

**PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY –
in partnership with the Gap Year Association study abroad**

PSY 204: Psychology as Social Science

COURSE SYLLABUS

CREDITS: 4 quarter-credits – Continuous Enrollment Course

Students who plan to use this course to fulfill specific curriculum areas should discuss transfer options and obtain written approval from a counselor or study abroad advisor at their own college/ university PRIOR to enrollment in this course.

PREREQUISITES: There are NO prerequisites for this course.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

This course is field-based. The course instructor will be available via e-mail.

INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD:

PSU has approved the following Instructors of Record, one of whom will be assigned to you typically two+ weeks prior to the beginning of your program:

- Britt Basel, MS - brittbasel@ecothropic.com
 - Dianna Hahn, MA – dianna.hahn@gmail.com
 - Alexander Papouchis, MS - alexpapouchis@gmail.com
 - Cam Sylvester, MA – camsylvester@gmail.com
- Office: 503-206-7336
Web: <https://gapyearassociation.org>
Address: PO Box 17427, Portland, OR 97217

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to provide hands-on learning opportunities for undergraduate students who undertake study away opportunities. Students will explore the ways in which human individuality is defined by social contexts, leveraging topics such as identity, intelligence, motivation, coping skills, psychological disorders, and cultural context. By comparing their own experiences, students will learn about the theories, methodologies and research that help frame how humans interact with one another, and thus better contextualize their own cultural norms and biases.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

- **Environment of Respect:** Disagreement and diversity of opinions are encouraged. You will be challenged to think critically about the impact of cultural differences, which may include gender, race, the roles environment has in business and market development, socioeconomic status, physical and cognitive ability, sexuality and other forms of diversity. You are encouraged to ask difficult questions and engage in discussion and critical reflection. Please be respectful of others, listen, and try to understand differences.
- **Experiential Learning:** In this course, learning is an experiential process in which you have the opportunity to engage in and reflect on a variety of different experiences throughout the term. The richness of this class will depend on the questions, insights, and active participation that you bring.
- **Personal Responsibility:** You are expected to engage fully in this class and take action if you need help. Please communicate any concerns about assignments, deadlines, or classroom activities.
- **Academic Integrity:** Please adhere to university policies. Please take special note of policies regarding plagiarism and course withdrawal. It is expected that each student will prepare his or her own assignments and that any assignments submitted will be the sole work of the student. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information, will not be tolerated. The University's Code of Student Conduct may be found at <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>.

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Examine how individuality is formed within social contexts.
- Understand behaviors and some of the ways society influence them.
- Examine tools for psychological measurement and some of their limitations.
- Understand more of the ways that psychological processes are shaped by experiences.
- Examine differences and similarities between cultural norms and their influences on behavior.
- Analyze and summarize insights gained from engaging in varied local cultural experiences.
- Improve cross-cultural and critical thinking about interpersonal interactions.

CONTACT HOURS, EXCURSIONS, AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

A total of 40 contact hours will be facilitated. These hours will come in the forms of:

- Homestays
- Introduction to relevant cultural norms
- Language learning and its role on world view
- Excursions to markets and culturally significant sites
- Interviews/lectures with/by local contacts
- Projects focusing on social service
- Cohort meetings and facilitated group dynamics

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

REQUIRED HOURS – must complete 40 contact hours as outlined above. The Gap Year Association will provide verification of hours.

A DAILY JOURNAL in English will be a descriptive study/journal of your semester. Use it to keep brief narratives of your daily experiences. It should contain notes on places visited, interviews, daily purchases, oral language activities, student observations of different and unique cultural traits, etc. Self-reflection is important and will be a significant part of your journal grade. Self-reflection will involve answering questions that force you to think critically about your experiences. When writing journals consider questions like:

- How is this experience different from my expectations?
- What challenges have I faced throughout this experience? How am I overcoming them?
- Explore differences, similarities to your home culture.
- What have been the most poignant learning experiences? How has that impacted my world-view?

REQUIRED READING – must read at least one book from the Reading list and demonstrate knowledge learned and/or perspectives expressed (with citations) in your FINAL REPORT.

FINAL REPORT of insights gained from this international service experience. Our expectation is that the papers you submit will reflect college-level writing. Your report will be 8-10 pages in length. Reports must be typed (double spaced) with a cover page that includes your name, the quarter (eg. fall 2021), the international program attended, and course number.

Submit a comprehensive analytical paper comparing and contrasting how individuality and identity are expressed between your host-community and your home. Explain how specific social contexts such as motivation, stress, intelligence, social psychology, and psychological disorders are viewed in your host-community versus home. Highlighting academic research and psychological measurements, outline how your own upbringing might frame these social contexts in contemporary terms.

Final Report will be graded as follows:

- Description host-community view on identity & individuality, citing specific social contexts - 20%

- Description of home view on identity and individuality - 10%
- Inclusion and understanding of psychological research and measurement - 20%
- Reflection on how common biases from your home are framed by social contexts – 20%
- Clarity and organization of ideas - 10%
- Grammar and punctuation - 10%
- Ability to demonstrate knowledge from the required readings - 10%

DUE DATES, SUBMITTING JOURNAL AND FINAL REPORT:

Calendar/Schedule:

All course requirements must be submitted by:

- Fall Semester: January 20th
- Spring Semester: June 20th

Submitting Journals & Final Reports:

Please email your final report to the instructor, and post any necessary journals or supportive documents to:

The Gap Year Association
PSU Grading Instructor
PO Box 17427
Portland, OR 97217

*** Purchase tracking for anything you post as some materials have gotten lost in the past.

COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- **Daily Journal** (30% of total criteria): Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, clearly presented ideas and observations, creative thought and appropriateness.
- **Final Paper** (70% of total criteria): Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, complexity of grammar and verb use, format, content appropriateness, organization, analysis, originality and summarization skills.
- **Required Readings:** This is a requirement for successful completion of this class and 10% of your paper grade depends on your referencing key lessons learned or examples. (Citations are required)
- **Required Hours:** The Gap Year Association will provide verification of these hours.
- **Grading:** This course is graded with letter grades; A - F. See more details about PSU's grading system [here](#).

READING LIST:

Students must read and cite at minimum ONE book in the final assignment. The following books have been approved for this course. Any other books not a part of this list must first be approved by the Field Instructors.

All Regions:

Man's Search for Meaning. Author: Victor Frankl

Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's memoir has riveted generations of readers with its descriptions of life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival to discover what individuals find meaningful.

Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life: Thich Nhat Hanh

World-renowned Zen master, spiritual leader, and author Thich Nhat Hanh shows us how to make positive use of the very situations that usually pressure and antagonize us.

The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World: Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu

In April 2015, Archbishop Tutu traveled to the Dalai Lama's home in Dharamsala, India, to celebrate His Holiness's eightieth birthday and to create what they hoped would be a gift for others. They looked back on their long lives to answer a single burning question: How do we find joy in the face of life's inevitable suffering?

Animism: Respecting the Living World: Graham Harvey

In this study, Graham Harvey explores current and past animistic beliefs and practices of Native Americans, Maori, Aboriginal Australians, and eco-pagans.

The Tibetan Book of Living & Dying: Sogyal Rinpoche

This book is an introduction to Tibetan Buddhist wisdom. An enlightening, inspiring, and comforting manual for life and death.

Engaging Cultural Differences: The Multicultural Challenge in Liberal Democracies: Richard Shweder, Martha Minow & Hasel Markus

Liberal democracies are based on principles of inclusion and tolerance. But how does the principle of tolerance work in practice in countries such as Germany, France, India, South Africa, and the United States, where an increasingly wide range of cultural groups holds often contradictory beliefs about appropriate social and family life practices?

Worldviews: Cross Cultural Explorations of Human Beliefs: Ninian Smart

This book offers a balanced, wide-ranging, and realistic approach to the full range of worldviews, showing how, whether religious or secular, they define the human values that drive the engines of both continuity and change worldwide.

Nobody Home: Writing, Buddhism and Living in Places: Gary Snyder

A book of conversations about how to live presently in the moment. Snyder describes the practice of Buddhism as way to articulate a direct experience rather than as a kind of abstract philosophy.

The Sacred Path of the Warrior: Chogyam Trungpa

There is a basic human wisdom that can help solve the world's problems. It doesn't belong to any one culture or region or religious tradition—Chögyam Trungpa calls this the sacred path of the warrior.