Department of Applied Psychology  
Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP)  
Rutgers University  
New Brunswick, New Jersey  
Fall 2022

18:820:534 Culture and Diversity in ABA  
Credits: 3  
Level: Graduate  
Wednesdays, 6:15-8:45pm  
Smithers 219

Instructor: Meghan A. Deshais, Ph.D., BCBA-D  
Office: Nelson D313  
E-mail: m.deshais@rutgers.edu  
Office Hours: The instructor will make every reasonable effort to meet with students whenever necessary.

Rutgers University Mission: As the premier comprehensive public research university in the state’s system of higher education, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, has the threefold mission of

- providing for the instructional needs of New Jersey’s citizens through its undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs;
- conducting the cutting-edge research that contributes to the medical, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of the state, as well as aiding the economy and the state’s businesses and industries; and
- performing public service in support of the needs of the citizens of the state and its local, county, and state governments.

Each component of the university’s mission reinforces and supports the other two. As the University of New Jersey®, Rutgers is dedicated to teaching that meets the highest standards of excellence, to conducting research that breaks new ground, and to providing services, solutions, and clinical care that help individuals and the local, national, and global communities where they live.

GSAPP Mission: The mission of GSAPP is threefold: education, research/scholarship, and public service. Its goal is to prepare well-educated, qualified, and competent direct-service psychologists who have a special commitment to direct community involvement and to underserved populations—professionals who can integrate scientific knowledge with innovation in the delivery of psychological services to individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Professionals receiving a doctoral degree in psychology should be capable of extending psychological knowledge and exhibiting the high level of analytic skills and theoretical understanding needed to use existing and emerging psychological knowledge.

Core Values. We are guided by four core values that are apparent in our learning environment, centers, and clinics:

1. **Academic excellence** in preparing students for careers in clinical and school psychology.
2. Commitment to social justice and helping underserved populations.
3. Diversity of students trained, approaches used, theoretical orientations followed, and populations served.
4. Knowledge generation and dissemination using contemporary research approaches.

**Applied Psychology Statement:** The Department of Applied Psychology embraces the mission of the school by offering instruction that has an emphasis on civic and global citizenship, social justice, and cultural diversity. Our programs provide students with knowledge needed to understand individual and collective behaviors; develop quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis and research design needed to analyze the corresponding physical and environmental contributors to human behavior; and a beginning understanding of the analysis and treatment of behavior problems and disorders.

Our programs prepare students with the requisite theoretical knowledge; critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed to successfully participate in employment or scholastic activities. Students will have opportunities to pursue scholarly activities that prepares them to successfully compete for admissions into doctoral level psychology and related academic programs, and pursue Master’s level career pathways through available concentration and certificate. In general, students will acquire a knowledge base grounded in psychological theory and experiential learning (research or practicum) designed to further advance their personal and professional career development.

**Course Description:** This course is designed to prepare students to bring a lens of cultural awareness to their practice of ABA. A primary focus will be learning how cultural variables can impact different aspects of behavioral intervention including building therapeutic rapport with families, client intake, behavioral assessment, treatment, and social validity. Students will gain knowledge and tools that prepare them to provide culturally responsive intervention to clients and to work effectively in diverse professional settings. For context, a brief history of the field’s treatment of marginalized groups and a basic overview of concepts such as systemic oppression, privilege, and intersectionality will be provided. Finally, cultural-level analysis of large-scale problems of social significance will be discussed along with ways that students can seek to address inequality and promote social justice as behavior analysts and as global citizens.

**Course Overview:** Course content is in alignment with the four core principles of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (2020) and is relevant to several items from the BACB’s 6th Edition Task Content Outline. Select items are listed below.

- Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (BACB, 2020)
  - 1.07 Cultural Responsiveness and Diversity
  - 1.08 Nondiscrimination
  - 1.09 Nonharassment
  - 1.10 Awareness of Personal Biases and Challenges
  - 1.12 Giving and Receiving Gifts
  - 2.09 Involving Clients and Stakeholders
  - 2.13 Selecting, Designing, and Implementing Assessments
  - 2.14 Selecting, Designing, and Implementing Behavior-Change Interventions
  - 4.07 Incorporating and Addressing Diversity
6th Edition Test Content Outline

E.8. Identify and apply interpersonal and other skills (e.g., accepting feedback, listening actively, seeking input, collaborating) to establish and maintain professional relationships.
E.9. Engage in cultural humility in service delivery and professional relationships.
E.10. Apply culturally responsive and inclusive service and supervision activities.
E.11. Identify personal biases and how they might interfere with professional activity.
F.2. Identify and integrate relevant cultural variables in the assessment process.
F.8. Interpret assessment data to identify and prioritize socially significant, client-informed, and culturally responsive behavior-change procedures and goals.
H.2. Identify and recommend interventions based on assessment results, scientific evidence, client preferences, and contextual fit (e.g., expertise required for implementation, cultural variables, environmental resources).
H.8. Collaborate with others to support and enhance client services.
I.3. Identify and implement methods that promote equity in supervision practices.
I.4. Select supervision goals based on an assessment of the supervisee’s skills, cultural variables, and the environment.

Objectives for the course:

- Students will gain an awareness of how their own cultural identities inform their values and decision-making as practitioners and citizens.
- Students will describe how cultural variables can impact behavioral intervention.
- Students will identify clinical and professional practices that are culturally sensitive and convey an appreciation for the role of culture in people’s lives.
- Students will analyze cultural-level problems of social significance from a behavior analytic viewpoint.

Assignments and Evaluation Method: Over the course of the semester, you will be responsible for written assignments, projects, presentations, requirements related to class discussion, and the completion of cultural competence modules. Your final grade will be determined and computed based on the following:

- Written Assignments: 25%
- Behavioral Assessment Project: 10%
- Article Presentation: 10%
- Discussion: 50% (40% questions, 10% participation)
- Modules: 5%

Grades and Grading Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>90-100 (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Intermediate Grade</td>
<td>87-89 (3.5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>80-86 (3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C**</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>70-79 (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>69 or below (0.0)</td>
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<td>INC</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
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<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
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**Grades of C or lower do not count toward graduation**
Program requirement: All students in Applied Psychology courses must achieve a grade of B or better and maintain a GPA of 3.0, or academic remediation will be enforced.

Written Assignments
- You will complete several written assignments on various topics covered throughout the semester.
- The goal of these papers is for you to critically reflect on course material and outline your thoughts clearly and concisely. Papers will be limited to 1-pg of double-spaced text.

Behavioral Assessment Team Project
- Your team will be assigned a portion of a behavioral assessment that is commonly used in ABA practice.
- Your goal is to identify assessment items that could be considered culturally specific and suggest alternative approaches for assessing the targeted skills.
- You will report your findings in a 5-8 min video recording.
- Your video will be graded on critical analysis of behavioral assessment items, not professional video editing so don’t try to make a “perfect” video. This is not a film class and I am not a film critic.
- You will be given a class period to work on this project with your team.

Article Presentation
- You and a partner will present on an article selected from a list of peer-reviewed publications on culture and diversity in ABA.
- Your presentation must be 10 min or less. It is critically important to learn to present within a given time frame.
  - I will stop you at 10 min even if you have not finished.
  - You must practice your timing to be sure you do not go over time.
- Your presentation must include:
  - A very brief summary of the article (no more than 3 min).
  - Critical analysis of the article (7 min), a strong critical analysis would include several of the following:
    - Make connections to basic principles of behavior or theoretical underpinnings of radical behaviorism
    - Make connections to prior behavior analytic research
    - Identify weaknesses of the study not mentioned by authors (if applicable)
    - Outline directions for future research
    - Describe implications for clinical practice

Discussion
- You will develop 1 discussion question for each assigned reading.
- Discussion questions are due by midnight Monday night before class on Wednesday.
• Points will be awarded based on the quality of the questions you develop. My expectation is that you will develop high-quality questions, see guidelines below.
• During class, we will discuss the assigned readings. Points for participation will be based on the quality (not necessarily the quantity) of your contributions. My expectation is that you will be respectful in your communication and open to hearing differences of opinion.

Guidelines for Writing Discussion Questions *(adapted from Dr. Gregory Madden):*

DON’T:
• Don’t summarize the article, we have all read it.
• Don’t ask, “Do you agree with the authors?” or “What has been published since this paper was published?”
• Don’t ask questions that have “yes” or “no” answers
• Don’t ask informational questions (e.g., “What single-subject design was used?”).
• Don’t submit single-sentence questions. On rare occasions, these receive good grades, but most of the time they do not.
• Again, don’t summarize the article, we have read it.

DO
• Do ask questions that would evoke rich discussion and higher-order critical thinking. Said another way, your question should make the reader think and evaluate the evidence for or against a particular hypothesis, suggestion, theory, etc.
• Do be specific and concrete. Once you have stated your basic idea/question, tell us why you think this. Are there some data in the article that led you to your idea/question? If so, tell us about them in concrete terms.
• Do run your question through a spell- and grammar-check program before submitting them. Errors of this kind make you look careless because they are easily avoided.

Class Discussion Guidelines *(established 9/7/22)*
• Minimize interruptions, wait until people are finished speaking.
• Hand raising to indicate you’d like to speak, speakers can acknowledge hand raisers.
• Be respectful of others’ responses, maintain professionalism, use opportunity to refine your verbal behavior
• No derogatory language toward one another, being mindful of tone/volume
• Be mindful of your talk time in groups
• Be open minded, receptive to new ideas, share your own
• Constructive feedback is welcome, being contrarian all of the time is not.
• Questions are welcome!!

Cultural Competence Modules
• You will complete a series of cultural competence modules over the course of the semester. The modules must be completed in order.
All 7 modules must be completed by the last day of classes
- Becoming a Culturally Competent Behavior Analyst: Rethinking the Tools in Our Toolbox (1) Culture and Cultural Competence - Student Edition
- Becoming a Culturally Competent Behavior Analyst: Rethinking the Tools in Our Toolbox (2) Self-Assessment - Student Edition
  - Self Assessment Workbook 10/5/2022
- Becoming a Culturally Competent Behavior Analyst: Rethinking the Tools in Our Toolbox (3) Conducting Culturally Responsive Assessments - Student Edition
- Becoming a Culturally Competent Behavior Analyst: Rethinking the Tools in Our Toolbox (4) Culturally Responsive Treatment - Student Edition
- Becoming a Culturally Competent Behavior Analyst: Rethinking the Tools in Our Toolbox (5) Culturally Responsive Supervision - Student Edition
- Becoming a Culturally Competent Behavior Analyst: Rethinking the Tools in Our Toolbox (6) Culturally Competent and Ethical Decisions - Student Edition
- Becoming a Culturally Competent Behavior Analyst: Rethinking the Tools in Our Toolbox (7) Closing - Student Edition


Required Text:
- Assigned readings will be posted on Canvas.
- Students will be required to purchase Cultural Competence for Behavior Analysts – Student Edition which costs $50. Modules are available here: https://institute.centralreach.com/learning-paths/becoming-a-culturally-competent-behavior-analyst-student-edition

Class Schedule (Dates are tentative and will be adjusted according to the semester calendar)

**Week 1: Introduction (9/7/22)**

**Week 2: Overview of Concepts (9/14/22)**

Skinner (1953) Science and Human Behavior - Chapter 27
Crenshaw, K. The Big Idea: Kimberle Crenshaw on Intersectionality. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BnAW4NyOak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BnAW4NyOak)


**Week 3: Culture and Diversity in ABA (9/21/22)**

**REFLECTION PAPER #1 DUE**

[https://www.bacb.com/bacb-certificant-data/](https://www.bacb.com/bacb-certificant-data/)


**Week 4: Historical Background (9/28/22)**


**Week 5: Self-Assessment (10/5/22)**
REFLECTION PAPER #2 DUE


Self-Assessment Workbook (Beaulieu & Jimenez-Gomez, 2020) from Module 2

Week 6: Culturally Responsive Behavioral Assessment: Part I (10/12/22)


Week 7: Culturally Responsive Behavioral Assessment: Part II (10/19/22)

Work on Behavioral Assessment Project in class

Week 8: Culturally Responsive Behavioral Treatment (10/26/22)


Week 9: Culturally Responsive Behavioral Consultation in Schools: Part I (11/2/22)

**BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT PROJECT DUE**

Angell, A. M., & Solomon, O. (2017). ‘If I was a different ethnicity, would she treat me the same?': Latino parents’ experiences obtaining autism services. *Disability & Society, 32*(8), 1142-1164.


Week 10: Culturally Responsive Behavioral Consultation in Schools: Part II (11/9/22)


Week 11: Cultural-Level Analysis of Problems of Social Significance: Part I (11/16/22)

**REFLECTION PAPER #3 DUE**


**Week 12: Cultural-Level Analysis of Problems of Social Significance: Part II (11/23/22)**

**CLASS WILL BE REMOTE**


**Week 13: Cultural-Level Analysis of Problems of Social Significance: Part III (11/30/22)**


**Week 14: Neurodiversity (12/7/22)**

**REFLECTION PAPER #4 DUE**

Veneziano, J., & Shea, S. (2022). They have a voice; are we listening?. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 1-18.


The Danger of Neurodiversity
https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-danger-of-neurodiversity-

Act Now for Severe Autism*** Trigger warning- this website contains graphic images/videos of self-injurious behavior
http://actnowforsevereautism.com/
Death by Severe Autism
https://www.ncsautism.org/blog//death-by-severe-autism

Exploring the Controversy Around ABA Therapy
https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/autism-aba-therapy/

A Renowned Physician Calls On Media to Acknowledge Autism's Brutal Truths
https://www.ncsautism.org/blog//death-by-severe-autism

The transgender ‘proud Autistic’ psychologist who believes we have Autism all wrong

A Voice from the World of Inpatient Hospitalization
https://www.ncsautism.org/blog//a-renowned-physician-calls-on-media-to-acknowledge-autisms-brutal-truths

**Week 15: Article Presentations (12/14/22)**

**IN CLASS PRESENTATION DUE**


**Additional Resources**


ABAI Special Interest Groups - [https://www.abainternational.org/constituents/special-interests/special-interest-groups.aspx](https://www.abainternational.org/constituents/special-interests/special-interest-groups.aspx)


Black Applied Behavior Analysts (BABA)- [https://www.babainfo.org/](https://www.babainfo.org/)

Latino Association for Behavior Analysis (LABA)- [https://www.laba-aba.com/](https://www.laba-aba.com/)

Women in Behavior Analysis (WIBA)- [https://thebaca.com/about-wiba/](https://thebaca.com/about-wiba/)

**GSAPP and Applied Dept. Policies**

**Class Format**
Culture and Diversity in ABA in an in-person course. The expectation is that students will attend in person, unless there is a change made by the university and/or the instructor, which would be announced to the students in a timely fashion. Students must wear masks during class. Students NOT following this guideline will be asked to put on their masks or to leave class. Students drinking or eating during class must replace their masks quickly. Please do NOT attend class in person if you are experiencing symptoms of illness.
**Attendance**
Each student is required to attend class and arrive on time. If you are unable to attend a class due to unusual circumstances (e.g., illness, child care) or religious observance, please inform the instructor in writing as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to obtain any missed notes and handouts from your peers, so please make arrangements with them in advance.

*Only two (2) excused/unexcused absences are permitted. Missing more than 2 classes will result in a 5%-point deduction for each additional day of absence from your final grade point.* If you are forced to miss an excessive amount of classes, you will be encouraged to withdraw from the class. Students who arrive to class more than 10 minutes after the class has started are considered tardy, and will be marked absent if they arrive more than 30 minutes after class has started. After 3 late arrivals, an unexcused absence will be marked in your record.

**Computer/Cell Phone Use in Class**
If students are expected to send or receive urgent e-mails, texts, or calls during class, their unanticipated and urgent needs should be communicated to and approved by the instructor prior to class. All cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode. All computing devices should be used only for the purpose of class-related activities.

**Academic Integrity**
All Rutgers students should review and adhere to the University principles of academic integrity, available at: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/

**Student Resources**
For more information visit: https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/current-students/important-links

**Accommodations due to Disability**
If you seek accommodations due to a documented disability, you may arrange for these through the Office of Disability Services, Kreeger Learning Center, 151 College Avenue; dfoffice@rci.rutgers.edu or you can visit: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines.

**Title IX:** http://compliance.rutgers.edu/resources/resources-for-facultystaff/

**Counseling services.** Students often experience personal problems or difficulties during the term that may interfere with learning and their daily activities. If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone regarding such personal issues, the University provides free counseling services through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and their information can be found at: http://psychologicalservices.rutgers.edu. They also offer a number of useful workshops for general stress management and techniques for promoting mental health. If you have any questions about CAPS or other services, I am happy to speak with you privately.

**Intellectual Property**
Lectures and materials utilized in this course, including but not limited to videocasts, podcasts, visual presentations, assessments, and assignments, are protected by United States copyright laws as well as Rutgers University policy. As the instructor of this course, I possess sole copyright ownership. You are permitted to take notes for personal use or to provide to a classmate also currently enrolled in this course. Under no other circumstances is distribution of recorded or written materials associated with this course permitted to any internet site or similar
information-sharing platform without my express written consent. Doing so is a violation of the university’s Academic Integrity Policy.

Similarly, these copyright protections extend to original papers you produce for this course. In the event that I seek to share your work further, I will first obtain your written consent to do so. Finally, as the instructor for this course, I have the responsibility to protect students’ right to privacy. Classroom recordings of students will therefore be treated as educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the U.S. federal law that governs access to educational information and records. Instructors and students must provide notification if any part of online sessions are to be recorded, and such recordings cannot be circulated outside the course.