

PSY 100A: Eastern vs. Western Approaches to Mental Health

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Course Description:

Japan is the setting for this exploration of the interplay between traditional Asian approaches to health and Westernized medicine. Japan poses an excellent case study for this investigation, as it has a rich history and has been rapidly Westernized. In terms of mental health care, Japan is in the process of reforming its systems and approach to treatment to face an overcrowded institutionalized population; a dilemma the US faced in the past. How did the US navigate this issue? What can Japan and other countries learn from American successes and failures? How does Japan balance traditional beliefs and healthcare practices with modern medical advances? We will seek to answer these questions during our trip. Additional factors we will look at include how psychologists and psychiatrists are trained, the role of spiritual traditions (e.g., Zen Buddhism, Shinto) in shaping perceptions of health, rural vs. urban access to healthcare, Kampo (traditional Chinese medicine adapted to Japanese culture), and culture-bound mental disorders that only show up in Japan.

The format of this course is experiential. To prepare you for these experiences, there will be lectures and readings. I expect you to integrate this background material into your reflections and final projects. The course is designed to help students reach the following learning objectives:

- Articulate the similarities and differences in the mental health systems of the US and Japan
- Hypothesize the causes and effects of those similarities and differences
- Discuss the role of culture in definitions of health and normality
- Challenge your cultural assumptions
- Increase cultural sensitivity and ability to navigate intercultural communication
- Push yourself outside your comfort zone and challenge yourself to experience new things

Required Materials:

Readings will be posted via Moodle.

Campus Meetings:

We will spend 3 days (1/2/17-1/4/17) on campus preparing for our trip. Most of this time will be spent on history and current practices of mental health care in the US. We will also have two sessions with Dr. Mindy Landeck, who will provide us with some Japanese phrases that will be very helpful for our time in Japan.

Travel Information:

We will leave campus at 6am on Thursday, 1/5/17, to catch our flight to Tokyo at 11:15 at DFW. We will be flying on Japan Airlines. Our flight number for the trip to Tokyo is JL 11. The flight is scheduled for 13.5 hours. You can check two suitcases for free, with a weight limit of 50 lbs.

per bag. You can bring one personal item on the plane (e.g., backpack, purse) as well as one carryon bag. Specific information about baggage restrictions is available at <https://www.jal.co.jp/en/inter/baggage/>. The hotel we will be staying at in Tokyo is the Hotel Francs (www.francs.co.jp/en/). The phone number is +81 43-296-2111. For the return trip, IES will bring us to the airport to catch our 11:50am flight home (Flight number JL 12) on Sunday, 1/22/17. It arrives at DFW at 8:15am on Sunday, 1/22/17. The flight is scheduled for 11.5 hours.

Assignments:

Attendance

As this is an experiential course, your attendance at all course activities is mandatory. Should you become aware you will be unable to attend an activity, you will immediately contact Ian and Abby via text and email, explaining why you will not be attending. You are expected to be able to set alarms and be ready for activities regardless of what time they occur or whatever else you choose to do with your free time. Repeated absences will be grounds for failing the course at the discretion of the instructor.

Daily Reflections

The first-hand experiences you will have during this course will lead to numerous insights about health, culture, and the idea of what is “normal.” You will try new things and have your assumptions challenged, both personally and academically. The critical component of learning from experiences is the process of reflection. Taking time to think about what you have experienced and connect it with other courses, information, ideas, and beliefs will both solidify and expand your understanding of material. It is important that such reflection happens on an ongoing and regular basis to be most effective. To that end, you are required to maintain some form of daily reflection. This can be a handwritten journal, a typed document on your computer, audio or video recordings, or a blog (if you have other ideas about how to do your daily reflection clear it with me ahead of time). We will have opportunities to discuss our experiences as a group, but your personal reflections need to be recorded somehow so you can reference them later. For each reflection you need to have a minimum of approximately 3 handwritten pages, 2 typed pages, or 10 minutes of recorded audio/video. I will be checking that these have been done every three days to make sure you have been keeping up with this. Due dates are noted on the tentative schedule below. At each due date, you will receive a score of 3 (excellent work), 2 (satisfactory work), or 1 (unsatisfactory work).

Final Project

Your summative project for the course will take what you have learned and experienced during the course and tie it together in a creative and reflective manner. This project may take several different forms, but must include multiple forms of media (e.g., text, pictures, video), summarize what you learned in the course, and touch on the major experiences you had in Japan. I expect you to incorporate readings, lecture material, and discussions into your final project. We will discuss options for the project more fully on 1/4, and there will be additional handouts with specific requirements. The final project will be due at noon on 2/1/17. The final project will be scored on the same 3-point system as the reflections. Projects receiving a 1 will be allowed to resubmit for a higher grade 24 hours after the project is returned to them.

Grading:

All students must take this course S/D/N. To earn a grade of “S,” students must:

- Attend all course activities, with excused absences only
- Receive no more than one score of 1 on your daily reflections
- Receive a score of 2 or better on the final project

To earn a grade of “D,” students must:

- Have no more than 1 unexcused absence
- Receive no more than two scores of 1 on your daily reflections
- Receive a score of 2 or better on the final project

Tentative Course Schedule:

Will be provided separately.

Comment on Course Content:

This course covers material related to mental illness and psychotherapy, which are sensitive topics. Some people in our class will have experience with mental illness and therapy either personally or via loved ones. For this reason please remember to be sensitive to others when asking questions, making comments, etc., in class. I encourage everyone to voice their thoughts and be curious about the subject matter, but do so in a respectful manner. I would also ask those individuals who are currently dealing with mental illness to refrain from discussing your own symptomology or treatment in class. This not only protects your privacy, but also will not pressure other students to reveal aspects of themselves beyond their comfort level and will allow for the carefully constructed examples prepared for class to be used. If you want to discuss a specific situation, please make an appointment with me. It is likely I will not be able to make any definitive statements about someone else’s mental health, but I will be happy to hear your concerns and make referrals to resources. If you have serious concerns about yourself or someone else, please talk to myself or a mental health professional. Here is a list of several resources for mental health issues:

Austin College Counseling Services:

<http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/counseling-services/>
903-813-2247

Suicide Crisis Line

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

Applied Psychological Group of Texoma

<http://www.apgtexoma.com/>
903-893-0298

Psychology Today’s Therapist Finder

http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/prof_search.php

Technology

This course will be web-enhanced through the use of Moodle. Readings, lecture slides, some handouts, and links to other resources will be provided through this system. Unless otherwise specified, you will turn your assignments in via Moodle. You can access Moodle through the following link: <https://moodle.austincollege.edu/login/index.php>. Questions concerning content/postings should be directed to the instructor, while questions regarding access/technical issues should be directed to the Austin College IT Help Desk (903-813-2063; helpdesk@austincollege.edu). A PDF viewer is required to view the content posted to the Moodle site. Free Adobe software is available for download via <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Policies:*Academic Integrity*

Scholastic misconduct is broadly defined as any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work. Scholastic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to): cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, which means misrepresenting as you own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned (including papers you have submitted in previous semesters); providing others with copies of your assignments; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student's work.

Plagiarism is a serious offense which will not be tolerated. Most of the time, however, plagiarism happens because students are rushing through assignments and do not leave themselves with sufficient time to properly attribute information taken from other sources. For this class you must cite your sources using either APA or MLA style. If you plan to be a psychology major or minor, I encourage you to get used to APA style, as you will be using this throughout your coursework. Note that for either style, you need to include citations each time you use information from a source. It is incorrect to use information throughout a paragraph and only include a citation at the end. Also, if you use 5 or more consecutive words from a source, you must include quotation marks and include the page number (or paragraph number if you are using an online source) in your citation.

Penalties for scholastic misconduct in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be made at the discretion of the instructor and may range from point deductions on the assignment to failing the class. All academic misconduct (no matter how small) will be reported to the Academic Integrity Council, which may impose sanctions up to and including expulsion. Austin College's full academic integrity policy is available in the *Environment* (Austin College Student Handbook; the most recent edition is posted on Moodle) in the Student Conduct section. If you have any questions about whether something is plagiarism or not, please talk with me about it BEFORE you turn in an assignment.

Accommodations

Austin College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all individuals with disabilities and will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines. If you have a documented disability for which you would like accommodations, please inform me by the third day of class. It is your responsibility to remind me of your accommodations at least a week before I distribute each assignment or exam. To arrange for accommodations, you will need to register as soon as possible at the Academic Skills Center with Laura Márquez Ramsey,

the Director of the Academic Skills Center, (903-813-2454, Suite 211 of the Wright Campus Center). For information on this process, go to <http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/>. This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request.

Changes to the Syllabus

All aspects of this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be informed in writing of any changes to the syllabus.

Communication

As this is a travel course, communication outside of class is critical. You will be required to provide me with your cell phone number and must reply to calls/texts/emails to your *Austin College email address*. **It is your responsibility to monitor these forms of communication and you are responsible for the information delivered in these manners.** Cell phone numbers for myself and the chaperone are provided at the top of the syllabus.

Role of Instructor

I will provide learning opportunities designed to provide students with information about psychology and foster critical thinking. I pledge to carefully consider constructive feedback about teaching methods and incorporate suggestions to the extent feasible. I am responsible for treating students in a respectful, professional manner and creating a classroom atmosphere where students treat each other as such. I will be accessible outside of class and encourages you to meet with me to discuss concerns (e.g., about the class, workload, assignments, etc.), conflicts or problems that affect course performance, concepts which need further clarification, additional resources related to course material, or careers in psychology.

Role of Student

Students will come to class prepared to learn and open to new ideas. Assignments (including readings) will be completed before class begins and to the best of each student's ability. Classroom discussions will be conducted in a respectful manner, where all opinions are valued regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the content. Students who cannot maintain respectful communication will be asked to leave the classroom. Students will take responsibility for their own learning throughout the class. Students will consult available resources (e.g., the syllabus, Moodle, email messages) before asking administrative questions.

Statement on Classroom Conduct

All students have the right to a civil, productive, and stimulating learning environment. In turn, instructors have a responsibility to nurture and maintain such an environment. Lively, even heated, discussion is not disruptive behavior. Both instructors and students have a fundamental obligation to respect the rights of each other and an equally fundamental obligation to respect the instructional setting as a place for civil, courteous behavior.

Statement on Diversity

We will all bring unique perspectives to this course and I hope those who feel comfortable will share insights and alternative interpretations throughout the semester. Cultural perspectives will be explicitly included in many of our discussions and will likely come up in many others. I welcome feedback on ways to increase the diversity of perspectives being provided in class and methods for creating a more inclusive atmosphere through my teaching.