

**PSY 416/516**  
**CULTURE AND COGNITION**  
Fall 2020

**Instructor**            Çağla Aydın                            cagla.aydin@ sabanciuniv.edu  
**T.A:**                    Damla Çamur                            damlacamur@sabanciuniv.edu  
**Time & Venue:**    Class meets online on Tuesdays 16:40-18:30  
Meeting ID:    945 8894 9212  
Password:       firstweek

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### **Course Description**

This course provides students interested in cognition with the opportunity to study the social and cultural aspects of thinking. It uses a psychological, and at times cognitive scientific, lens to explore issues such as the relationship between language and thought, narrative development, memory (individual and collective), emotion, morality, cultural transmission of knowledge. It will survey research and theory within cognitive psychology, linguistics, social psychology, and cross-cultural psychology and provide implications from and for philosophy, anthropology, literature, artificial intelligence. This course is also concerned with methodological and theoretical challenges in the integration of cultural perspectives in psychology.

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### **Format**

The course will take place online. The format is hybrid; meaning that some parts will be synchronous -the instructor and the students will be online at the same time- and occasional parts will be asynchronous -the instructor will provide brief background information about that week's topic or direct the class members' attention to a resource-.

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### **Course Text**

We will read original research reports and theoretical papers relevant to the topics above. These readings will be made available on a weekly basis on SUCourse by the instructor. The final list of topics and readings will be determined in part by the interests of the class members. Readings must be completed by the assigned date.

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### **Structure**

Since this is a senior/master's level course, we will follow a seminar-class format. The instructor will provide a brief background each week either in the form of video recordings or live at the beginning of each class. These will be uploaded to the course website each week by the instructor. Students will be responsible for the discussion of the material via three outlets: (1) using the discussion board (forum) on the course website

(2) a presentation (or discussion; whichever name that you prefer), (3) thought questions submitted for the presenter for that week.

Therefore, the students are expected to do the readings and be ready for a critical evaluation of the material. The aim is for the students to learn about the current status and the major debates in the field, determine their own research interests and critically evaluate it. Such a practice is extremely helpful in coming up with research proposals for master's or doctoral theses as well as research grants for professional organizations.

## **Evaluation**

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### **Leading the discussion/ Presentation.**

- After the first couple of weeks into the semester, each student is expected to lead the discussion for an assigned week.
- Each presenter for that week will first present a general question, and then see if the assigned article was successful in answering that question; state what additional research questions the piece generates etc. More information on this will be provided later.

### **Exams**

- There will be two exams; a midterm and a final. The midterm will be on **Nov. 23**, and the final exam date will be determined centrally by the University. The midterm and final exams will be practically similar in terms of format. The final will focus on material presented in the second half of the semester. A portion of the final will require you to integrate material from the first half of the semester –hence, the slightly higher percentage of the final exam.
- Both exams will be “take-home exams”, and they need to be submitted within a short time frame (e.g., within 2 hours).

### **Class participation**

- Please note that this item has an actual defined weight in the grade breakdown. Participation could be through (1) active participation in the discussion (class discussion or forum discussion), and (2) posting thought questions\* for that week's discussion. Your participation and thought questions will make up 10% of your grade.
- **Thought questions:** Class members are expected to post questions about that week's topic/reading on SuCourse+. They are due each Sunday at 6 PM. They will be graded out of 2 (0 = no submission, 1 = questions submitted simply for the sake of submitting, 2 = actual thought questions). These questions may be used by that week's presenters or by other class members in the discussion thread.

**Grading Summary:**

Presentation/Discussion	20%
Exam 1	30%
Exam 2	40%
Participation & TQs	10%

A	90-100
A-	85-89
B+	80-84
B	75-79
B-	70-74
C+	65-69
C	60-64
C-	55-59
D+	50-54
D	45-49
F	0-44

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
1	Oct 5	Introduction Culture in Psychological Science	What is this course about? Implicit and explicit definitions of culture
2	Oct 12	Cultural stability and diversity Human universals	Sperber & Hirshfield Norenzayan & Heine
3	Oct 19	Modularity Core Knowledge	Spelke & Kinzler Optional: Karmiloff-Smith
4	Oct 26	Theory of Mind (Core knowledge)	
5	Nov 2	Issues in measurement	
6	Nov 9	Perception	Norenzayan & Nisbett
7	Nov 16	Narrative & Memory	

8	<b>Nov 23</b>	<b>Exam</b>	
9	Nov 30	Memory	Wang
10	Dec 7	Self	Matsumoto
11	Dec 14	Language	Goldin-Meadow
12	Dec 21	Neuroscience	
13	Dec 28	Morality & Fairness	
14	Jan 4	Conclusion: Should we all be cultural psychologists?	Wang

### **Classroom Etiquette**

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You are expected to show up on time, participate honestly in class activities and discussions, and treat your fellow students with tolerance and respect. Sleeping during the online portion of the class, texting, using your cell phone or computer for purposes other than the class activities are not allowed.

### **Disability Accommodations**

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If you need accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can schedule a time to meet privately and discuss arrangements.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

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Short version: Don't cheat.

Long version: Student Code of Conduct

All individual assignments must be completed by the student himself/herself, and all team assignments must be completed by the members of the team, without the aid of other individuals. If a team member does not contribute to the written documents or participate in the activities of the team, his/her name should not appear on the work submitted for evaluation.

Plagiarism is defined as 'borrowing or using someone else's written statements or ideas without giving written acknowledgement to the author'. Students are encouraged to conduct research beyond the course material, but they must not use any documents prepared by current or previous students, or notes prepared by instructors at Sabanci

University or other universities without properly citing the source. Furthermore, students are expected to adhere to the Classroom Code of Conduct and to refrain from all forms of unacceptable behavior during lectures. Failure to adhere to expected behavior may result in disciplinary action.

**There are two kinds of plagiarism:** Intentional and accidental.

Intentional plagiarism (Example: Using anyone's work –friend or firm- as one's own because the student does not want to spend time working on that homework) is considered intellectual theft, and there is no need to emphasize the wrongfulness of this act.

Accidental plagiarism, on the other hand, may be considered as a 'more acceptable' form of plagiarism by some students, which is certainly not how it is perceived by the University administration and faculty. The student is responsible from properly citing a source if he/she is making use of another person's work. For an example on accidental plagiarism, please refer to the document titled "An Example on Accidental Plagiarism" below.

### **An Example on Accidental Plagiarism**

This example is taken from a document prepared by the City University of New York. The following text is taken from Elaine Tyler May's 'Myths and Realities of the American Family':

*“Because women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage, single mothers rarely earn enough to support themselves and their children adequately. And because work is still organized around the assumption that mothers stay home with children, even though few mothers can afford to do so, child-care facilities in the United States remain woefully inadequate.”*

Below, there is an excerpt from a student's homework, who made use of May's original text:

“As Elaine Tyler May points out, “women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage” (588). Thus many single mothers cannot support themselves and their children adequately. Furthermore, since work is based on the assumption that mothers stay home with children, facilities for day care in this country are still “woefully inadequate” (May 589)”.

You may think that there is no plagiarism here since the student is citing the original author. However, this is an instance of accidental plagiarism. Although the student cites May and uses quotation marks occasionally, the rest of the sentences, more specifically the following section: *“Thus many single mothers cannot support themselves and their children adequately. Furthermore, since work is based on the assumption that mothers stay home with children, facilities for day care in this country are still “woefully inadequate.” (May 589)”* almost exactly duplicates May's original language. So, in order

to avoid plagiarism, the student either had to use quotation marks for the rest of the sentences as well, or he/she had to paraphrase May's ideas by using not only his/her own words, but his/her own original ideas as well.

You should keep in mind that accidental plagiarism often occurs when the student does not really understand the original text but still tries to make use of it. Understanding the original text and understanding why you agree or disagree with the ideas proposed in that text is crucial both for avoiding plagiarism and for your intellectual development.

*Reference(s):*

Avoiding and Detecting Plagiarism: A Guide for Graduate Students and Faculty.

The Graduate Center. City University of New York, 2012. Web.  
[http://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY\\_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Publications/AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf](http://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Publications/AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf)