



MODULE DESCRIPTION

Module title	Code
Culture, Self, and Meaning	

Teacher(s)	Unit
Co-ordinating: Prof. Victor de Munck Other(s):	Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies

Cycle of studies	Level of module	Type of module
1st cycle	1/1	Elective

Mode of implementation	Period of instruction	Language(s) of instruction
Lectures	1 semester	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: none	Additional requirements (if any): none

Module volume in credits	Total student workload	Contact hours	Independent study hours
5	133	32	101

Aim of module: competences developed by the study programme
<p>The aim of this course is to read, discuss and study the three concepts that constitute the title of this course and to learn about their interconnectedness from an anthropological perspective. Since the inception of Anthropology as an academic field in the late 1800s, the concept of culture has undergone many transformations. In fact, so many that it may well be the most problematic concept in anthropology, with many considering it to be an inherently ethnocentric and failed concept. We will consider the main transformations that have occurred. Three features of culture that remain foundational are: social learning, its collective nature, and that it serves as a grounding or foundation for making meaning.</p> <p>The concept of the self has also undergone similar transformations, from a holistic to a fragmented minimalistic, and illusory “entity.” The cross-cultural variety in conceptualizing self will form the second part of the course. In this part we connect the concept of self to culture since variations of self are understood by researchers as related to cultural differences.</p> <p>In the third part of the course we consider how the study of meaning has developed over time and the bio-cultural mechanisms by which meaning is made and how it is necessarily constructed as a collectively as an inherent product of culture.</p>

Learning outcomes of the module	Study methods	Assessment methods
<p>1. to be able to present intelligently different theories of culture, self and meaning</p> <p>2. to discuss the respective strengths and weaknesses of these arguments.</p> <p>3. to understand the important controversies or areas of contention within these fields</p> <p>4. to be able to integrate the three domains together into one dynamic, perhaps contingent, whole.</p>	<p>1. Readings from one book and from sets of articles.</p> <p>2. Eight or more debates in class regarding readings;</p> <p>3. three graded exercises on culture, self and meaning.</p> <p>Not all the assigned articles will be required reading for each day. Some will be only scan-read and I will lecture on them. I do not expect the students to read more than 20 pages even though more are assigned—I will lecture on them.</p>	<p>1. 8 (or more) reaction papers and exercises, 6/7 points each, 50 pts or 25%</p> <p>2. Midterm 25%</p> <p>5. Final test 50% s</p>

Topics	Contact hours							Independent study time and assignments	
	Lectures	Consultations	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Practic e	Total contact hours	Independent work	Assignments
1. INTRODUCTION TO COURSE	2						2		
2. the Superorganic View	2						2	7	CSM (culture, Self, and Meaning) pp1-10 Superorganic “kroeber”.
3. Psychology, personality and culture	2						2	5	CSM pp. 11-22. Benedict on culture 15 pps Sapir culture: genuine and spurious 10 pps Total 35 pps
4. Action Theory/Psychoanalytic	2						2	7	CSM 22-35 Schwartz “idioverse” Obeysekere “Medusa’s Hair” read 20 pages
5. Interpretivist and Cognitive	2						2	7	Geertz, “the cock fight” 20 Goodenough “status and roles”

6. Anti-Cultural Positions	2						2	5	Abu-Lughod “Anti-culture” Clifford and Marcus “writing culture”
7. The Self	2						2	7	CSM on the SELF
8. Illusion of Self.	2						2	4	Ewing “the Illusion of Wholeness
9. Questioning the reality of self	2						2	6	de Munck, The Fallacy of the Misplaced Self.
10. Cross-Cultural Studies of Self	2						2	5	Markus and Kityama “culture and the self” Triandis “self and social behavior
11. Western and non-Western Self-Concepts	2						2	6	Spiro “is the Western Concept of the Self Peculiar?”
12. Meaning: From Classical to Fuzzy	2						2	7	CSM “Meaning”
13. Taxonomies and Componential analysis	2							6	Hunn “the utilitarian Factor in Folk Classification; Metzger “Tzetzal Firewood
14. Towards Prototypes and Extensionist Semantics	2						2	7	Rosch “Cognitive Representations of Semantic Categories.”

										Kempton “Category Grading... 'mug is a sort of a cup.’
15. Cultural Models	2						2	7		Kronenfeld Shared cognitive structure: Flexibility and Change; Kronenfeld “intro to cultural Models
16. Culture, cultural models, and meaning	2						2	5		De Munck “disciplining culture”
Preparations for the test								10		
Total	32						32	10 1		

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Assessment time	Assessment criteria
Reaction papers	25%	Throughout semester.	6 papers on readings must have 1. Gist, 2. Strong and weak points; 3 nontrivial questions 10 points each.
Midterm	25%	During semester	50 points: multiple choice, true/false, and fill in the blank.
Final test	50%	During examination period	A final exam of multiple choice, true false, fill- in-the-blank questions and one essay question will be given to test students overall learning of the class material.

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or a web link
Compulsory reading list				
De Munck, Victor C.	2000	Culture, Self and Meaning		Chicago, IL: Waveland Press

Kroeber	1927	Superorganic		American anthropologist
Benedict	1936	On culture		American Anthropologist
Sapir	1924	Culture genuine and spurious	29(4):401-429.	American Journal of Sociology
Abu-Lughod	1991	Writing Against Culture	In R.G. Fox (Ed.). <i>Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present</i> , pp.137–162.	In R.G. Fox (Ed.). <i>Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present</i> , pp.137–162. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
Ewing, K. P.	1991	The illusion of wholeness: Culture, self, and the experience of inconsistency	18 (31):251-278	Ethos
De Munck, Victor C.	1992	The Fallacy of the Misplaced Self	20(2):167-190	Ethos
Goodenough	1957	Cultural Anthropology and Linguistics	9:167-173	Georgetown University Monograph series.
Kempton, W.	1978	Category grading and taxonomic relations: A mug is a sort of a cup	5, 1: 44–65	<i>American Ethnologist</i>
Markus H.R.. & Kitayama, .	1991	Culture and the self: Implications for cognition	98, 2: 224–253	<i>Psychological Review</i>
Hunn, E	1985	The Utilitarian Factor in Folk Biological Classification	117-140	<i>University of Illinois Press.</i>
Metzger, D.G.	1966	Some procedures and results in the study of native categories: Tzeltal “firewood	68, 2: 389–407.	<i>American Anthropologist</i>
Rosch, E.	1975	Universals and cultural specifics in human categorization	93:10-20	<i>Journal of Experimental Psychology</i>

Triandis, H.C.	1995	Individualism and Collective Behavior: Introduction	1-17	<i>Westview Press</i>
Kronenfeld, D.B	2008	Culture, Society, and Cognition	Pps 21-37	<i>Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter</i>
De Munck, victor C.	2019	Disciplining Culture	60(2):174-185	<i>Current anthropology</i>
Additional reading list				
Kronenfeld, D.B	2018	Cultural Systems		routledge
Shore, B.	1991	Culture In Mind		Oxford University Press
Sperber	1996	Explaining Culture		Blackwell.