

Psychology & Society:

Insights into individual behaviour within social context

Lecturer: Eva Filippova, PhD

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Course Description:

The course provides an overview of the field of social psychology—the study of human interactions within groups. The concepts (e.g., stereotypes, biases, groupthink, conformity, totalitarianism, agency) will be examined within the context of the Czech society to mitigate students' broader cultural understanding.

The course covers a range of topics to instigate students' insight and awareness of these at large. It focuses on different factors constituting a society and a culture. For students coming to the Czech Republic, an emphasis on Czech culture and its transition from the communist system to a liberal "western" style democracy provides a unique experience for cultural enrichment as well as for a more in-depth understanding of the social and historical context of the contemporary Czech society.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

Upon the completion of the course, students

- will demonstrate their understanding of the most famous social-psychology experiments that have shed light into human behaviour and human nature,
- through the lens of critical thinking, will have identified psychological challenges that arise from cultural differences,
- will have acquired a basis for critical thinking and learn to form new perspectives to approach the problematic through informal environment facilitating the share of views and ideas;

- will have developed reading-comprehension skills adequate for scholarly literature in the field through reading texts representing different research approaches and methodologies, and an ability to engage in an academic dialogue;
- will have enhanced their cultural understanding and adaptability to new cultural situations,
- will reflect on major historical influences on the Czech population to lessen some of the possible culture shock;
- and will foster their cultural self-awareness, other culture awareness and the dynamics between them.

Course Requirements:

1. Reflections for a portfolio

A total of four reflection entries will be required from each student, each 500-words long. The papers should reflect on the course topics, readings, discussions, etc. pertaining to the content of the class and should examine a theme beyond the reading and/or class discussion. The choice of the readings or themes is up to each student, although the instructor is ready to consult the topics with students. Intellectual queries are welcome but a reflection based on one's own application of the knowledge gained on to one's personal experience will suffice.

2. Individual Class Presentation

Each student is required to present and lead a discussion on one of the course themes of their own choice relating to the topic of the course and the students' interests. Upon an agreement with the instructor, the student will present their topic to the class for about 20-minute long. It will be followed by a discussion lead by the presenting student.

3. Peer Reviews

Students are required to review five different presentations of their choice and write a constructive criticism to help their peer to reflect on the delivery and the content of their presentation. To get a full score, the review should include both the positive aspects of the presentation, as well as suggest avenues for improvement of concrete facets of the presentation.

4. Final academic paper

The final course work consists of writing a research paper in which an analysis of the constituent parts and their subsequent synthesis will be assessed. One of three topics suggested by the instructor will be graded as to whether the thesis of the paper is well defended and counterarguments are dealt with equally (Grade A), whether the thesis is supported sufficiently (Grade B), whether the thesis is clearly constructed without sufficient arguments presented for either the arguments or counter-arguments to the thesis (Grade C), or whether the paper only marginally touches on the theme of the course and at least some part of an argument is present (Grade D). A total of 2000-2500 words with an adequate list of scholarly references will be required.

5. Class participation

Class participation will consider the students' familiarity with the course readings and the willingness to either spur or join a class debate on a particular class topic. Online discussions will allow for a further engagement in virtual space to elaborate on the topics raised in class.

Assessment and Final Grade:

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Four reflections for a class portfolio, 4x5% | 20% |
| 2. Individual class presentation | 20% |
| 3. Peer reviews of 5 presentations, 5x2% | 10% |
| 4. Final Academic paper | 30% |
| 5. Class participation | 20% |

Mandatory Completion Policy

Note that all mandatory assignments and exams must be completed to the best of your ability in order for your final grade to be issued. Failure to complete a mandatory assignment or exam may result in a failing grade.

| Letter Grade | Percentage | Description |
|--------------|------------|--|
| A | 93-100 | Outstanding work |
| A- | 90-92 | |
| B+ | 87-89 | Good work |
| B | 83-86 | |
| B- | 80-82 | |
| C+ | 77-79 | Acceptable Work |
| C | 73-76 | |
| C- | 70-72 | |
| D+ | 67-69 | Work that is significantly below average |
| D | 63-66 | |
| D- | 60-62 | |
| F | 0-59 | Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course |

UPCES Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not tolerated. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the development of knowledge and learning is encouraged at many stages of the learning process. While we value technology for educational purposes, we also value originality and the retainment of knowledge, and thus using AI for assignments and examinations, even if rephrased, is strictly prohibited and considered an academic integrity violation, unless the instructor explicitly allows for it in the context of evaluated work

UPCES Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy

The UPCES program in Prague promotes a diverse learning environment where the dignity, worth, and differences of each individual are valued and respected. Discrimination and harassment, whether based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected characteristic, are repugnant and completely inconsistent with our objectives. Retaliation against individuals for raising good faith claims of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited.

UPCES Diversity Policy

UPCES fully embraces diversity and strives to create a safe and welcoming environment for students from all backgrounds. Prague is a wonderfully diverse community and UPCES is no different. All students should feel at home while studying abroad and UPCES will do its utmost to make sure that becomes a reality. Although unique challenges may arise, we believe that students from all walks of life will encounter wonderful opportunities for enrichment as they explore a new culture while studying abroad.

Weekly Schedule:

Week 1

Orientation Week

UPCES Orientation and Lecture Series

Week 2

Course introduction

*Course content, course requirements, grading and syllabus overview
Key concepts defined*

Readings due:

Course syllabus

Journal databases through students' home university library access

Week 3

Social behaviour as a result of social mapping

Social thinking; social cognition, inherent social and cultural influences

Readings due:

Aival-Naveh et al. 2019, 1-25.

Week 4

Social judgements & cognitive shortcuts

Bias, stereotypes, prejudice

Readings due :

Plous 2003, 3-48.

Deliverables: Journal entry 1 due

Week 5

Exchanges between social groups

Cultural dimensions and their validity

Readings due:

Hofstede et al. 2010, 89-134.

Gerlach & Eriksson 2021

Week 6

History and its relationship to the cultural psyche:
the case of the Czech Nation

Possible guest lecture, TBC

Readings due:

Serran 2013, pages TBC

Deliverables: Journal entry 2 due

Week 7

Social norms; conformity

Motivations and attitudes as constraints of conformity

Readings due:

Hollingworth & Barker 2019

Berry, Lewis & Sowden 2021, 321-326.

Week 8

Groupthink & obedience

Stanford Prison Experiment, its value and its critique

Readings due:

Nicholson 2019, 99-115.

Deliverables: Journal entry 3 due

Week 9

Social transitions

From communism to liberal democracy

Vaclav Havel Library visit, date TBC

Readings due:

Klicperova et al. 1997, 39-52

Week 10

Culture of totalitarian and post-totalitarianism regimes

Readings due:

Havel 1978, 'The Power of the Powerless', Sections I–VIII

Roubal 2003, 1-25.

Deliverables: Journal entry 4 due

Week 11

Social change, Individual and collective agency

Martin Kuciak and the ultimate value of one's voice

Readings due:

Dixon et al. 2016, 481–499

Miller et al. 2017

Week 12

Human rights and democracy

Readings due:

Potucek 2000,107-121

Deliverables: Peer reviews due

Week 13

Controversial issues in contemporary Czech society

Readings due:

Strnad, Marek 2014, 121-130

Winkler et al. 2015

Deliverables: Final paper due

Readings:

Aival-Naveh, E., Rothschild-Yakar, L., & Kurman, J. (2019). "Keeping culture in mind: A systematic review and initial conceptualization of mentalizing from a cross-cultural perspective." *Clinical Psychology Science and Practice*, 26, 1-25.

Berry, Z., Lewis, N. A., & Sowden, W. J. (2021). The double-edged sword of loyalty. *Current Directions of Psychological Science* 30, 321-326.

Dixon, J., Durrheim, K., Stevenson, C., Cakal, H. (2016). "From prejudice reduction to collective action: Two psychological models of social change (and how to reconcile them)." In: Sibley, Chris G. and Barlow, Fiona Kate (Eds.) *Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 481–499.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J. & Minkov, M. (2010). "I, we, and they." In G. Hofstede, G.J. Hofstede, & M. Minkov (Eds.) *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival*, 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 89-134.

Gerlach, P. & Eriksson, K. (2021). Measuring Cultural Dimensions: External Validity and Internal Consistency of Hofstede's VSM 2013 Scales. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12: 662604. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.662604

Hollingworth, C. Baker, L. (2019) "New frontiers: social norms and conformity", Opinion 22 May 2019 online: <https://www.research-live.com/article/opinion/new-frontiers-social-norms-and-conformity/id/5054112>

Klicperova, M., Feierabend, I. K., & Hofstetter, R. (1997). „In the Search for a Post-Communist Syndrome: A Theoretical Framework and Empirical Assessment." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 7, 39-52.

MacLeod, E. L. (2017). "Unraveling the evolution of uniquely human cognition." *PNAS*, 113 (23), 6348-6354.
Nicholson, I. (2019). "A Tale of two Methods: Gustave Gilbert, Stanley Milgram, and the 'Mysterious Nazi Mind' (1945-1965)." *Qualitative Psychology* 6, 99-115. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/qap0000098>

Miller, J. et al. (2017). *A Cultural Psychology of Agency: Morality, Motivation and Reciprocity*. Perspectives on Psychological Science.

Plous, S. (2003). "The psychology of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination: An overview." In S. Plous (Ed.), *Understanding prejudice and discrimination*. New York: McGraw-Hill, pp. 3-48. Available online at <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/apa/english/>

Potůček, M. (2000). The Uneasy Birth of Czech Civil Society. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 11(2), 107 - 121.

Roubal, P. (2003). "Politics of Gymnastics. Mass gymnastic displays under communism in Central and Eastern Europe." *Body and Society*, 9(2), 1-25.

Strnad, A., Marek, J. (2014). "Homelessness in the Czech Republic." *Housing, Care and Support*, 17(3), 121-130.

Winkler, P., Csémy, L., Janoušková, M., Mladá, K., Motlová, L. B., & Evans-Lacko, S. (2015). Reported and intended behaviour towards those with mental health problems in the Czech Republic and England. *European Psychiatry*, 30(6), 801–806.

Professor's profile:

| Eva Filippova, PhD | |
|--------------------|---|
| Nationality | Slovak & Canadian |
| Academic degrees | Hons. B.A., M.A., PhD (University of Toronto) |
| Research interests | Human development, social cognition, language, non-literal communication, irony, atypical development |