

SYLLABUS

1. Program details

1.1 Higher education institution	West University of Timișoara
1.2 Faculty	Psychology and Educational Sciences
1.3 Department	Psychology
1.4 Field of study	Psychology
1.5 Cycle of studies	Bachelor's study
1.6 Study program	Psychology – Cognitive science

2. Discipline details

2.1 Discipline name	Culture and Social Cognition						
2.2 Tenured teacher - course activities	Lecturer Daniela MOZA, PhD						
2.3 Tenured teacher - seminar activities	Research Assistant / PhD student Alina Ștefan						
2.4 Study year	III	2.5 Semester	I	2.6 Type of assessment	E	2.7 Discipline regime	DOP
2.5 Google Classroom code	niec2bze						

3. Estimated total time (hours per semester) of teaching activities

3.1 Number of hours per week	4	Of which: 3.2 course	2	3.3 seminar	2
3.4 Total hours from the curriculum	56	Of which: 3.5 course	28	3.6 seminar	28
Time fund distribution:					hours
Study based on the textbook, course material, bibliography, and notes					20
Additional documentation in the library, on specialist electronic platforms / in the field					24
Preparing seminars/labs, homework, papers, portfolios, and essays					16
Tutoring					5
Examinations					4
Other activities					--
3.7 Total hours of individual study	69				
3.8 Total hours per semester	125				
3.9 Number of credits (ECTS)	5				

4. Prerequisites (where necessary)

4.1 for curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of Introduction to Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, and Social Cognition.
4.2 for competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to conduct individual documentation using scientific databases. Skills in academic writing and structuring scholarly arguments. Capacity to investigate psychological constructs in practice, by linking theoretical concepts with real-life examples.

5. Conditions

5.1 for conducting the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are required to join the Google Classroom dedicated to the course.
5.2 for conducting the seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at a minimum of 70% of the total number of seminars.
5.3 use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (genAI) tools within the discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot, etc.) is permitted only under the conditions established by the course or seminar instructor and in compliance with UVT's standards of academic integrity. Permitted uses include: brainstorming ideas; support with writing and structuring; translation and language revision; creation of images, graphics, diagrams, illustrations, audio or video materials, avatars, and other digital objects, provided these are used strictly for educational purposes. Prohibited uses include: submitting work (essays, reports, projects, or presentations) generated entirely by AI or presenting AI-produced content as one's own original work. Disclosure requirement: Any use of genAI must be explicitly acknowledged. Failure to disclose constitutes a violation of academic integrity and will be addressed in accordance with UVT regulations. Student responsibility: Students are expected to verify the accuracy and relevance of AI-generated content, respect issues of confidentiality and copyright, and demonstrate critical and personal engagement with any outputs produced using genAI.

6. Discipline objectives - expected learning outcomes to which the discipline's study and promotion contribute

Knowledge	<p>The student/graduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describes and explains the main concepts, paradigms, and methodologies used in psychological research and practice in the field of culture and social cognition; identifies and summarizes the cultural models that shape social cognition and situates them within the dominant paradigms of cultural and social psychology; distinguishes validated scientific knowledge from common-sense beliefs in the field of culture and social cognition; recognizes the ethical implications of cross-cultural research and interprets findings with attention to cultural sensitivity and diversity.
Skills	<p>The student/graduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyzes theoretical and empirical issues related to culture and cognition that are relevant to psychological research and practice, integrating theoretical and methodological perspectives; designs a medium-complexity psychological research project in the field of culture and social cognition, formulating pertinent hypotheses and selecting appropriate methods; applies methodologies and statistical analyses appropriate to cross-cultural and social-cognitive research designs, interpreting results while accounting for cultural variability; communicates conclusions and recommendations in a clear, accurate, and ethical manner, adapting messages to diverse cultural and professional contexts; collaborates effectively in intercultural and interdisciplinary teams, showing openness, respect, and adaptability.

Responsibility and autonomy	<p>The student/graduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> works independently (with minimal guidance when necessary) in collecting, structuring, and analyzing information from scientific sources and field data; applies rigorous and responsible work strategies, demonstrating punctuality, accountability, and adherence to professional ethics; engages in continuous self-reflection and self-regulation regarding learning motivations and professional development goals, critically assessing the impact of one's own cultural biases; demonstrates openness to cultural and individual diversity, respecting alternative perspectives and avoiding biased interpretations; integrates responsibly digital tools and emerging technologies (including AI) into documentation, research, and professional development.
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7. Contents

7.1 Course	Teaching methods	Observations
C1. Launch & brief history.	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "Introduction" and "Culture and Cognition Research: A Brief History".
C2. Beyond WEIRD: Rethinking "Human Nature" in Social Cognition	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? <i>Behavioral and Brain Sciences</i> , 33(2-3), 61–83. Wang Q. (2016). Why Should We All Be Cultural Psychologists? Lessons from the Study of Social Cognition. <i>Perspectives on Psychological Science</i> , 11(5), 583–596.
C3. What is culture? Cultural models.	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "What Is Culture"; "Cultural Models"; "Two Cultural Models: Independent and Interdependent".
C4. Macro antecedents of cultural models and social-cognitive patterns.	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "Antecedents of the Two Cultural Models".
C5. The dual-process model of cultural cognition - an overview.	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "Two Pathways of Cultural Influence".
C6. Fluency-based process of cultural influence on social cognition (I).	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "Fluency-Based Process" (stimulus availability, ecological environment). Wang & Senzaki (2019): "Attention and Perception".
C7. Fluency-based process of cultural influence on social cognition (II).	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "Linguistic Structure and Cultural Practices".
C8. Schema-based process of cultural influence on social cognition (I).	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "Self perception". Wang & Senzaki (2019): development & socialization evidence showing how cultural schemas are acquired.

C9. Schema-based process of cultural influence on social cognition (II).	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Vignoles et al. (2016). Beyond the 'east-west' dichotomy: Global variation in cultural models of selfhood. <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology: General</i> , 145(8), 966–1000.
C10. Schema-based process of cultural influence on social cognition (III).	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "Person perception". Wang & Senzaki (2019): "Attribution & Reasoning" (correspondence-bias limits; constraint transparency); "Family socialization" (parental trait vs. situation-talk). "Naïve dialecticism" (lay theories that promote greater situational integration).
C11. Schema-based process of cultural influence on social cognition (IV).	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "Face perception"; "Features of Emotion". Wang & Senzaki (2019): Context effects in face/emotion judgments; attention patterns to facial regions (eyes vs. mouth) and holistic scanning of person-context arrays; neural evidence of context sensitivity; development/socialization notes; parent-child emotion talk; schooling/language cues that shift labeling.
C12. Cultural acquisition.	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Readings: Kitayama & Berg (2024): "Cultural acquisition".
C13. Guest lecture on culture and social cognition.	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Invited talk (research/applied) with Q&A.
C14. Recapitulation and feedback.	Lecture, conversation, demonstration, in-class exercises.	Integrative recap; synthesis; Q&A; feedback.
<p>References: Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? <i>Behavioral and Brain Sciences</i>, 33(2-3), 61–83. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X0999152X Kitayama, S., & Berg, M. K. (2024). The cultural psychology of social cognition. In D. E. Carlston, K. Hugenberg, & K. L. Johnson (Eds.), <i>The Oxford handbook of social cognition</i> (2nd ed., pp. 901–937). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197763414.013.33 Wang, Q., & Senzaki, S. (2019). Culture and cognition. In D. Matsumoto & H. C. Hwang (Eds.), <i>The handbook of culture and psychology</i> (2nd ed., pp. 318–360). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190679743.003.0011 Vignoles, V. L., Owe, E., Becker, M., Smith, P. B., Easterbrook, M. J., Brown, R., González, R., Didier, N., Carrasco, D., Cadena, M. P., Lay, S., Schwartz, S. J., Des Rosiers, S. E., Villamar, J. A., Gavreliuc, A., Zinkeng, M., Kreuzbauer, R., Baguma, P., Martin, M., . . . Bond, M. H. (2016). Beyond the 'east-west' dichotomy: Global variation in cultural models of selfhood. <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology: General</i>, 145(8), 966–1000. https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000175 Wang Q. (2016). Why Should We All Be Cultural Psychologists? Lessons from the Study of Social Cognition. <i>Perspectives on Psychological Science</i>, 11(5), 583–596. https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916166645552 Supplementary references: Ardila, A. (2021). Cross-cultural differences in cognition and learning. In T. K. Shackleford (Ed.), <i>The SAGE handbook of evolutionary psychology: Foundations of evolutionary psychology</i> (pp. 420–435). Sage Reference.</p>		

<p>Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. <i>Psychological Review</i>, 98(2), 224–253. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.98.2.224</p> <p>Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2003). Culture, Self, and the Reality of the Social. <i>Psychological Inquiry</i>, 14(3-4), 277–283. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1403&4_17</p> <p>Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. C. (Eds.). (2019). <i>The handbook of culture and psychology</i> (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190679743.001.0001</p> <p>Nisbett, R. E., Peng, K., Choi, I., & Norenzayan, A. (2001). Culture and systems of thought: Holistic versus analytic cognition. <i>Psychological Review</i>, 108(2), 291–310. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.108.2.291</p>		
7.2 Seminar	Teaching methods	Observations
S1. Introductory seminar.	Conversation; discussion.	Organization.
S2. Beyond WEIRD samples: generalizability and mechanisms in social cognition.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization, AI tools for content generation and critical analysis.	Application to course C2.
S3. What is culture?	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C3.
S4. Macro antecedents of cultural models.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C4.
S5. The dual-process model of cultural cognition.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C5.
S6. Stimulus availability and ecological environment.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C6.
S7. Language and practices.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C7.
S8. Self and autobiographical memory.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C8.
S9. Multi-dimensional self-construal.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C9.
S10. Person perception and attribution.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C10.
S11. Face and emotion in context.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C11.
S12. Cultural acquisition.	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	Application to course C12.
S13. Research design clinic (mechanism-first).	Conversation; discussion; exercise; problematization.	
S14. Recapitulation and feedback.	Conversation; discussion.	

8. Correlation of discipline contents with the expectations of the representatives of the epistemic community, professional associations and representative employers in the field related to the program

This discipline aligns with the epistemic community by training students in contemporary theory and method on culture and social cognition, preparing them for rigorous, evidence-based inquiry. It reflects professional association expectations by strengthening cultural competence, ethical practice, non-stereotyped interpretation, and clear communication of culturally sensitive findings. For representative employers in the program's field (education, organizations/HR, health/clinical, community and public services), the course develops practical abilities to (a) identify cultural factors that shape social-cognitive processes, (b) adapt assessment, communication, and intervention to diverse populations, and (c) design, implement, and evaluate culturally informed programs and policies. These competencies align with the Psychology – Cognitive Science program outcomes and equip graduates to translate evidence into practice across settings, collaborate in interdisciplinary teams, and update practices in step with emerging cultural research.

9. Assessment

Activity type	9.1 Assessment criteria	9.2 Assessment methods	9.3 Weight of final mark
9.4 Course	Correct answers to the multiple choice test and accuracy of answers to the open-ended questions.	Final exam consists of a combination of multiple-choice test and open-ended questions.	60%
9.5 Seminar	Adequately and accurately transmitting the core ideas of the seminar topic through the coordinated activity. Explaining and justifying clearly how the chosen activity engages with the key concepts of the topic. Strong connection of the activity with the topic of the seminar.	Students will form groups of 2–3 members to propose and coordinate a seminar activity (approximately 40 minutes) on one of the 12 seminar topics (excluding the first and last). Through this assessment approach, students will have the opportunity to engage with the topic in original and creative ways. The groups may choose, for example, to involve their colleagues in a debate; to replicate a previous scientific experiment conducted on the topic (with peers as participants); to initiate an artistic or social project; to facilitate a brief field experience outside the classroom; to lead a storytelling exercise; to invite their peers to act out a culturally relevant event; to present ideas in an entertaining media format; or to design a game that reflects the key concepts of the topic. At the end of the activity, each student must specify their individual contribution to the work carried out.	40%
9.6 Minimum performance standard			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final mark represents the arithmetic mean of the 2 marks obtained for the assessments pertaining to the course and the seminar, respectively, provided that the minimum grade in each of the two assessments is at least 5 (unrounded). Therefore, the promotion of the discipline is achieved with a final mark of at least 5. Participation in the exam in the first session is conditional on passing the evaluation for the seminar with minimum 5 and attending the minimum number of seminars. Passing the seminar assessment in the first session is only possible if students coordinate a seminar activity during the semester. <p><i>Re-examination</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course assessment method remains the same in the re-examination sessions. For the seminar, the assessment will consist of a written original illustration of the seminar topic (Individual task). Students who wish to improve their final mark will undergo a specific assessment covering the content of both the courses and the seminars. 			

Date of completion:
12.09.2025

Tenure teacher:
Daniela MOZA, Ph.D.
Lecturer

Date of approval in the department

Head of Department:
Delia VÎRGĂ, Ph.D.
Professor