

**Teaching Cultural Psychology—A Post Secondary Course  
Syllabus and Unit on Abnormal Psychology with focus on China**

2009 Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad to China  
Curriculum Project

Karen Edwards Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology  
Endicott College  
Beverly, MA

## **I. Summary of Curriculum Project**

Information and inspiration from the month studying the History and Culture of China with the Fulbright Hays program has resulted in numerous presentations for higher education audiences. I have presented a brief overview of the experience at the college Faculty Assembly and encouraged their future participation in international study programs. A more detailed presentation about China was presented to the Arts and Sciences faculty at Endicott College. A slide show with discussion of the changing culture of China was delivered to the Endicott Psychology Faculty. I am scheduled to meet with the college President to discuss what I discovered about higher education in China. The Provost has asked me to speak to the Board of Trustees to discuss educational opportunities in China for our students. I submitted a proposal to the National Institute on Teaching Psychology for the Jan 2010 Conference. I hope that these presentations will inspire college faculty to explore other cultures and teach from a more global perspective.

I have been awarded a Project Grant for the academic year 2009-2010 by my college to develop opportunities for Psychology students to be in contact with students in China. I am using some of the contacts I made during the Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar to facilitate student contacts. Students in my Human Relationships course will correspond with Chinese students about relationship issues in China and in the United States.

I usually teach Clinical Psychology courses such as Theories of Counseling and Abnormal Psychology as I am also a licensed therapist. For this project I have created a new Cultural Psychology course. In the past this course was taught as a Multi-cultural diversity course about stereotypes and prejudice. My vision of Cultural Psychology is to explore some of the major fields within Psychology using research from other cultures. This is important for future psychologists as indicated by the 1999 Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health that found that the impact of culture has been historically underestimated. We can't know all the psychological implications of the world's cultures but it is important for students to learn some of the research on psychology in other cultures.

In addition to a new Cultural Psychology syllabus with a special focus on China, I will include a detailed curriculum unit on "Culture and Treatment of Abnormal Behaviors" focused in China and a bibliography for students and professors.

## **II. Essential Questions**

- Is what we know about psychology true for people in other cultures?
- If not, what are the important cultural differences in normal and abnormal behavior? How can we understand them?
- What is it in the culture that produces these psychological differences?
- What are the differences in mental health interventions in different cultures?

### III. Syllabus

#### **Cultural Psychology (Subject to change)**

Endicott College  
Beverly, Massachusetts  
Arts and Sciences/Psychology Department

**Course #** PSY 30701 (3 credits) (Prerequisite: 6 credits of psychology)

**Spring Semester 2010**

**Faculty:** Dr. Karen Edwards Professor of Psychology

**Office:** AC 226R; Tel: Ext. 2088; Email: kedwards@endicott.edu

#### **Required Texts:**

Culture & Psychology by David Matsumoto and Linda Juang, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Thomson/Wadsworth, 2008.

Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice by D.W. Sue and D. Sue, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, John Wiley & Sons, 2003.

#### **Course Description**

This course examines culture as process. Emphasis is placed on the interaction of culture in various contexts. Particular attention is paid to the relationship of cultural identity and psychology as well as mental health issues. This course helps meet Goal #8 in the APA Guidelines for the undergraduate Psychology Major approved in 2006.

*GOAL 8: Socio-cultural and International Awareness*

*Recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of socio-cultural and international diversity.*

#### **Suggested Learning Outcomes**

- 8.1 Interact effectively and sensitively with people of diverse abilities, backgrounds, and cultural perspectives.
- 8.2 Examine the socio-cultural and international contexts that influence individual differences.
- 8.3 Explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interactions with others and vice versa.
- 8.4 Understand how privilege, power, and oppression may affect prejudice, discrimination, and inequity.
- 8.5 Recognize prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors that might exist in themselves and in others.
- 8.6 Predict how interaction among diverse people can challenge conventional understanding of psychological processes and behavior.

#### **Goals of the Course**

1. Explore cross-cultural issues such as: the role of culture in defining normal behavior, the prevalence of certain disorders in different cultures, the impact of socioeconomic status on the assessment process.
2. Analyze different cultural perspectives as they determine the cause, and relief of psychological disorders.
3. Explore the psychological dimensions of various cultures to help explain differences in behavior.
4. Understand the issues of using psychological assessment tools including the DSM IV in different

- cultures.
5. Explore how cultural value systems may contribute to developmental processes including gender role development and cognitive development.
  6. Understand some of the relations between culture and intimate love relationships.

### **Topical Outline**

- Cultural values & identity
- Cultural relativism and ethnocentrism
- Functions of cross-cultural research
- Gender role expectations
- Culture and personality theories
- Culture specific disorders
- Multicultural counseling
- Intercultural relationships
- Prejudice reduction techniques

### **Course Requirements and Teaching Strategies**

There will be 3 exams and a final. These exams will be a combination multiple choice and essay or case study. These will include the text, readings, the lectures, in-class presentations and panel discussions. I recommend that you form a study group with others in this class to help you prepare for the exams. They are difficult exams.

Major Presentations on specific cultural issues will be presented in class by small groups of students who have worked together to create an informative and interesting presentation. Look at the topical outline above and rank your top 3 preferences of the \* topics and be ready to hand it in when asked. I will try to give you a favorite when I arrange the presentation groups. In addition to teaching the class, each student in the group will find 3 peer reviewed articles from Library journals or the Internet and will hand these in with their own typed comments about the articles. Incorporate this information into the presentation. Due the day of the presentation. See attached "Presentation evaluation sheet" for more details.

Writing competence is considered a significant part of any evaluation. If the spelling, punctuation, grammar, the content and organization of the written work are not at a college level, the paper must be rewritten to receive any credit.

Multicultural interview: You will conduct a 1 hour or equivalent interview with a person from another culture. This may be with an international student at the college or Chinese students with whom I will arrange the connection. Submit interview questions to me before the interview. Type up the interview and present your reflections to the class at the scheduled time.

### **Course Philosophy**

Learning is an active process in which we all participate. This suggests the importance of understanding and experiencing ideas, rather than just remembering a list of facts. This course should become a dialogue between all of us as we reflect upon the material presented. Such a conversation includes responsibilities to which we must all agree. Clearly, one initial responsibility involves being in class regularly. But merely being in class is not enough to create a climate in which we can all learn. Being prepared for class is an additional commitment that is necessary from each of us. A quick reading of the assigned material will do little to prepare for class. The nature of the material presented in this course invites critical reflection upon the ideas and a willingness to share our insights and perspectives. A final and vitally important responsibility involves a willingness to be open to consider the thoughts and ideas of others in the classroom. You may not agree with the views expressed by others in the course, but we must

all agree to respect each individual's right to have and share their own opinions. Lack of regular attendance and participation in class can result in up to 50 minus points at the end of the semester. This could change your grade by a letter. I do take attendance. Bonus points can be earned by doing well on quizzes and homework assignments.

### **Honor Code**

You are bound by an honor code of student conduct for all of your graded work in this course. Accept and give no assistance on any of the graded assignments for the course except when assigned to do group work. Your name on your assignments and tests is your honor pledge.

### **Grading**

Exams (3)	210 points
Final	100 points
Presentation & comments	100 points
Interview Paper	40 points
Class participation	25 points

Grading Scale: All of your scores will be added together and divided by the total possible to determine your percentage. Grades will be based on the following scale:

A=95% A- 90% B+=87% B=84% B- = 80% C+=77%, C=74%, C-=70% D+=67% D=64% F=0-59%

### **Late Assignments**

All Make up exams will be taken just before finals begin. Case study presentation and comment paper must be given on the day assigned. All of us are very busy. I need to arrange home life, preparation for teaching and my work as a therapist around grading papers. A late paper means I have to rearrange it all! Late papers will be penalized 3 pts. for each late day including weekends. Plan your time so that last minute computer problems are irrelevant. The take home final **will not** be accepted late.

### **ADA Policy**

If you as a student qualify as a person with a disability, as defined in Chapter 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, you may wish to discuss the need for reasonable accommodation with your instructor. You should make this contact at the start of the semester.

### Cultural Psychology Course Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment (Read Before Class)</b>
1/26	Defining Culture	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 1, <u>Culture &amp; Psychology</u> <b>Homework:</b> Distinguish differences among race, culture, ethnicity, and nationality.
1/28	Factors that Influence Culture	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 1; Li-Jun Ji et al (2009) Looking into the past: cultural differences in perception and representation of past information <i>Journal of Personality &amp; Social Psychology</i> , 96(4),761-769. <b>Homework:</b> What are some cultural universals?
2/2	American Subcultures	<b>Homework:</b> What are the benefits and liabilities of being and insider or outsider?
2/4	Cross-Cultural Research Methods	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 2
2/9	Cognitive Differences	<b>Homework:</b> How might you explain the increased tolerance for cognitive uncertainty in Asians?
2/11	Developmental Psychology	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 3 and pp. 96-101; QianWang (2007) The role of parents' control in early adolescents psychological functioning: A longitudinal investigation in the US and China, <i>Child Development</i> , 78 (5), 1592-1610. <b>Homework:</b> Investigate childrearing beliefs about crying, sleeping and eating in different cultures.
2/16	Attachment and moral reasoning	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 4 <b>Homework:</b> Explain individualism and collectivism
2/18	<b>EXAM</b>	
2/23	Conference Day- Small group meetings for presentations	
2/25	Culture and Gender	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 6 <b>Homework:</b> Bring in an article from any source discussing recent gender role changes in another culture.
3/2	Culture and Communication	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 9 <b>Homework:</b> Self administer Neuliep & McCroskey (1997) Measure of intercultural communication apprehension. <i>Communication Research Report</i> , 14, 145-156.
3/4	Love and Marriage Across Culture	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 14; Ho, Loretta Wing Wah (2008) Speaking of same-sex subjects in China, <i>Asian Studies Review</i> , 32(4), 491-509. <b>Homework:</b> Find a website for cross-cultural couples and

		take notes on the difficulties they report
3/9	Intimate Relationships in China (Based on Student Email Correspondence)	<b>Text:</b> Chen Baifeng (2008) The influence of changing peasant values on familial relations. <i>Chinese Sociology &amp; Anthropology</i> , 41(1), 30-42. <b>Homework:</b> Cultural Interview Questions
3/11	<b>EXAM</b>	
<b>Spring Break</b>		
3/23	Present interview reflections	<b>Homework:</b> Write up interview
3/25	Cross-cultural research on abnormal behaviors	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 11 <b>Homework:</b> Meet with group to plan presentation
3/30	Culture & mood disorders	<b>Text:</b> Kleinman, A., & Kleinman, J. (1985), Somatization: The interconnections in Chinese society among culture, depressive experiences, and the meanings of pain.” Kleinman & Good (Eds.) <i>Culture and Depression: Studies in the Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Psychiatry of Affect and Disorder</i> (pp. 272-298). Berkeley: University of California Press.  Kirmayer,L.J.(2001). Cultural variations in the clinical presentation of depression and anxiety: Implications for diagnosis and treatment. <i>Journal of Clinical Psychiatry</i> , 62, 22-28.
4/1	Suicide	<b>Text:</b> Kral, M.J.(1998). Suicide and the internalization of culture: Three questions. <i>Transcultural Psychiatry</i> , 35 (2), 21-233.
4/6	Student presentations-culture specific disorders	<b>Text:</b> Clark, Taylor,(2008) Plight of the little emperors, <i>Psychology Today</i> , 41, 4, 86-91.
4/8	Schizophrenia	<b>Text:</b> Hopper, K. and Wanderling, J.(2000) Revisiting the Developed vs. Developing Country Distinction in Course and Outcome in Schizophrenia. <i>Schizophrenia Bulletin</i> , 26, 835-846.
4/13	Student presentation-culture specific disorders	
4/15	Culture& the treatment of abnormal behavior	<b>Text:</b> Ch. 12; Ming-Tak Hue (2008) The Influence of Confucianism: A narrative study of Hong Kong teachers understanding of counseling and practices of school guidance, <i>British Journal of Guidance &amp; Counseling</i> , 2008, 36 (3), p 303-316.

4/20	Psychotherapy in China	<b>Text:</b> Wong, D. (2008) Cognitive and health-related outcomes of group cognitive behavioral treatment for people with depressive symptoms in Hong Kong. <i>Australian &amp; New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry</i> , 42 (8), 702-711.
4/22	Culturally competent therapists	<b>Text:</b> Smith, T.B., et. al, (2006) Multicultural Education in the Mental Health Professions: A Meta-Analytic Review. <i>Journal of Counseling Psychology</i> , 53, 132-145.
4/27	Indigenous Healing Practices	Student Presentations
4/29	Prejudice reduction techniques	<b>Homework:</b> Reflect on your own stereotypes and discrimination behaviors
5/4	<b>Review for Final Exam</b>	

### **Cultural Psychology Presentation Evaluation**

- Topic: 20 points
- Level of Preparation: 10 points
- (Spoken, not read, and well organized and not overlapping others in the group)
- Visual Aids: 10 points
- Handouts: 10 points
- Clarity of presentation: 10 points
- Accuracy of information presented: 10 points
- Quality of 3 Non-Textbook articles: 15 points (relevant, important, and peer reviewed)
- Ability to answer questions: 5 points
- Evaluation of your contributions by other members of your group: 5points
- Evaluation of presentation by classmates: 5points

### **Guidelines for Comments on Articles**

- Title, author, journal, date etc. (attach a copy of the article to your comments so I can read both unless the article is more than 10 pages long. Then attach the first page and conclusions of the article you read.
- Briefly state the main idea of this article
- List at least 3 important facts that the author uses to support the main idea
- What information or ideas in this article are also discussed in your textbook or other readings we have done?
- List any examples of bias or faulty reasoning that you found in the article.
- List any new terms/concepts that were discussed in the article and write a short definition.

## **Unit on Culture and Treatment of Abnormal Behavior- 3 hours**

### **Objectives**

- Learning to conceptualize cultural differences in understanding psychological disorders.
- Learning how to explore disorders in cultures using discussion, interviews, reading, and writing.
- Understanding why different therapy techniques may be needed with different cultures.

### **Terms**

- Enculturation–The process of learning about and adopting the values of a culture.
- Social Axioms–Beliefs about oneself, the social, physical and spiritual world that assert the relationship between these. We endorse and use them to guide our behavior. For example, “freedom to love is essential to happiness”.

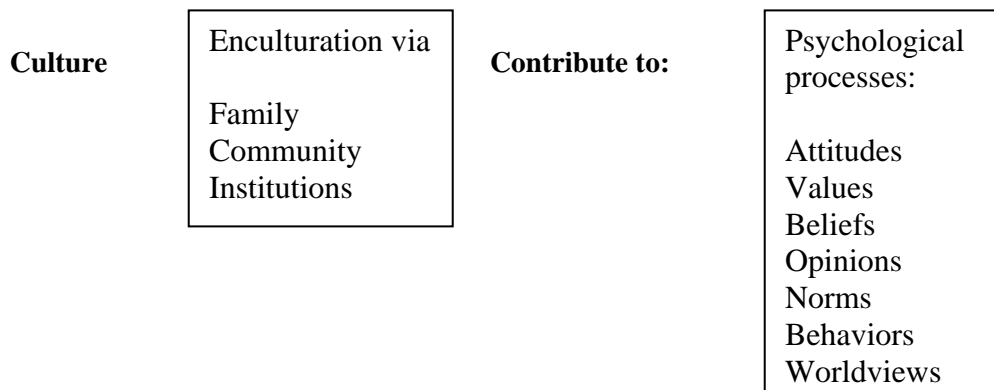
### **Activity**

- Ask students to brainstorm social axioms from their own culture.
- Social Axioms for China can be found on the IEPS- Fulbright Hays resources where this curriculum was found.

Hofstede (2001) generated five dimensions that he suggested could differentiate cultures. They are:

- Individualism versus Collectivism-This dimension refers to the degree to which cultures will encourage the tendency for people to look after themselves and their family only or for people to belong to in-groups that are designed to look after its members in exchange for loyalty.
- Power Distance–This refers to the degree to which cultures will encourage less powerful members of groups to accept the inequity.
- Uncertainty avoidance–This dimension refers to the degree to which people feel threatened by unknown or ambiguous situations and have developed ways to avoid them.
- Masculinity versus Femininity–This dimension is characterized by focus on things and tasks versus relationships & caring for others.
- Long versus Short term Orientation–This dimension refers to the degree to which the culture encourages delayed gratification of material, social and emotional needs among its members.

**Lecture:** How does culture influence behaviors and psychological processes?



Cultures are learned. The enculturation process shapes individual psychological characteristics including how they think, perceive, act, feel and interact in the world. Scholars argue that we can understand and recognize abnormal behavior only if we take the cultural context into account. Using reports of subjective distress to define abnormal behavior is a problem because it may depend on how others respond to the distress. Cultural groups vary in the amount and kind of distress they report experiencing with psychological disorders. Depression is often characterized by body changes (sleep and stomach) and changes in motivation (boredom and apathy), emotional and behavioral changes (sadness, hopelessness, helplessness and loss of energy). Chinese and African participants who are depressed report feeling less guilt and shame than do depressed European and American participant in the Kleinman (1988) study. The Chinese and African participants report more symptoms related to their body. Depression is projected to be the second leading cause of illness-related disability affecting the world's population (World Health Organization, 2006). Women are twice as likely to experience depression as men. This gender difference holds true across race, ethnicity, socioeconomics, adult age and culture. The incidence of depression has risen dramatically over the past few decades, especially among adolescents. Research indicates that depression is universal but the expression and course of the illness are culturally determined.

Marsella, Kaplan, & Suarez (2002) suggest that depression takes a primarily affective form in individualistic cultures where the dominate symptoms are feelings of loneliness and isolation. In cultures with a more communal structure, there are more somatic symptoms such as headaches. Another interpretation of this difference in symptoms is based on Chinese philosophy where there is no mind-body dichotomy. The coexistence of psychological and physiological symptoms in depression are congruent with Chinese notions of mind-body oneness.

There are also cultural differences in the sources of stress that may account for some of the differences in diagnosis. The Chinese Classification of Mental Disorders (CCMD) formerly included a duration of symptoms for 4 weeks instead of the current 2 weeks because "2 weeks of depressive symptoms could be difficult to distinguish from social suffering, which was common in China's history of wars, turmoil, and rapid social change"(Lee, 2001, p.423) The social and historical context is crucial in defining psychological disorders.

The Chinese Classification of Mental Disorders had been greatly influenced by the DSM-IV and the International Classification of Diseases-10 but has culture specific features that do not exist in the international systems.

### **Reading**

Kirmayer, L. J. (2001). Cultural variations in the clinical presentation of depression and anxiety: Implications for diagnosis and treatment. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 62, 22-28.

Kleinman, A., & Kleinman, J. (1985) Somatization: the interconnections in Chinese society among culture, depressive experiences, and the meanings of pain. In Kleinman & Good (Eds.) *Culture and Depression: Studies in the Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Psychiatry of Affect and Disorder* (pp. 272-298). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Kral, M.J.(1998). Suicide and the internalization of culture: Three questions. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 35 (2), 221-233.

### **Activity**

Students list behaviors that are viewed as normal in their own culture and abnormal in other cultures. Discuss whether normality is different by culture or if there are universal rules to determine truly disordered behaviors.

### **Assessment**

Essay exam questions—How do definitions of normality and abnormality vary across cultures? What culturally distinct patterns of abnormal behaviors have been identified?

**Lecture:** What are the cultural limitations of psychotherapy and how is it effectively adapted in other cultures?

Show the micro training DVD “Multicultural Counseling/Therapy: Culturally Appropriate Intervention Strategies” with the vignette about Betty, a 30 year-old Chinese American woman. (Available from John Wiley & Sons, publisher) The vignette describes how the therapist imposes Western standards to judge normality/abnormality and utilizes an individually focused approach, which prove to be ineffective in working with Betty. Some of the problems include communication styles. Different forms of psychotherapy possess varied communication styles. For example, in client centered therapy Rogers emphasizes attending skills while Lazarus took an active style of re-education in his multi-modal therapy.

As we know it is important that the therapist and client send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately. Here Betty expresses a more indirect and subtle communication style than the therapist. Students should watch for how nonverbal communication and behavior varies between cultures. Also observe their level of comfort with closeness and distance. In Western culture, people seem to grow more uncomfortable when others stand too close rather than too far away. Cultural norms regarding gestures, expressions, voice volume, pace and eye contact can be discussed here.

Directness of a conversation or the degree of frankness also varies considerably among various cultures. High context is anchored in physical context (situation) or internalized in the person—less reliance on explicit code (e.g. Asian cultures). Low context cultures communicate with a greater reliance on the verbal part of the message (e.g. U.S. culture). It is important for counselors to understand their own personal communication styles and attempt to adapt to our client’s preferred form of communication

A therapist who has not dealt with their own biases may convey them nonverbally in the counseling session. Culturally diverse people are often placed in situations where they are asked to deny their true feelings in order to perpetuate western assumptions

Asian Americans may value restraint of strong feelings and feel that intimate feelings should be shared with close friends although Chinese psychiatrists say they will reveal in a trusted therapist relationship.

Implications for Clinical Practice:

- a. Recognize that no one style of counseling will be appropriate for all clients and be aware of adapting your style
- b. Become knowledgeable about how race, culture, and gender affect communication styles
- c. Obtain additional training and education on a variety of theoretical orientations and approaches
- d. Think about the whole system rather than in a piecemeal manner when conceptualizing the human behavior
- e. Training programs need to use an approach that calls for openness and flexibility in conceptualizing issues and skill building

Sue and Sue (2003)

### Discussion Questions

- In the vignette, mis-communication based on cultural values were evident. How would you have interpreted the counselor’s communication style? Can you think of a recent example where you may have misunderstood or misinterpreted someone based on cultural communication styles?
- Some believe that most communication occurs nonverbally. What are some nonverbal cues that you rely on in communication? Describe some differences you have observed in persons of different ethnic groups or genders.

## **Readings**

- Ming-Tak Hue (2008) The influence of Confucianism: A narrative study of Hong Kong teachers understanding of counseling and practices of school guidance, *British Journal of Guidance & Counseling*; 36(3), 303-316.
- Wong, D. (2008) Cognitive and health-related outcomes of group cognitive behavioral treatment for people with depressive symptoms in Hong Kong. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*. 42 (8), 702-711.
- Smith, T. B., Constantine, M.G., Dunn, T.W., Dinehart, J.M., & Montoya, J. A. (2006). Multicultural Education in the Mental Health Professions; A Meta-Analytic Review. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53,132-145.

## **Assessments**

### **Cultural Interview**

1. Find an individual from a culture different from your own to interview. This interview could be face to face with someone you know, or a student in the International Program at your school or a pen pal from the [www.penpalparty.com](http://www.penpalparty.com) site. Explain the assignment to them.
2. Do some background reading about the culture this person represents. You can do this on-line. Also look for recent news stories about their culture. Use our library databases to find psychological studies on this culture. The more you know, the better your questions and understanding of the answers. Be aware that people often want to present their culture in the best light. You will need to ask them to think of examples and exceptions to the generalities they are giving you. Ask them how people in their culture behave, what are the common attitudes and beliefs, if any. You will be creating your own interesting questions based on your reading and thinking of follow-up questions during the interview. You need to ask insightful questions to get the individual to really think about their culture without reverting to stereotypes. Ask them how psychological disorders are perceived in their culture. Do they know how they are treated? Did they have any experience in school or at work with psychologically abnormal individuals?
3. Audiotape the interview or take extensive notes.
4. After the interview review your notes/audiotape. Based on class discussions and your background reading, try to explain the interviewee's answers. Provide examples from the interview that match specific characteristics of the culture you studied. Prepare an 8-10 page paper using the background information, examples from the interview and an analysis of the culture based on our texts and lectures. Do not include the name of your interviewee. These papers will be bundled and placed on library reserve for the class to read.
5. Prepare a 5 minute verbal summary of what you learned about this culture from the interview using specific examples for a class presentation.
6. Hand in a folder containing your interview records (notes of questions and responses) and copies of articles you read for this project.

### **Exam Essay Questions**

Discuss the implications that various communication styles have on counseling practice. In your response, please indicate how a counselor can become a culturally competent communicator. How do psychotherapeutic approaches need to be modified in order to deal effectively with cultural influences on abnormality.

## Bibliography

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Whaley, A.L., and Davis, K.E. (2007). Cultural competence and evidence-based practice in mental health services: A complementary perspective. *American Psychologist*, 62, 563-574.

Wong, D. (2008) Cognitive and health-related outcomes of group cognitive behavioral treatment for people with depressive symptoms in Hong Kong. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*. 42 (8), 702-711.

### **Media**

*Heart of the Dragon, part 10, Mediating* (57min., PBS/Ambrose Video) Resolving a marital dispute in the Peoples Republic of China.

*A Great Wall*(100 min.,Pacific Arts Video) Chinese American family visits relatives in China and encounter many cross-cultural communication problems.

*A World of Differences: Understanding Cross-Cultural Communication*. (30 min. University of California Extension). Explores 14 dimensions of cross-cultural misunderstandings.