



COURSE UNIT INFORMATION SHEET (*SYLLABUS*)

2021/2022

Study Programme _ Undergraduate Degree in Psychology

Name

Cross-cultural Representations of Health, Sickness and Healing

Teaching staff

(Also indicate the Professor in charge)

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ECTS

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Functioning

The Course unit functioning consists of one general lecture class to be attended by all students and of two practical classes; each student must register in one of these classes.

Learning goals

The students are expected to enhance their understanding of
human communication specificity and diversity of communication codes as forms of “making sense”
symbolism as a mechanism connecting verbal and non-verbal languages within a shared universe of meaning
meaning construction as the source of physical and psychological well being across different cultures
the narrow relation between anthropological and psychological approaches concerning psychophysiological



disorders and the importance of meaning bearer narratives and the mechanism of symbolic healing processes

Skills to be developed

- a) The capacity of analysis and of reasoning on the symbolic dimension of culture specificity
- b) The understanding and the ability to apply the main scientific concepts of Psychological Anthropology and Symbolic Anthropology
- c) The capacity to frame empirical data on disease and healing into proper theoretical frameworks and the capacity to analyse the symbolic implications they include
- d) The capacity to research and analyse scientific data on the symbolic dimension underlying cross cultural physical and psychological well being representations
- e) The capacity of placing the anthropological knowledge on the body, disease and healing on the larger framework of the psychological training of the student in order to achieve original and trans disciplinary approaches to these topics

Prerequisites (precedences) *

No prerequisites

Contents

1. The symbolic dimension of culture as manipulation of the reality
 - a. Meaning, Language and Symbolism
 - b. Signs, signals and symbols
2. Symbolic effectiveness: to name the invisible
 - a. Unlocking disorder and disease processes
 - b. The rise of order and healing processes
 - i. The shamanistic complex
 - ii. Healing Rituals
 - iii. Possession cults



3. Representation of psycho-physiological disorder
 - a. Mind-Body: dualism and incommensurability
 - b. The body as a space of symbolic manipulation
 - i. Embodiment as a paradigm for psycho-anthropological knowledge
4. Well being narratives as the construction of the universe's sense or order
 - a. Universe well being and cosmogonic narratives: the order of the world
 - b. The group's well being and mythological narratives: the order of the society
 - c. Subjective well being and subjective narratives: the order of the self

Bibliography

- Blacking, J., (1977) (Ed). *The anthropology of the body*. Academic Press.
- Bock, P. K., (1994). *Psychological anthropology*. Praeger
- Csordas, T. J. (1994) (Ed). *Embodiment and experience. The Existential ground of culture and self*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lambek M., & Strathern A, (1998) (Ed). *Bodies and Persons. Comparative Perspectives from Africa and Melanesia*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1958/1974b), L'efficacité symbolique, In C. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie Structurale* (213-234). Librairie Plon.

Teaching methods

Lecture classes and practical classes.

Lecture classes: the different topics are dynamically examined and critically discussed and illustrated with ethnographic relevant examples. Participant discussion is encouraged as a way for the students to internalize the issues under discussion

Practical classes: the students are grouped into units of 3-5 and required either to research a given theme or to critically appreciate a research article from a list proposed by the teacher. The methodological and theoretical problems arising from the research are discussed. The oral presentations of the different group research will take place according to the calendar established at the beginning of the semester



Evaluation Regimes (General and/or Alternative)

Evaluation consists of two elements in both regimes: a final exam and a group oral presentation during the practical classes

Evaluation Elements

(Dates due, weights, minimum required grades)

Evaluation consists of two elements: a written final exam and a group oral presentation during the practical classes.

The exam consists of an essay (2/3 pages) to be written in the examination room according to the FPUL exam calendar and focuses on the contents topics.

Group presentation – the students are grouped into units of 3-5 and required to elaborate a theoretical reflexion on a topic/scientific article chosen among a set of proposals made by the teacher.

This group work will be presented to the class during the practical classes according to a calendar established at the beginning of the semester

The exam is scored from 0 to 15

The group presentation is scored from 0 to 5.

The final grade is the sum of the two components

Rules for grade improvement

Only the final exam can be improved

Rules for students having previously failed the course unit *

Students who have failed the UC in the last two academic years may, if they wish, preserve the grade concerning the group presentation and only apply for the final exam



Requirements on attendance and punctuality

There is no imposition of attendance

Rules for special students

(workers, elite athletes, student body leaders, military, fathers/mothers, with special needs) *

Language of instruction

Portuguese

Disciplinary violations and penalties

According to the Evaluation of Learning Regulation of the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Lisbon, the following behaviors are considered as disciplinary offenses subject to disciplinary action:

- a) To use or attempt to use materials, information, notes, study resources or other objects and equipment not authorized in academic exercises;
- b) To help or try to help a colleague in committing a disciplinary offense;
- c) To submit the same written work for evaluation in different course units without permission from the instructors, even if with minor changes;
- d) To present someone else's work as one's own;
- e) To forge, or change without permission from the author, any information or citation in an academic work;
- f) To interfere, change or attempt to change grades;
- g) To try to prevent or interfere with the proper functioning of classes, research or other academic activities;
- h) To make false accusations regarding instructors, governance bodies, other students or non-teaching staff of the FPUL;
- i) To falsify signatures in attendance sheets, documents relating to evaluation elements or in any official document relating to an academic process or status.

Disciplinary offenses committed in any assessment element can lead to its annulment, and must be reported to the Pedagogical Council or, considering their gravity and repetition, may lead to other penalties, to be determined by the Rector of the University of Lisbon.



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* If applicable