

PSYC 4099-01: Selected Topics in Psychology (3 cr.)
“Psychology of the Arab American Experience”
Spring 2016

GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructor: Mona Amer, PhD
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Office hours: Sundays 12-1 pm and by appointment

Class location: Waleed CP53
Meeting times: Sundays 2:00 – 4:40 p.m.

Teaching assistant: Carine Karnouk, karnouk@aucegypt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course Description

Alongside the growing diversity of the U.S. population there has been increased attention to issues of multiculturalism in psychological research and practice. In the 1990’s counseling psychologist Paul Pedersen even argued that multicultural psychology had become the “fourth force” in psychology; i.e., the fourth leading paradigm after the psychodynamic, behavioral, and humanistic traditions. Psychologists have seen that ethnic/racial minority groups face unique challenges and opportunities in the American context, and psychological theories, research results, and suitability of services may differ based on cultural background. A great deal of literature has focused on understanding the experiences of and tailoring culturally sensitive services to African American, Asian American, and Native American groups. In contrast, scholarly attention to the Arab American population has been deficient, despite increased interest in Arabs and Muslims in the media and public context post 9/11.

This course will offer a comprehensive review of the psychological scholarship on Arab Americans. The course will begin with an examination of the Arab region and culture from a cross-cultural psychology lens. The historical trends of Arabs’ migration (whether voluntary or forced displacement) and settlement in North America will be reviewed, along with the current demographic profile. We will explore how these patterns intersect with stressors such as acculturation and discrimination. The course will next explore lifespan development when living in the U.S., from early childhood to college years, to marriage and family, sexuality, and finally older adulthood. The second half of the course will examine behavioral health issues. The risk and protective factors for trauma, psychological distress, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug misuse, domestic violence, and medical conditions will be reviewed. Culturally-sensitive interventions for these issues at different ecological levels will be discussed, including psychological assessment, individual counseling and psychotherapy, family therapy, healthcare services, and community-based programming. Throughout the course the scholarship itself will be critiqued, particularly methodologies used.

Class Format

This is an advanced undergraduate seminar course. Class meetings will be devoted to discussion and debate. Some topics will be introduced and discussed in class although they are not covered in the assigned readings.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to meet the following objectives in regards to Arab Americans:

- Describe the historical and post 9/11 contemporary experiences that affect racial and ethnic identity
- Discuss cultural and acculturation impacts on youth development, sexuality, and marriage
- Identify the primary risk and protective factors for stress, behavioral health concerns, and health conditions
- Discuss the factors that limit and facilitate psychological service utilization
- Examine cultural considerations for psychological interventions at the individual, family, and community levels
- Critique the methodology of individual studies and the overall body of scholarship

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grading Scale

Please note that final grades will be rounded up at the .5 level.

A =	93-100%	B- =	80-82%	D+ =	68-69%
A- =	90-92%	C+ =	78-79%	D =	60-67%
B+ =	88-89%	C =	73-77%	F =	below 60%
B =	83-87%	C- +	70-72%		

Course Requirements

<i>Requirement:</i>	<i>Points</i>
Participation	30
Response papers	120
Article critique	30
Term paper	100
Presentation	20
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>300</i>

Participation (30 points)

Class sessions follow a seminar format emphasizing discussion and debate. This means that *it will be crucial for you to read the assigned material carefully before class and come prepared to ask questions, discuss the case studies, and show critical thinking in your analysis of the topics.* You are encouraged to bring recent news articles and videos to share in class. The quality of the discussion will be only as good as the quality of students' understanding of the material and contributions to the discussion. In order to gain a high grade you will need to demonstrate in the class discussions that you have read and contemplated the material. If you repeatedly come late to class or miss part or all of the class periods you will not be able to earn the full grade.

Reading Response Papers (20 points each one)

You will submit 6 response papers throughout the semester. The papers should reflect on and analyze the course readings for that week. The aims of these papers are to encourage deeper examination of the course topics as well as demonstrate your understanding of the course content as there are no exams in the course. The papers should show accurate grasp of the concepts, critical thinking, and synthesis with other material such as other course readings. You should not summarize the readings. You do not need to address all the points or issues raised throughout the readings; use your judgment in focusing what you will write about.

The papers are due within one week of the class period discussing those readings (if the due date falls on a holiday you are welcome to submit it earlier). Submissions will not be accepted after 1 week. The papers should be 1.5 to 2 double spaced pages in length, 1 inch margins, 12 pt. font. Papers longer than 2 pages will not be graded. Papers submitted past the 1-week deadline will not be considered. You can select any 6 weeks to write your papers on; however, at least 3 papers should be submitted by March 20.

Papers that receive the full marks will demonstrate the following:

- thoughtful analysis of the readings and discussion, as demonstrated by critical thinking and original insights
- accurate representation of concepts, methods, and research findings
- active synthesis or comparing/contrasting the concepts with previously-learned multicultural psychology material, psychology in general, and/or other disciplines
- debate or argumentation of different sides of an issue
- association of theoretical concepts or research findings to relevant real-life situations, including current events or personal experiences
- clarity of written expression, including smooth organizational flow and accurate English usage

Research Article Critique (30 points)

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how researchers study the topics discussed in the course, and to strengthen your research conceptualization skills, you will conduct a critique of a research study that was published in a scholarly journal. To critique means to examine and evaluate, such as identifying strengths and weaknesses. This exercise will give you the feel for how experts conduct their reviews of manuscripts submitted to journals for potential publication.

You will choose an article that was published within the past 5 years that included Arab Americans as participants and utilized qualitative and/or quantitative empirical data collection and analysis. The article that you select should be approved ahead of time. You will complete a form that asks you to critique the study importance, aims, participant recruitment and sampling methods, methods or materials (i.e., psychometrics or interview protocols), and results and discussion. You should use Chapters 26-28 in the book to guide your critique, showing that you understand the content and arguments in those chapters.

Comparative Analysis Term Paper (100 points)

As an opportunity for you to gain expertise in a topic of interest related to Arab Americans, you will write a literature review paper. The paper should have an analytical voice and integrate a comparative lens. This comparison could be within the Arab American population; for example, contrasting the acculturation experiences of young children to older adults or examining key differences among Arabs who arrived in different waves of

immigration. Or, you can compare any aspect of the Arab American experience to the experiences of other minority groups in the U.S., Arabs minorities in other parts of the world, Arabs in the Arab world, or non-Arabs who immigrate or sojourn in the Arab world. Or, you can take a particular model or framework and examine to what extent it would fit for Arab Americans. Or, you can pick a particular issue of psychological relevance and present how it would be researched and interpreted differently from the perspective of another discipline (e.g., sociology). Or, you can evaluate the strengths and limitations of different types of research designs used to study a particular topic related to Arab Americans.

The specifications for the paper are as follows:

- 7-8 pages double spaced, not including the title page or references pages
- 12 point font and 1 inch margin
- APA 6th edition style (this should apply to all aspects of the paper including title page, citations, references, page numbering, headings, etc.)
- At least 6 scholarly citations/references such as peer-reviewed journal articles and academic book chapters, not including the course textbook

Throughout the semester there are due dates for showing progress on your paper. You are welcome to submit a draft earlier than the maximum deadline if you wish to receive more feedback; otherwise, only general observations will be provided on the draft if it appears that there is a significant concern to address.

The 100% of the paper grade will be divided as follows:

- * 10%: meeting deadlines in submitting progress on paper throughout the semester
- * 65%: content (e.g., relevance of topic, accuracy of information, clarity and persuasiveness of arguments, comprehensiveness in assessing different aspects of the issue, depth of critical analysis, etc.)
- * 15%: referencing & APA style (selecting key papers and well-known authors, using valid academic references, citing or quoting where necessary, using APA format correctly)
- * 10%: writing style (e.g., overall organizational structure, smooth transitions between paragraphs and sections, correct grammar and syntax, use of academic vocabulary)
- * (*Note: 2% will be deducted every day the paper is late and it will not be accepted at all after 7 days from the due date*)

Presentation (20 points)

At the end of the semester, you will give a 10-minute presentation to the class based on your term paper topic. This will be an opportunity for the class to gain further breadth and depth to the understanding of Arab Americans and multicultural or cross-cultural psychology issues beyond the core course content. You should utilize a PPT presentation and submit this PPT before class time on the day of your presentation. The presentation will be evaluated on professionalism, articulation and presentation skills, organization of content, time management, audio-visuals (i.e., PPT slides), and answering questions.

CLASS CALENDAR

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>
Jan 31	Introduction to multicultural psychology Research methods with Arab Americans	
THE ARAB AMERICAN POPULATION WITHIN CONTEXT		
Feb 7	Arab world culture and context	Ch 1. The Arab Region Abi-Hashem pp. 128-141
Feb 14	The Arab American population: immigration, demographics, and racialization	Ch 2. Race and Racialization AANM booklet on Arab Americans
Feb 21	Cultural and religious identities	Ch 3. Acculturation and Enculturation Ch 4. Religion and Religiosity DUE: term paper topic & references
Feb 28	The experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and exclusionary politics	Ch 6. Community Activism pp. 78-85 Ch 5. Discrimination
LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT		
Mar 6	Youth development and educational settings	Ch 7. Youth Development Ch 23. School Psychology Ch 11. International Students pp. 147- 148; 150-151
Mar 13	Gender, sexuality, marriage, and older adulthood	Ch 8. Marriage and Family Ch 9. Gender and Sexuality
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STATUS AND INTERVENTIONS		
Mar 20	Mental health status and trauma	Ch 13. Psychological Wellbeing Ch 12. Refugees and Forced Migrants pp. 160-163 Ch 14. Trauma DUE (RECOMMENDED): term paper draft
Mar 27	<i>WESTERN EASTER HOLIDAY</i>	
Apr 3	Substance abuse	Ch 16. Tobacco Use Ch 17. Alcohol and Drug Use DUE (MAXIMUM): term paper draft
Apr 10	Entering the psychological service system	Ch 19. Help-Seeking Ch 20. Psychological Assessment
Apr 17	Individual and family psychological interventions	Ch 21. Counseling Ch 22. Psychotherapy Models DUE: TERM PAPER
Apr 24	<i>SPRING BREAK & EASTER</i>	
May 1	<i>SPRING BREAK & EASTER</i>	

May 8	Community-based psychological interventions	Ch 15. Domestic violence Ch 25. Community-Based Programs DUE: ARTICLE CRITIQUE
May 15	Health status and interventions	Ch 18. Health Disparities Ch 24. Health Psychology FINAL PRESENTATIONS
May 22	11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	FINAL PRESENTATIONS

COURSE READINGS

Amer, M. M. & Awad, G. H. (2016). *Handbook of Arab American Psychology*. New York: Routledge. ISBN 9780415841931

- ✓ Please read the book through the e-version available at the library, which you can access here: <http://lib.aucegypt.edu/record=b2300316~S2>
- ✓ If you prefer to read a print version, it is available at the library Reserve section.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

According to university policy, if you miss more than 3 weeks of classes you will either drop or fail the course depending on the timing and circumstances. Please note that although points will not be deducted for attendance, your participation in class discussions will be evaluated, so if you miss classes or arrive late you will not be able to earn the full Participation score.

Communication

Blackboard will be the main mode of communication outside of class. This will also be a resource for obtaining readings, submitting assignments, and tracking your grades. Make sure to log in regularly at <http://blackboard.aucegypt.edu>. If you have any technical difficulties, please contact blackboard@aucegypt.edu or visit UACT.

Academic integrity

Any type of academic dishonesty (including cheating, plagiarism, claiming someone's work to be your own, etc.) will be met with an immediate "F" for the course. You will also be reported to the Academic Integrity Committee, which can lead to a cancellation of your tuition scholarship and a permanent record of your dishonesty. To learn about what violates academic integrity, you are requested to carefully review the following website: <http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/integrity> or <http://in.aucegypt.edu/academic-integrity>

Accommodations

If you have a disability or special need that would affect your performance or attendance, please let me know as soon as possible of the curriculum or testing accommodations requested. To request any special accommodations you may contact Disability Services at the Office of Student Support for diagnostic and academic support in this matter at Campus Center P001, 2615-3918. The website with further information is <http://www.aucegypt.edu/studentlife/gethelp/Pages/disabilityserv.aspx>