, you must notify the instructor as soon as possible.

If you are unable to submit an assignment by the due date, you are required to contact the course instructor **in advance**. Written assignments submitted after the deadline will receive a penalty of **5% per day late** (including weekends).

For online quizzes, there are no make-ups or late submissions. However, you may miss up to two quizzes without penalty, as your grade will be based on your best 10 out of 12 quizzes.

[Undergraduate Grading Procedures](#)

Course Policies on Group Work:

The Culture Profile research paper is to be completed in collaboration with a partner. This means that although you may divide the work between you and your partner (in any way that suits you best), both of you are responsible for the project as a whole. This also means that you must develop cooperative ways of working together (e.g., the equitable distribution of tasks) that will ensure an interpersonally positive and intellectually rewarding experience for you and your partner. I expect that most, if not all, groups will function well; however, unforeseen problems could arise. If they do, you should let me know as soon as possible about any perceived difficulties.

Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices and recording of lectures:

Electronic recording of classes is not allowed without consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted, they are solely for the use of the authorized student and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the written consent of the instructor.

University Policies**Disclaimer:**

Please note that a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules is occasionally required. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules.

Academic Consideration

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for

Academic Consideration:

[Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions](#)

Academic Misconduct

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 54335 or email accessibility@uoguelph.ca or the [Student Accessibility Services Website](#)

Student Feedback Questionnaire

These questionnaires (formerly course evaluations) will be available to students during the last 2 weeks of the semester. Students will receive an email directly from the Student Feedback Administration system which will include a direct link to the questionnaire for this course. During this time, when a student goes to login to Courselink, a reminder will pop-up when a task is available to complete.

[Student Feedback Questionnaire](#)

Drop date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is Friday November 28, 2025. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#)

Additional Course Information

Course instructors are allowed to use software to help in detecting plagiarism or unauthorized copying of student assignments. Plagiarism is one of the most common types of academic misconduct on our campus. Plagiarism involves students using the work, ideas and/or the exact wording of other people or sources without giving proper credit to others for the work, ideas and/or words in their papers. Students can unintentionally commit misconduct because they do not know how to reference outside sources properly or because they don't check their work carefully enough before handing it in. Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin.com to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to prevent plagiarism in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences.

A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.