

# The Challenges of Interculturalism (31127)

<b>Degree:</b>	Master in Immigration Management
<b>Year:</b>	2010/2011
<b>Quarter:</b>	1° or 2°
<b>Course:</b>	Optional
<b>Module:</b>	IV
<b>Number credits ECTS:</b>	3
<b>Lecture course hours:</b>	18 hours
<b>Non-lecture course hours:</b>	57
<b>Course languages:</b>	English (+ some Spanish & Catalan when needed)
<b>Professor:</b>	Veronica Benet-Martinez
<b>Day:</b>	Tuesdays 3-6 PM
<b>Room:</b>	Jaume I 20.137

## 1. Course Description and Goals

What happens when people of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds come to meet (live and work) in a shared social and political space? Often, the real or perceived incompatibility between these individuals' values, norms, expectations, goals, communication styles, and cultural rituals leads to intercultural conflict and misunderstandings. This conflict can manifest itself at many different levels: inter-personal (e.g., between national and immigrant groups/individuals, intergenerational conflict), intra-personal (e.g., within-person cultural identity confusion), organizational (e.g., between employee and manager/corporation), and community levels (e.g., between different cultural and political institutions).

This course will examine these intercultural challenges (with an emphasis on real life examples) and review how the disciplines of social and cultural psychology have approached these issues and even influenced public policy in some societies. Note that intercultural conflict will not be approached as inevitable or as always negative. In fact, the seminar will also deal with the positive (individual and collective) benefits derived from intercultural contact, clashes, and cultural shifts.

Two psychological research traditions have been concerned with the topic of intercultural relations and intercultural conflict. One is the study of acculturation, which refers to the psychological changes that minority and majority individuals/groups experience when becoming in contact with other cultures. The second research tradition is that of ethnic relations, which is concerned with understanding how individuals perceive, evaluate and behave towards each other, both within and across ethnic group boundaries. The present seminar will integrate these two approaches and provide students with tools for understanding and managing the above intercultural challenges.

Ultimately, this seminar will also help you gain a better appreciation for the ways in which culture influence individuals, and enhance your ability to deal with and understand cultural diversity and multiculturalism in terms of both their different levels of analysis (e.g., collective, group, and individual) and their challenges and consequences.

## 2. Professor

Veronica Benet-Martinez, Ph.D.  
ICREA Research Professor  
GRITIM, Pompeu Fabra University

<http://www.icrea.cat/Web/ScientificStaff/Veronica-Benet-Martinez-518>  
<http://benetmartinez.socialpsychology.org/>  
<http://biculturalism.ucr.edu/>

### 3. Course Format & Activities

Each week I will first introduce the pertinent topic by presenting a recent and real-life case of intercultural contact and possible conflict. Afterwards, we will review the main ideas and conclusions behind the relevant assigned readings and relate them to the introductory case. Finally, we will discuss how to identify, analyze, and research similar intercultural processes and situations.

As a course participant, you are required to attend each class without exception, and expected to participate actively in the seminar. You will be expected to make each session stimulating by reading the required articles/chapters before class, organizing your thoughts before each session, and participating actively in the discussion.

Note about in-class discussions: Please keep class discussions at a high professional level by making sure that your comments and observations largely *pertain to the topic of study* (vs. largely personal and anecdotal observations). The most useful kind of participation – for yourself and others – is that which stimulates thinking and elicits intellectual reactions from other participants.

### 4. Course Requirements

1. (50% of grade) In preparation for each class, students will generate: (1) summaries (1 page-long) of the main issues addressed by the weekly obligatory readings (i.e., write a summary for each reading clearly stating the main topics and questions addressed), and (2) two personal reactions or comments for each reading regarding issues to discuss in class. The summaries and questions should be sent by email to me no later than Monday at midnight.
2. (25%) Class participation: how well you lead and participate in the class discussions.
3. (25%). The quality of your presentations (we will talk more about this at the organizational meeting),

Presentations: Depending on the size of class, groups of 2-3 students will be the ‘experts’ for one week and give a class presentation discussing a recent immigration-related event and one scholarly article which extends and illustrates the topic covered that week.

### 5. Course Content (expanded in page 5)

#### Week 1

*Foundational/Definitional Issues*: The psychological basis of culture & ethnicity, cultural diversity, and cultural difference.

## Week 2

*Acculturation*: Components, processes, and domains; Cultural shock and acculturation stress.

## Week 3

*Intercultural relations*: Components, processes, and domains

## Week 4

*Inter-personal cultural conflict*: Personal, professional/organizational, and inter-generational levels.

## Week 5

*Intra-personal cultural conflict*: Negotiating cultural and ethnic identity; Bicultural identity development.

## Week 6

*Intercultural competence*: Development and training; Socio-cognitive benefits of interculturalism

## **6. Course Literature**

These readings will be electronically available in the course website (UPF “aula global”).  
**Articles with \* are obligatory weekly readings, and the ones you should write your summaries and comments on. Articles without a \* are optional but strongly recommended.**

### Week 1: Foundational/Definitional Issues

\*Schwartz, S. H. (2007). A theory of cultural value orientations: Explication and applications In Y. Esmer & T. Pettersson (Eds.), *Measuring and mapping cultures: 25 years of comparative value surveys* (pp. 33-78). Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill (2007).

Cohen, A. B. (2009). Many forms of culture. *American Psychologist*, 64, 194-204.

### Week 2: Acculturation

\*Sam, D. L., & Berry, J. (2010). Acculturation: When individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5, 472-481.

Sam, D. L., Vedder, P., Liebkind, K., Neto, F., & Virta, E. (2008). Immigration, acculturation and the paradox of adaptation in Europe. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 5, 138-158.

Achotegui, J. (2008). Migración y crisis: el síndrome del inmigrante con estrés crónico y múltiple (síndrome de Ulises). *Avances en salud mental relacional*, 7.

### Week 3: Intercultural Relations

\*Verkuyten, M. (2007). Social psychology and multiculturalism. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 1, 1-16.

\*Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). Identity contact and intergroup encounters. In S. Ting-Toomey (Ed.), *Communicating across cultures*. The Guilford Press, New York.

#### Week 4: Inter-Personal Cultural Conflict

\*Oetzel, J., Dhar, S., & Kirschbaum, K. (2007). Intercultural conflict from a multilevel perspective: Trends, possibilities, and future directions. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 36(3), 183-204.

Ting-Toomey, S., (1994). *Managing intercultural conflicts effectively*. In L. Samovar & R. Porter (Eds.), *Intercultural communication: A reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). Intercultural personal relationship development. In S. Ting-Toomey (Ed.), *Communicating across cultures*. The Guilford Press, New York.

#### Week 5: Intra-Personal Cultural Conflict

\*Benet-Martínez, V. (in press). Multiculturalism: Cultural, personality, and social processes. In K. Deaux & M. Snyder (Eds.), *Handbook of Personality and Social Psychology*. Oxford University Press.

Deaux, K. (2006). Who am I? The construction of ethnic identity. In K. Deaux (Ed.), *To Be an Immigrant*. New York: Russell Sage

#### Week 6: Intercultural Competence

\*Crisp, R. J. & Turner, R. N. (in press). Experiencing social and cultural diversity: A cognitive model of antecedents and generalized benefits. *Psychological Review*.

Hammer, M. R, Bennett, M. J, & Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensitivity: The intercultural development inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27, 421-443.

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## Appendix

### *Understanding and Managing Multiculturalism: How Cultural Psychology Can Help*

Psychologists are trained to interpret human affairs in terms of individual-level concepts such as belief, desire, personality, and motivation. These intrapsychic cognitive and affective processes, however, do not take place in a vacuum, but rather always develop and operate within a social context. Thus, while goal-directed behavior and effort, or even meaning making for instance, may be universal human characteristics, the particular goals people choose to pursue and the particular meanings they ascribe to life events vary widely across different social contexts.

For many decades, psychologists, especially those in Europe and the United States, proceeded with their investigations as if cultural influences were irrelevant to their inquiries, or at least could safely be ignored until some future point in time. In recent years, however, motivated in part by the increasing cultural diversity within advanced industrial nations and recognition that the psychology of Northern Europe and North America can not be considered representative of all humankind, psychologists have begun studying the interplay between psychological and cultural processes. The study of "cultural psychology," as it has come to be known, differs from research in other social science disciplines in that cultural psychologists adhere to a model wherein societal-level and individual-level processes reciprocally influence each other. Whereas classical economic doctrine treats societal-level phenomena as merely the aggregate of individual utility-maximizing decisions, and certain sociological and anthropological approaches view individual humans as mere carriers of social forms that exist in some ethereal realm independent of the individual humans who substantiate them, cultural psychologists instead study the mutual constitution of mind and society. That is, cultural psychology investigates both the ways in which social context shapes the development and expression of individual thought and behavior, as well as the ways in which the more widespread and durable characteristics of human thought, feeling, and behavior shape the development and transmission of cultural forms.

There are three reasons why cultural psychology is a particularly appropriate theme for today's current European affairs. First, the political transition that many countries in Eastern Europe have undergone can be construed, in ideological terms, as a shift from a discourse of extreme social constructivism (i.e., Marxism) to a discourse of extreme individualism (i.e., economic liberalism). Both discourses do violence to the complex reality of human social life, and political systems built too exclusively upon the foundations of either discourse are, as we have seen, likely to do violence to many of those who live under them. There is a need within the American and European academy, therefore, for a more balanced and sophisticated social science discourse, one that validates both individual-level and societal-level processes and attempts to understand the interactions between them. Cultural psychology offers such a discourse.

Second, many countries of the Eastern European region, especially in the Caucasus and former Yugoslavia, have suffered, and continue to suffer, the ravages of bitter ethnic conflict. The homicidal fury with which these hostilities erupted shocked both outside observers and people within the affected countries themselves. Future recurrence of such conflicts is not inevitable, but neither is lasting peace. Those who are committed to building and sustaining pluralistic civil societies in the region will be more effective to the extent that they appreciate

the ways in which historically contingent social conditions and enduring human psychological tendencies can combine to unleash the sort of powerful fear and hatred that leads people to engage in collective violence [massacre their neighbors]. In addition to illuminating the dark side of the human condition, cultural psychology also seeks to identify the social circumstances that evoke people's capacities for tolerance and cooperation.

Finally, cultural psychology is an emerging cutting-edge field of research within psychological science, and one therefore, to which other social science scholars may not have been exposed. The opportunity to learn about current theory and practice in cultural psychology from scholars who are conducting some of the most exciting new research in the field will be a valuable contribution to the course participants. Moreover, the discipline is one to which course participants themselves are increasingly able to make an important contribution, because course participants increasingly represent a variety of different nationalities and cultures.