COURSE SYLLABUS
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PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS WITH ETHNIC MINORITY CLIENTS AND FAMILIES
Rutgers University, Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology (GSAPP)
Fall, 2023

GERMÁN A. CADENAS, Ph.D.

Class Meeting: Psych 307
Class Times and Dates: Wednesdays 2pm to 4:45pm
Professor’s Email: german.cadenas@rutgers.edu
Office: Center for Youth Social Emotional Wellness (CYSEW)
797 Hoes Lane West, Office #2
Piscataway, NJ, 08854
Office Hours: Wednesdays at noon and by appointment (in person or virtual)

GSAPP COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Evaluation of the literature and research findings concerning the psychological experience of African-American, Hispanic, Asian populations with an emphasis on a sociocultural and ecological perspective. Implications of these findings discussed in terms of their impact on assessment, intervention, research and training in the cross-cultural context. The need for alternative strategies in the delivery of psychological services to minorities will be addressed. Both semesters (Fall & Spring) will include both didactic & experiential group process format.

EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on the psychological and cultural experiences of ethnically and racially minoritized groups in the U.S., who compose the global majority (i.e., Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other People of Color). Using critical a, this course explores how race and ethnicity intersects with other social categorizations (e.g., gender, LGBTQ+ identity, social class, immigration status, ability/disability, spirituality) to shape the psychological wellbeing of minoritized groups. Cultural competency issues will be explored in terms of interventions with ethnic minority clients and families. The need for alternative strategies in the delivery of psychological services to minority clients will be addressed. Didactic and experiential group process formats including videos and case presentations will be utilized to help instruct students in the therapeutic use of self in cross cultural work. As a part of the GSAPP curriculum, all students are required to take a diversity course. This course fulfills that requirement and provides training in competency related to individual cultural diversity skills.

Goals of this Course:
1) Students will explore and share their own cultural identity related to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, spirituality, and social class, among others.

2) Students will gain cultural knowledge of individuals, families, and communities that are racially and ethnically minoritized in society (e.g., Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other People of Color).

3) The experiences of racially and ethnically minoritized individuals and communities will be explored in relation to intersecting systems (e.g., racism, sexism, economic marginalization, xenophobia, ableism).

4) Each student will have the opportunity to interview an individual from one of the cultural groups discussed in this class.

5) Students will develop and apply research skills to conduct a literature review pertaining to evidence-based interventions to promote psychological wellbeing among the cultural groups discussed in class.

6) Students will develop and apply skills in ethical decision-making, assessment, intervention, and consultation, by presenting a clinical case and facilitating a group case conceptualization dialogue.

**APA PROFESSION-WIDE COMPETENCIES & DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE**

This course aims to facilitate the following (bolded) Profession-Wide Competencies as outlined in the Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology:

i. Research  
ii. Ethical and legal standards  
iii. Individual and cultural diversity  
iv. Professional values, attitudes, and behaviors  
v. Communication and interpersonal skills  
vi. Assessment  
vii. Intervention  
viii. Supervision  
ix. Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills

The course is also designed to facilitate the following (marked with an asterisk *) Competency Benchmarks in Professional Psychology:

1. **Professional Values and Attitudes**: as evidenced in behavior and comportment that reflect the values and attitudes of psychology.
2. **Individual and Cultural Diversity**: Awareness, sensitivity and skills in working professionally with diverse individuals, groups and communities who represent various
Psychological Interventions with Ethnic Minority Clients and Families

3. **Ethical Legal Standards and Policy**: Application of ethical concepts and awareness of legal issues regarding professional activities with individuals, groups, and organizations.

4. **Reflective Practice/Self-Assessment/Self-Care**: Practice conducted with personal and professional self-awareness and reflection; with awareness of competencies; with appropriate self-care.

5. **Relationships**: Relate effectively and meaningfully with individuals, groups, and/or communities.

6. **Scientific Knowledge and Methods**: Understanding of research, research methodology, techniques of data collection and analysis, biological bases of behavior, cognitive-affective bases of behavior, and development across the lifespan. Respect for scientifically derived knowledge.

7. **Research/Evaluation**: Generating research that contributes to the professional knowledge base and/or evaluates the effectiveness of various professional activities.

8. **Evidence-Based Practice**: Integration of research and clinical expertise in the context of patient factors.

9. **Assessment**: Assessment and diagnosis of problems, capabilities and issues associated with individuals, groups, and/or organizations.

10. **Intervention**: Interventions designed to alleviate suffering and to promote health and well-being of individuals, groups, and/or organizations.

11. **Consultation**: The ability to provide expert guidance or professional assistance in response to a client’s needs or goals.

12. **Teaching**: Providing instruction, disseminating knowledge, and evaluating acquisition of knowledge and skill in professional psychology.

13. **Supervision**: Supervision and training in the professional knowledge base of enhancing and monitoring the professional functioning of others.

14. **Interdisciplinary Systems**: Knowledge of key issues and concepts in related disciplines. Identify and interact with professionals in multiple disciplines.

15. **Management-Administration**: Manage the direct delivery of services (DDS) and/or the administration of organizations, programs, or agencies (OPA).

16. **Advocacy**: Actions targeting the impact of social, political, economic or cultural factors to promote change at the individual (client), institutional, and/or systems level.

**CLASS FORMAT**

This course meets weekly for approximately 2.75 hours during the designated day and time. The course is designed to meet in person, with flexibility for virtual meetings and remote learning due to unpresented circumstances, such as changes related to COVID-19. The course is envisioned to function as a largely discussion-based one, with high emphasis on dialogue centered on assigned readings and students’ self-reflection. The course also has an applied component, which is particularly facilitated by the inclusion of case presentations. Multimedia content and hands-on activities are also used to support learning objectives.
ASSIGNMENTS & GRADINGS

1. Active Engagement (50 points)

A total of 50 points are allocated toward active engagement in the course throughout the semester. This is reflective of Rutgers university’s Course Attendance Policy. Given that the course is largely discussion-based and participatory. Thus, active engagement includes: attending every class meeting, arriving to class on time and staying until the end, responsiveness to instructor and peers, completing assigned readings prior to class meetings, being responsive during dialogues, being supportive to peers, self-reflection, and openness to dialogue and group discussions. If unforeseen and extenuating circumstances may prevent class attendance and engagement, please contact me prior to missing a class meeting.

2. Culture & Mental Health Interview & Presentation (150 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to explore the connection between sociocultural factors and mental health centering the lived experience of someone who identifies as a member of a racially or ethnically minorized group, and/or part of the global majority, that is different from your own cultural identity group. Findings from completing this assignment are to be shared with the class as a 15-minute presentation.

In approaching this assignment, we embrace the assumption that views of psychology and mental health held by individuals and groups are largely influenced by sociocultural factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, social class, ability immigration status, country of origin, among many others. For this assignment, please choose one aspect of your cultural identity that is salient for you. Engage in self-reflection that is centered on this identity domain, based on the questions below. Once this is completed, please interview someone who holds different cultural identity within the same domain. Please make sure to ask them the same questions that you answered for yourself.

1. What domain of your cultural identity is most salient for you? What do you think makes this domain so prevalent for you?
2. What messages about mental health have you learned pertaining to this cultural identity group? What are positive/helpful messages you have learned about this group in relation to mental health? What are negative stereotypes you have heard about this group’s mental health?
3. As a member of this group, what beliefs do you hold about your own group’s mental health that you have found to be true? what beliefs do you hold about your own that you have found to be false/misconceptions? Where might have these beliefs originated?
4. What cultural knowledge about mental health are held by this cultural group that is not well represented in mainstream academic literature, media, and culture?
5. What insights might have come up for you and/or your interviewee while thinking about these questions?

3. Applied Case Dialogue (100 points)
There are 100 points allotted to this assignment. The goal is to integrate the knowledge cultivated in the course thus far and to translate it into practice in health service psychology (i.e., clinical psychology, school psychology, and counseling psychology). This involves developing and presenting a case vignette to the class and leading the group through conceptualizing the case together and choosing appropriate interventions. Each student will be in charge of 30 minutes to present and conceptualize their case, and they will choose their proffered date.

The case is intended to be reflective of the psychological concerns that may be experienced by the students/clients that you would like to serve as a psychologist. Please use the case vignette format below to structure the case, which may be entirely fictional or based on real-life persons. If the case is based on a real person, please ensure that all information is deidentified. Please ensure that the level of severity described in the case is appropriate to the level of competence and skill at your current stage of training.

Once the case is presented to the class, please guide the group through conceptualizing the case together, and choosing next steps for intervention. To facilitate this, please bring a set of open-ended questions that you would like to pose to the class.

⇒ Case Vignette Format:

- **a)** Context in which the student/client is receiving health service psychology services. Ex: K-12 school setting, higher education institution, community agency, private practice.
- **b)** Pseudonym: de-identified if based on real person.
- **c)** Demographic information: age, gender identity, sexual identity, race/ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, ability/disability, social status, religion/spirituality, other. What are cultural factors salient to student/client?
- **d)** Presenting concern(s): what brings the person to seek services? What would they like to change? How is this concern impacting their life at the moment? What is the level of severity of the concern? Be highly descriptive with this part.
- **e)** History of presenting concern: when did this concern start? How has it progressed over time? How does it impact this person’s overall development?
- **f)** History of psychological services: what kind of help have they sought?
- **g)** Risk assessment: risk and protective factors, is the person a danger to themselves or others, suicide or homicide ideation?
- **h)** Health-related concerns: are there any medical conditions or somatic symptoms associated with the presenting concerns?
- **i)** Family history and dynamics: what is the student’s/client’s positioning in the family (ex: middle child, parent, etc.)? What does the relationship with family members look like? What does the family structure look like? Are there any mental health concerns in the family?
- **j)** Social functioning: social supports, relationships, education and/or employment, level of functioning (ex: able to attend appointments, completing work on time, etc.).
k) Trauma history: what is the student’s/client’s history with trauma? Ex: interpersonal, physical, verbal, structural, sexual, financial, immigration trauma, etc.
l) Substance use: what substances does the student/client use, how much, and how often?
m) How does this case make sense to you conceptually? Where would you start in providing services to this person?

4. State of Intervention Science Group Paper and Presentations (100 points)

This is a group assignment that may be completed with 3-4 students. This assignment involves writing a 10-page academic paper in APA style (100 points). The goal with the assignment is to use research skills to become familiar with the scientific literature of highest impact on a specific topic related to ethnic psychology. The 10-page length for the paper does not include title page or references.

To start, please identify a topic of intervention that interests you, as well as a developmental stage and population that you wish to work with in practice as a psychologist. Please ensure that the topic is relevant to the psychology of racially and ethnically minorized groups. Conduct a literature search using research databases and find the top 10-15 articles cited on this topic within the last 10 years. As you read this research, please prepare a paper that addresses the following areas:

a) What are the overall themes in the research? What are the major findings?
b) What recommendations for practicing health service psychology (i.e., clinical, school, and counseling psychology) are emerging for this topic?
c) What methods and analyses are being used in this type of research? Is there a bias emerging for a particular type of methodology?
d) What critical thoughts do you have to deconstruct the science that is emerging on this topic? How would you interpret these findings using a decolonial or liberatory lens?
e) How may you translate the findings from the research into your own interventions?

GRADES

Letter grades for the semester are assigned following Rutgers University’s Grades and Symbols Policy and GSAPP’s Grading Processes. In this course, grades are be based on the total number of points students receive in the 4 assignments above. There are a total of 400 points possible. The following legend describes the allocation of grades based on total points:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points Range</th>
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<tr>
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<td>F</td>
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- All written assignments will be submitted through Canvas.
- Written assignments are automatically checked for plagiarism and originality built-in tools within Canvas.
- Written assignments should follow APA style guidelines (7th edition).
- Assignments are due at the beginning of each class on the date assigned. A letter grade is deducted from total assignment grade each day an assignment is late.
- Exceptions are possible under extreme circumstances; please contact me prior to missing a deadline to discuss any barriers to completing assignments.

**POLICIES: COURSE, GSAPP, & UNIVERSITY**

This course is designed to provide an inclusive and intellectually stimulating learning environment that affirms the university mission: “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.” This entails that instructional practices are guided by **Rutgers University’s Academic Policies** and by **GSAPP Policies and Procedures**.

**Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to display academic integrity in all aspects of the course, including in written assignments, class dialogues, presentations, and collaboration with the community. If in doubt about whether something would violate academic integrity, please contact me. I am available to consult and discuss academic integrity and tips for ensuring originality in your work. This course follows Rutgers University’s **Academic Integrity Policy**. Resources for students regarding academic integrity, identifying and avoiding academic dishonesty, citations, and writing instructions can be found in the **Academic Integrity – New Brunswick website**.

**Religious Holiday Policy**

All religions and spiritual beliefs are equally respected and welcomed in this course. Please contact me to make any accommodations in the event you will miss class for religious or spiritual reasons. This course follows **Rutgers University’s Religious Holiday Policy**.

**Students with Disabilities**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you and your instructor with a Letter of Accommodations. Please
discuss the accommodations with your instructors as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the registration form.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

In this course, we acknowledge that learning takes place in Piscataway, on the land of the Lenape peoples.

All students are welcomed, affirmed, and respected in this course, including students from underrepresented backgrounds in higher education and in psychology, and those who are underserved and marginalized in society at large. This includes racially and ethnically minoritized students (Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color), students from low socioeconomic households and communities, women and gender minoritized students, students with disabilities, students who are immigrants or from international backgrounds, and students who identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and allies (LGBTQIAA), among many other groups.

As an advocate for educational equity, I can assist in connecting with resources on campus to concerns that may interfere with your student success. Rutgers provides several resources to support the success of all students. Moreover, the Cultural Collaborative within the Division of Student Affairs hosts a number of diversity and inclusion initiatives and centers that offer safe spaces, programming, and advocacy. These include the Asian American Cultural Center, Center for Latino Arts and Culture, Center for Social Justice Education and LGBTQ Communities, and the Paul Robeson Cultural Center.

COURSE TIMELINE & READING LIST

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments Due</th>
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| 4    | 9/27/23  | Social Justice and Advocacy Competencies    | **Note: Class Meets Virtually**  
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/18/23</td>
<td>*Due: Interview Presentations</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10/25/23</td>
<td>*Due: Interview Presentations</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>11/1/23</td>
<td>Indian, Indigenous, and Native American Psychology</td>
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<td>Latinx and Latin American Psychology</td>
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<td>12/22</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recess – No Class Meeting</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
<td>American Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African (AMENA) Psychology</td>
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of immigrant-origin children and youth. *American Psychologist, 73*(6), 781–796. [https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000265](https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000265)


| 16 | 12/20/23 | **Week of Final Exams – No Class Meeting**  
*Due: State of Intervention Science Group Paper* |