

10810GEC 140203 (Tn56)
Social and Cultural Analysis: Cross-Cultural Comparison

社會文化分析：跨文化比較

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Adopting a cultural relativist perspective, this course examines diverse cultural phenomena of different societies. By examining social institutions and social forces, including gender, family, religion, economy, politics and migration, students are guided to understand the cultural construction processes and the underlying power relationships of different cultural phenomena. Introducing the basics of anthropological and sociological concepts, the course will lead students to examine the relationship between individual and society, and whether individuals are agents to make changes or conform to the society. By comparing and analyzing diverse social situations and cultural phenomena, students will learn to reflect on their experiences and critically examine their values.

Upon finishing the course, students will be able to:

1. understand the construction of cultural phenomena from a socio-cultural perspective;
2. re-think the place of the individual within structures of power and domination; and
3. examine their own values and understand others whose values may be very different from their own.

TEXTBOOK

- Spradley, James, and David W McCurdy, eds. 2012. *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*. 14th edition. New Jersey: Pearson.
*Reserved at Main Library: GN325 .C69 2012
- Required readings are available on iLMS.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

- Lectures and PPT slides will be in English.
- Students are encouraged to use English during class discussion and presentation.
- Written works in either Chinese or English will be accepted.

NOTES ON PLAGIRISM

The University takes plagiarism seriously. Works found to have plagiarized will receive zero mark.

- Follow the style guide of in-text citations and bibliography on **iLMS**. Written works without proper referencing might be considered as plagiarized.
- Upload all of your written works to **Turnitin**.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Class participation (10%)

Students are expected to participate in class discussion. Both attitudes and quality of content will be evaluated.

Reading note (15%)

Select a piece of reading from the weekly schedule. Provide a summary and your comments of the reading. Length of your note: no less than 800 words in Chinese; no less than 500 words in English. Submit the reading note to **Turnitin** any time before Jan 3 (week 17). No late submissions will be accepted.

Final exam (30%)

In-class exam will be held in week 18. Exam format will be in short questions. No make-up exam will be offered unless you are sick and have documents for medical proof.

Group project (45%)

Students in a group (5-6 students/group) will be responsible for a project. Your group needs to analyze a cultural phenomenon in Taiwan or any other places.

The project requires your group to collect information about a cultural phenomenon that you selected. The information can be second-hand data, such as facts and data from reports or newspaper, etc. You can also include first-hand data by conducting interviews, but it is optional. In the analysis part, you are required to apply at least 2 concepts that you have learned in class to analyze the information you collected.

Due date:

1. Week 7: present your topic in class (~10 minutes/group):
 - (1) A short description of the cultural phenomenon; (2) methods of data collection; and (3) timeline
2. Week 14 - 16: Deliver a presentation in 30 minutes, plus 10-15 minutes for Q&A. Upload your set of ppt slides to iLMS a day (24 hours) before your presentation.
3. A week after your presentation: turn your ppt to become a group report and upload it to Turnitin. Make sure you take my comments in your group report.

Assessment breakdown: Week 7 presentation **5%** + Group presentation **25%** + Assessed by classmates **5%** + Group report **10%** (total 45%).

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Why is it important to learn cultural diversity?

Key concepts: culture; cross-cultural perspective; cultural construction; cultural diversity

Week 2: Gender

Are there only two genders? How do nature and culture work together in gender construction?

Key concepts: femininity and masculinity; gender and work; body politics; transgender

Read: Gender (iLMS)

Week 3: Sexuality

How does a society come to use sexuality to define people? The class will examine the meanings of sexuality in different societies.

Key concepts: construction of sexuality; sexual meanings

Read: Pascoe, Compulsive Heterosexuality (iLMS)

Week 4: Going to form groups for group project. Must come to class!
Please!

Week 4: Marriage and Family

The class will deconstruct the relationship between romantic love and marriage by reviewing the marriage systems and family forms of different societies.

Key concepts: kinship; inheritance; monogamy and polygamy

Read: Goldstein, Polyandry: When Brothers Take a Wife (Ch. 19, textbook)

Week 5: Parenthood

Is parent's love an instinct? Are women necessarily better care-givers than men? The class will examine the parenting practices of different societies.

Key concepts: fatherhood; motherhood; adoption; surrogacy

Read: Scheper-Hughes, Mother's Love (Ch.17, textbook)

Week 6: Religion and Cultural Rights

Some traditions are considered as violating human rights. How can we uphold the values of human rights without giving up our traditions?

Key concepts: traditions; universal values; state interests

Read: Gruenbaum, Female Genital Cutting (iLMS)

Week 7: Presentation of Topic of Your Group Project

Week 8: Economic systems (1)

What is affluence? By reviewing different subsistence strategies, such as hunting and gathering, horticultural, pastoral, and agricultural societies, the class will critically examine the relationship between affluence, human relationships, and economic development.

Key concepts: subsistence strategies

Read: Lee, the Hunters (Ch. 9, textbook)

Week 9: Economic systems (2)

Is poverty caused by laziness? How do capitalism, racism and sexism work to sustain inequality?

Key concepts: market economy; wealth disparity; structural inequality

Read: Bourgeois, Poverty at Work (Ch. 14, textbook)

Week 10: Political systems

Are there any free gifts? The class will examine how leaders establish their power by giving out big gifts in pre-industrial societies. This may help understand the current international relations.

Key concepts: reciprocity and power; leadership; international relations

Read: Harris, Life without Chiefs (Ch.26, textbook)

Week 11: No CLASS (Teacher is out of town for academic conference)

Week 12: Migration and Work

Why would we accept foreigners to take care of our intimate part of lives? How do gender and racial stereotypes work in the international division of labor?

Key concepts: international division of labor; binary of domestic/public; stereotypes

Read: Ehrenreich and Hochschild, Global Women (Ch.35, textbook)

Week 13: Migration and Sexuality

How does sexuality affect the decision of migration? How does migration journeys shape migrants' sexuality?

Key concepts: transnational sexuality; intersectionality

Read:

1. Brennan, Sex Tourism, Globalization, and Transnational Imaginings (iLMS)
2. Lai, Sexuality at Imagined Home (iLMS)

Week 14: Group presentation (~3 groups)

Week 15: Group presentation (~3 groups)

Week 16: Group presentation (~3 groups)

*If there is time left, we can discuss LGBT movements both locally and globally. Is there anyone or social group left behind in the movements?

Read: Engebretsen, Queer Grassroots Activism in China (iLMS)

Week 17: Conclusion and Review: Are we agents to Change or Conform?

Week 18: Final exam

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