

Professor: Dr. Regan A. R. Gurung
Class time: Saturday: 9am to 12 noon 09/17, 10/29, 11/12, 12/03
Office Hours: Please email with questions the moment you have them: gurungr@uwgb.edu



The Course

Understanding differences among cultural communities, whether of ethnicity, race, religion, gender or socioeconomic status, is critical to understanding attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. The communities in which children are raised differ markedly, and these can affect physical growth, aspirations, abilities, adjustment and worldview. Socio-cultural differences correspondingly impact many areas of our lives; what we eat and drink, our lifestyles and our health. This course examines how socio-cultural settings in America influence development, health beliefs, and health behaviors. Through a study of culture, you will have the opportunity to become more aware of the diversity around you and develop an increased understanding and tolerance of attitudes and viewpoints different from your own.

A note on my approach in this class: In contrast to many other courses in which we tend to accumulate facts and then present them in an exam, I have engineered this class to be more experiential in nature. You will do a majority of your learning from class discussions of the readings, and your classmates' comments, conversation, and anecdotes. Everything we talk about that illuminates cultural differences is critical. The partition of grades reflects this philosophy. This course is designed for junior and senior level students and serves as an **elective course** in the Human Development major. It also satisfies University **Ethnic Studies (an understanding of the causes and effects of stereotyping and racism and an appreciation of cultural diversity in the United States)** and **Writing Emphasis** requirements.

Key goals of this class are to help you understand:

- The full meaning of 'culture', and to examine your own personal culture,
- How cultures vary in health and health behaviors, and how this affects mortality and morbidity.

Primary Human Development Learning Outcomes Addressed in this class

Diverse Context – Students will recognize the role of context (i.e., ecological systems) in the processes of human development. Understand and be able to apply key components of cultural diversity (e.g., social class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation).

Basic Skills – Use APA style effectively when writing papers; ; Use library facilities and computerized databases to locate pertinent information; Present material effectively in class participation and group oral presentations). We will also address some Application & Theoretical Knowledge Outcomes.

Required Books*

- Alexi, S. (2008). *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian*. New York: Little Brown.
- Edut, O. (2004). *Body Outlaws: Young Women Write About Body Image and Identity*. New York: Seal Press.
- Fadiman, A. (1998). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux.
- Mehl-Medrona, L. (1998). *Coyote Medicine: Lessons from Native American healing*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

- Note * publication date may vary slightly according to printing/edition. Ensure title is right.

Recommended

- Galanti, G. (2004). *Caring for patients from different cultures: Case studies from American Hospitals*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Schwartz, B. M., Landrum, R. E., & Gurung, R. A. R., (2011). *An EasyGuide to APA style and format*. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage.

Readings on D2L

- Galanti, G. (2004). *Caring for patients from different cultures: Case studies from American Hospitals*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. (Selected chapters).
- Gurung, R. A. R. (2010). Culture and health. In K. Keith (Ed.), *Psychology & Culture*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Gurung, R. A. R. (2009). Cultural differences in food preferences. In L. Walter (Ed.) *Sustenance: food studies across the disciplines*. New York: Praeger.
- OEMA (2009, July). Psychology education and training from culture-specific and multiracial perspectives.
<http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/education-training.pdf>

Additional readings for your exploration will be added during the course of the semester.

A Framework for this Course

I have structured this course to reach many different learning styles and to provide multiple opportunities for enhancing understanding. This means going BEYOND multiple-choice exams to demonstrate your learning. I provide different opportunities for you to engage the material, AND provide rewards for it. Take the time to utilize the different resources provided and you will do well. Focus on the process and do not get bogged down by the outcome.

Learning Engagement Opportunities: I designed a variety of course activities to help you to comprehend, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the major links between culture, development and health, and to apply them to everyday life. Participation in the class will consist of many different components. You will have an opportunity to engage in each one. There is a lot more to learning than just reading a textbook or article.

Successful learning often involves sharing your personal views and opinions, listening to and digesting the views and opinions of others, and engaging in an exchange of ideas. Active participation in online discussion is critical to this process.

DISCUSSION: 20% of Grade

The best way to learn information is to talk about it. I have structured a number of activities to optimize your level of engagement with the material, your classmates, and with me.

- Book Clubs:** You will be divided up into groups of 3 to give you a chance to share your reactions to 3 of the required books (you will do a report on the Alexi (2008) book on your own). A short Reaction Paper (RP) of your discussion will accompany each. We will discuss *Body Outlaws* and *The Spirit Catches You...* in class and *Coyote Medicine* online. You will each be *Discussion leader*, responsible for providing the group with a brief summary of the reading and a comfortable environment for your group members to share their reactions, comments, and criticisms to the assigned readings. This should involve the preparation of questions that will stimulate an exchange of ideas.
- Issues to Ponder:** I will post questions relating to class material or current events for you to react to. Your responses will be posted to the Discussion Board. You will have approximately 7-10 questions during the semester.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: 40% of Grade

This class is designated as a Writing Emphasis (WE) class. All write-ups will be evaluated on a scale of 0-5 (5 – Exceptional; 4 – Good; 3 – Satisfactory; 2- Unsatisfactory; 0 – No paper). See the Schwartz et al. (2011) book for APA style help if needed.

- Book Reports.** You will write brief (approximately 2 pages long) papers on each of the four books in class. Your lowest score of the 4 will be dropped.
- Contact Interview:** You will also have the opportunity to interview a member of a culture that is different from your own, and write a Report that documents your rationale for choosing the interviewee and a summary of the person's cultural background and health behaviors. You will be given a worksheet/list of questions to guide you. Grades will reflect the degree to which each question was addressed.

CRITICAL READING REFLECTIONs (CRR): 10% of grade

To enable you to get the most of the readings, stimulate discussion, and prepare for class, write down 2-3 main questions about each reading/the main points, and/or your main criticisms.

GROUP PRESENTATION: 10% of grade

You will be required to choose a cultural group and provide a brief overview of the main belief system and health behaviors. You will compare and contrast the beliefs, development, behaviors, and health of the chosen group with another cultural group. Groups will be formed based on common interests and site where you are taking the class. I will provide some class time for group planning, early in the semester and a GoogleDocs site for document sharing and discussion as well as a discussion page on D2L. Every member in the group will be asked to evaluate the extent and quality of their own contribution and those of the other group members. Group members will all get a similar grade UNLESS there are major discrepancies in individual contributions as indicated by self-evaluations. Members in danger of getting a lower grade than the group due to social loafing or for other reasons will be notified in time if possible. In addition the class will provide a rating of the presentation. Presentations grades will consist of a weighted average of class ratings and mine.

FINAL ESSAY: 20% of grade

This will test for your comprehension of key terms and theories, and have you analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the material from the readings and from class.

How does it all add up? THERE IS NO CURVE! My philosophy on grading is that individual effort rather than competition results in a more productive and successful learning environment. **LATE POLICY:** You lose 1 point for every day the paper is late.

A = 93%; A/B = 88%; B = 83%; B/C = 78%; C = 70%; D = 65%; F <<60% [near impossible]

Approximate Schedule of Classes

Topics and reading assignments changes will be announced in class/by email

There will be 2-3 experts who will demonstrate various alternate medicine approaches and belief systems. I will be arranging for an acupuncturist, a yoga instructor, and a Shaman may all be joining our class. In addition there will be a variety of activities I will ask you to do on your own and to reflect online with the class (e.g., doing yoga, tai chi, chi running, meditation, a sweat, etc.)

Week	Topic	Read/Do
1. Sept 10	What is culture? What is health?	-
2. Sept 17	Definitions, measures, & Development	Galanti One
3. Sept 24	Prejudice and development	Alexi (2008)
4. Oct 1	Gender roles, development & health	Edut (2004)
5. Oct 8	"	"
6. Oct 15	Cultural Variations in Eating	Gurung (2009)
7. Oct 22	Food Adventure	Fadiman (1998)
8. Oct 29	A focus on Hmong Americans	"
9. Nov 5	Cultural Variations in Health Beliefs	Yoga/tai chi/sauna
10. Nov 12	Cultural Variations in Health Beliefs	Galanti two
11. Nov 19	A focus on American Indians	Gurung (2010)
12. Nov 26	A focus on American Indians	Mehr-Medrona (1998)
13. Dec 3	African Americans; Group Presentations	OEMA (2009) selections
14. Dec 10	Course Summary Final Essay	DUE DEC. 17th

NOTE:

1. Dates in **BOLD** indicate face-to-face class meetings.
2. Only read select stories from *Body Outlaws* listed on class D2L page.
3. Additional details/a rubric for online activity/discussions/CRR will be posted on the class D2L page.
4. There may be some changes in readings/assignments based on progress of class.