THE PSYCHOCULTURAL STUDY OF SOCIALIZATION

Time and Place

Thursday 9am-12pm (first meeting, Thursday, January 10)
Haines Hall 310
Phone: 794-3632
fax: 794-6297
email: tweisner@ucla.edu
CLASS URL: http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/08W/anthrom236p-1/
INSTRUCTOR URL: http://cultureandhealth.ucla.edu/tweisner/

This class website is linked from the following locations:
http://www.registrar.ucla.edu/schedule/
http://my.ucla.edu/
http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/classes/

Office Hours: Thursday, 12-1pm, after class, in Haines Hall 304 (or at my NPI/Psychiatry Dept office: NPI/Semel Institute C8-678; email for appointment, or schedule during class).

Goals of this course

Children grow up in a wonderful and remarkable diversity of cultural communities around the world. Every cultural community provides developmental pathways for children. These pathways are shaped by cultural ecology and history, and by the goals of parents, communities, and children themselves. The proposal for consideration in our class is that the cultural pathways in which human development occurs are the single most important influences shaping development and developmental outcomes.

An important goal of the course is to read about how children grow up in a culturally pluralistic world. We will read studies, hear lectures, or see films of childhood and families in cultural communities in these countries: Kenya (Gusii; Abaluyia), Ivory Coast (Beng); Tanzania (Chagga), Japan, China, Northern India, Brazil, Germany, and the United States. Studies in the United States include Mexican immigrants in California, Euro-Americans in California, Native Hawaiians, and working poor children and families in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The cultural place in which development occurs is not the only influence on children’s development, by any means. A variety of mechanisms of the mind shape and are shaped by culture, and so influence development. These mechanisms include psychodynamic processes, evolved memory and learning patterns, cognitive developmental stages, and sensitive periods in development such as those that accompany infant attachment, acquiring language, and processes of self and identity formation.
There are also maturational, brain and neurological foundations of development shared by all infants and children everywhere. Our course, however, focuses on the role of cultural models of development and parenting shared by a community, and the cultural ecology of communities. We study how these models of childhood, parenting, and development are represented as schemas and scripts in the mind, and how emotions and sentiments become attached to these schemas. Schemas are associated with developmental goals parents have for children, and we discuss how children acquire these. We relate these cultural models to the ecology and institutions around families and children. We will also discuss policy and interventions for children and families; interventions also are cultural activities in a cultural context. The course emphasizes the difference between advocacy, ideology, and strong research on interventions and human development.

Understanding human development across cultures requires a wide-ranging set of conceptual tools and multiple methods. It requires a multivariate way of thinking about the world. Many interacting circumstances shape human development and family life, and no one discipline or method or theory is likely to capture all these circumstances. The ecocultural perspective in our class does not only highlight the considerable differences between cultures, but also universal features of parenting and development found across cultures as well. Many of the readings use mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) to study cultural pathways and family and child well being.

Readings introduce a variety of theoretical approaches to understanding culture and development, including structural-functionalist approaches, ecocultural (cultural-ecological), evolutionary theory, biosocial, enculturative, feminist, critical theories, and others. Although we consider various theories, the course does emphasize an ecocultural model of development. Ecocultural theory focuses on the influence of family and community adaptation on development. In ecocultural theory, socialization and culture acquisition are viewed as adaptive projects with a goal of creating a culturally meaningful daily routine of family and community life for children and parents. LeVine has described socialization as “the intentional design of psychologically salient environments” for children to reach goals set by parents and communities. Children experience their cultural world through active participation in such psychologically salient environments within family and community routines and activities.

This daily routine consists of activity settings and cultural practices. The family routine can be examined for its ecological fit in a particular cultural ecology, its meaningfulness and value for the family, its balancing of competing interests among family and community members, and its predictability and stability for children. Ecological fit, meaning, balancing of interests and conflict, and stability jointly define the sustainability of a family daily routine in a particular cultural place. Ecocultural theory is based on the idea that children's engagement in their everyday routines of life is the single most powerful influence in a child's development, and that children’s development is better if children are engaged in sustainable routines. We compare children’s developmental pathways with both a local contextual perspective (local rationality, ecology, and daily routines) and a comparative one.
More sustainable routines, according to this theory, are better for children and should produce more well being in children and in families. Well being in ecocultural theory, consists of engaged participation in cultural activities deemed desirable by a cultural community, and the psychological experiences produced thereby. This is a universal developmental outcome, explicitly embedded in the cultural community the child develops in, and worth considering across cultures. Our approach to what is good or bad for children and families in the course will emphasize contextualism, not relativism regarding child and family well being. We also distinguish between well being and well becoming. Well becoming refers to what the present circumstances of a child and family may imply about some future developmental outcome (higher literacy test scores later in life; completing high school later in childhood; caring for elderly parents when a child grows up). Well being is current. Developmental research usually focuses on well becoming – will current practices lead to “better” outcomes later?

The course is organized around consideration of some common human concerns about childhood and development: the tension between the individual and cultural community; trust and safety (including attachment); fear, threat and aggression; gender development; caretaking and provision of nurturance; schooling and skill acquisition; and change, interventions and policy to improve children’s lives.

The course focuses on topics of general importance in the social sciences as well, using comparative childhood research as the lens: is there a common human nature; where are the boundaries between the individual and culture; the nature of social order and how socialization of children creates a social order; gender differences; the self and identity; how cultural models motivate or direct parents and children to behave in certain ways and not others and why; what constitutes deviance, either in a community or cross-culturally; culture change; and the role of cultural research in intervention and applied work. One of the exciting things about studying culture and development is that so many questions in this field are of general interest to anyone in the social and human sciences.

Readings emphasize contrasts and similarities between how the rest of the world conceives and manages human development, and how various North American cultures do so. We always consider the meaning of comparative and cross-cultural studies for our own life and contemporary culture. The readings each week include such comparative material. All of the readings and films refer to North American families and socialization practices as a contrast to studies of other cultural communities. Five books (Contested Childhood, Child Care and Culture, The Afterlife is Where We Come From, Women, Family, and Child Care in India, Hunger and Shame), several of the assigned papers, and my own research include many direct comparisons with North American communities. I will also present material on my research with the Abaluyia of Kenya, Native Hawaiians, the Family Lifestyles Project (FLS), the CHILD Project, the New Hope project, and the Head Start study. The FLS is a longitudinal study of conventional and nonconventional families and children from California; the CHILD project is a longitudinal study of family adaptation among families with children with developmental delays in Los Angeles; the New Hope project is an ethnographic, developmental, and survey study of
economically poor families who participated in a program to assist parents in finding employment (Higher Ground, which we are reading, synthesizes this work; Making It Work, from which we read a chapter, presents extensive empirical data); and the Head Start study is an examination of efforts to enhance pre-literacy skills of children.
Class Format and schedule

The class is a structured seminar. I will lecture and organize class discussions in varied ways, and provide opportunities for email feedback.

Class requirements:

Email note. By 6pm on January 16th, the night before the second class meeting, email me one to two pages of notes and comments about the readings, class discussion, and how this course relates to your personal experiences and professional and intellectual interests. This email note is your opportunity to get personal feedback from me on the readings, lectures or class discussions. What is puzzling to you about the course or the readings, surprising and exciting, contradicts or fits with what you have learned in other courses, makes you angry, happy or uneasy, fits or does not fit with your personal experience, influences what you might study or might be useful in your professional plans and related research? What would you like emphasized more (or less) in class discussions or lectures? How does this course fit with what you are learning or have learned in other courses in your own department or elsewhere? What ideas are you thinking of for your paper? No question is too “obvious” for you to ask: what does “culture” mean? Why aren’t all the readings focused on the often tragic current problems facing children and families? What about globalization and the media and their effects on children? Can I do my paper on children’s play? Etc. Whatever is engaging you about the class lectures, discussion, and readings can be what you write to me about in your email.

The content of your email note on Jan. 16 is not graded (although referring to specific readings or class lectures and discussions is graded). It is your chance to think broadly, clarify confusions before you get too deep into the quarter, to think aloud about the readings, and relate the class readings, lectures, and discussion to your overall professional goals and personal life experiences. I will reply to your notes by the following week’s class on Jan. 24th. This is the only required email note. However, if you have other questions during the quarter not covered in class or in office hours, you can always email me throughout the quarter.

NOTE: BE SURE THAT THE EMAIL ADDRESS YOU USE TO SEND ME YOUR NOTES IS ALSO YOUR RETURN ADDRESS. IF IT IS NOT YOUR RETURN ADDRESS – INDICATE WHAT ADDRESS YOU WANT YOUR COMMENTS RETURNED TO. BE SURE THAT YOUR RETURN ADDRESS MAILBOX HAS ENOUGH STORAGE SPACE AND WILL BE AVAILABLE TO RECEIVE REPLIES. MAKE THE SUBJECT LINE OF THE EMAIL SOMETHING I CAN EASILY RECOGNIZE AS BEING FROM YOU AND ABOUT THIS CLASS. USE “MARY JONES M236P EMAIL”, FOR EXAMPLE, NOT “NOTES” OR “DOC”.
**Paper.** You will also write one 10 to 15 page paper, **due week 8 of classes** (February 28th, Thursday), in class. **Your paper must use the course readings extensively, including the empirical data and relevant theories presented in the readings and in class.** The paper of course also can make use of other materials and bring in your other interests. I will hand out a list of what the paper should include several weeks before the due date. The paper can also relate to your own research and professional interests in whatever field you are in. A goal for class papers is to take your own interests and apply a cross-cultural point of view to the topic(s) you decide to focus on for your paper, and use the empirical evidence from the readings.

**By 6pm on February 13th, the night before week 6 of the quarter, you should turn in a proposed topic, proposed paper title, and one summary paragraph describing the paper you are thinking of writing by email.** I will read all these by class the next day, and give you an idea if the topic is OK. You can still revise and change the paper topics thereafter, but this is a way to get some early feedback. You can also email me your thoughts about the paper at any point during the quarter, or meet during office hours (12 – 1 after class or by appointment). The paper itself is then due 2 weeks later, February 28th, giving you time to use feedback on the topic.

“One-minute papers”. At the beginning or end of some classes, we will write short paragraphs about what we anticipate for the class that day at the beginning, and/or what were the key points from that class at the end. These are not tests. They help focus class discussion and give us some shared questions for class.

**Class Participation.** All students are expected to attend the seminar regularly and to have completed the readings in advance of the discussion. All students are also expected to have something to say each week: e.g., a simple factual or historical question about one of the readings, a point which reveals a methodological bias or assumption, a critique of one or more of the readings, a strong point of an article or book which merits our admiration, a clarification which will help everyone to understand the readings better, a question about the proposed universal parental concern that is the focus for that week, or other topics. If everyone comes thus prepared, you will learn from each other as well as from the readings and from me. You may not actually be able to present that question or point due to the large class size – but you may be asked to write it in a one-minute paper at the beginning or end of the class.
Class presentation. You will also prepare a 10 minute oral presentation of your paper to the class on either week 9 or 10 (March 6th or March 13th) (the last two class meetings of the quarter). (The week you present your paper will be decided during week 8, and emailed to all students as early as possible prior to class on March 6th.) These short talks should help you to summarize and present your work – and to a friendly and sympathetic group at that. Due to the relatively large class size, these will have to be very brief summaries of your paper, 10 minutes or so, with some brief discussion following. You can present your talk with a paper handout to the class, Powerpoint, or just give a talk.

Course Requirements summary

1. Active, informed seminar participation, and full attendance (NOTE: the class is from 9 AM to 11:50 AM; please be in class at 9).
2. Your email note about the class, submitted via email by 6 PM on January 16th, the day before our second class.
3. A 10 to 15-page paper due in class week 8, February 28th.
4. Presenting a short talk based on your paper, about 7 minutes, to the class during week 9 or 10. (The week you present your paper will be decided before March 6th, and emailed to all students.)

Grading
The paper is 60% of your final grade. The other course requirements comprise the remaining 40%.

All students receive feedback in the form of comments on the email you write before class on Jan 17th, comments on the suggested paper topic, and feedback on the final paper. In addition, students have the option of not knowing their actual letter grade they might have during the course or on the paper. Many students find it somewhat liberating (and only mildly anxiety inducing) to just focus on the course content, and actual feedback given during the course, rather than on a letter grade. Of course, you can find out about your letter grade at any time -- it is entirely up to you, and there is no stigma either way.
The paper is graded on the mastery system. The principle of the mastery system is that students should receive rapid and specific feedback on their strengths and weaknesses in a paper, and be able to use this feedback to redo and improve their work. Students can then benefit from feedback by re-doing the work, showing improvement, and thereby getting a higher grade. There is no risk for revising a paper and resubmitting: no one receives a lower grade after revising a paper. The paper can be redone and resubmitted up to and including Friday, March 21st, the last day of the quarter by 5 PM, and you can revise more than once. Other details will be discussed in class. You will receive a sheet listing features I look for in the papers before the paper is due. Since the paper is due February 28th, and returned before on or before the beginning of the class of week 9 (March 6th), you have at least 3 weeks from the time you submit the paper, to revise and resubmit the paper before the quarter is over, if you choose to do revisions.
**Readings**

**Required texts for all students (in book store)**


**The books should be purchased.** Bring the books to class; quote from them in your notes, in class, and in your paper; mark them up; go from reading the text to joint discussion with peers and in class, and then back to the text. The books are also on reserve in the Young Library Graduate Reserve Room. For students needing to do some background reading, either in human development or in psychological anthropology, some references to general texts and readers are included with this course outline, and are on reserve in the Young Library.

I will also hand out some articles in class, usually 1-2 weeks before they are to be discussed in class. If you have to miss a class, ask a fellow student to get you a copy of these articles!

**Internet site**

The class has a website and the course syllabus is posted there: http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/08W/anthrom236p-1/
**Background Reading** (on reserve in Young Library):


Moore, Carmella & Holly Mathews, eds. 2001. *The psychology of cultural experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,


Course Outline

Week 1 of quarter (January 10, Thursday): The Study of Socialization Across Cultures
Fundamental questions in culture and child socialization studies; what is "good" and "bad" socialization?; ethics and values regarding this topic; what is the anthropological approach to the study of childhood – a brief history; the ecocultural model in the study of socialization; the significance of these questions for the comparative study of humankind and for core questions in the social sciences generally; organization and outline of the course; comparisons of this course to others possible.
Focus of class discussion: what will this course be about and why? Class organization and requirements.

(Look through all the assigned books to get an overview of them, including chapters that might be relevant for each topic of the seminar. Think about a topic you might like to focus on for your paper.)

Week 2 of quarter (January 17): Caretaking and Parenting of Children
Cultural models for parenting and child care and their consequences for children.
Cultural goals and child outcomes. Nonparental care of children – its organization in other societies. Cultural goals and parental decisions.
Focus of class discussion: What is good parenting and what is well being for children and parents? Relativism, contextualism, and universalism.


1-2 page comments are due on my email a day or more before this class to (tweisner@ucla.edu). NOTE: BE SURE THAT THE EMAIL ADDRESS YOU USE TO SEND ME YOUR NOTES IS ALSO YOUR RETURN ADDRESS. IF IT IS NOT YOUR RETURN ADDRESS – INDICATE WHAT ADDRESS YOU WANT YOUR COMMENTS RETURNED TO. BE SURE THAT YOUR RETURN ADDRESS MAILBOX HAS ENOUGH STORAGE SPACE AND WILL BE AVAILABLE TO RECEIVE REPLIES. MAKE THE SUBJECT LINE OF THE EMAIL SOMETHING I CAN EASILY RECOGNIZE AS BEING FROM YOU AND ABOUT THIS CLASS (“MARY JONES M236P EMAIL NOTE”, FOR EXAMPLE, NOT “NOTES” OR “DOC”).
**Week 3 (January 24): Trust, intimacy and attachment across cultures**

Culture, trust and attachment. What is the cultural problem for which different modes of attachment and security are solutions? How did attachment evolve? What cultural meanings and varieties of attachments and contexts are found around the world?

Focus of class discussion: LeVine, et al, & Gottlieb social-relational theories of attachment; German and Japanese evidence; relationships to Western developmental and clinical psychology theory and evidence.

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Review data on attachment in LeVine, et al *Child care and culture*.


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Week 4 (January 31st): Threat, fear and war: effects on children
Relationships between structural, environmental and community threats and parenting.
What do parents and children fear and worry about and why?
Focus of class discussion: Gottlieb study of Beng; fears of Gusii, Japanese, and German parents; structural violence; contextual influences on parenting; parenting in the context of poverty in rural and urban Brazil.


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Week 5 (February 7th): Culture, Education, and Schools.


Focus for class discussion: How do cultural models of parenting and development influence schools, teaching, and learning? How do cultural activities, schemas, and scripts direct our behavior?


Video: "Preschool in Three Cultures"

A one-page summary of your plans for your paper are due by 6pm Feb. 13th, before class next week.

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**Week 6 (February 14th): Culture, gender, and development**


Focus of class discussion: Evidence on gender socialization, and gender roles in LeVine, Gottlieb, Seymour, Holloway, Goldstein, Scheper-Hughes, and other readings thus far. Common patterns and variations.

Video: "Maragoli", with Joseph Ssenyonga


Read Howard & Millard, Chp. 6

**A one paragraph summary of your paper outline, including a suggested title for the paper, is due by 6pm Feb. 13th the evening before today’s class.** These will be read and returned after the break half way through class today.

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**Week 7 (February 21st): Intervention and culture change**

How should cultural research inform intervention? Ethics and the research role revisited. What do we mean by policy-relevance? Who are the audiences and consumers of such research?

Focus of class discussion: importance of the local ecocultural context in interventions. Importance of social settings in designing and implementing change. Family and child take-up of an intervention. How to reduce hunger and improve well being among the Chagga and elsewhere?

Complete reading Howard & Millard

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**Week 8 (February 28th): Research evidence to improve the lives of children and families at risk.**

Examples from the New Hope study of working poor families and children, and Project Child, a study of families with children with developmental disabilities.

Focus of class discussion: how to use strong ethnographic, qualitative, and contextual evidence to improve the well being of children and families. Advocacy and research. Differences between description, association, and impact. Mixed method research in human development.


*[Your paper is due in class today, February 28th and comments will be returned before or in class next week.]*
Week 9 (March 6th): Culture and human development: Discussion of papers

About half of the class will briefly (about 10 minutes each) summarize their papers during the seminar. We will discuss and expand on each of your paper topics in class discussion.

Papers are returned in class today. You can do revisions through March 21st, Friday, the last day of the quarter.

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Week 10 (March 13th): Culture and human development: Discussion of papers

The other half of the class will briefly (about 10 minutes each) summarize their papers during the seminar. We will discuss and expand on each of your paper topics in class discussion.

[Any rewrites/revisions of your papers can be turned in any time up to March 21st, Friday.]