



RELEVANT LEARNING OUTCOMES For My Social and Cultural Psychology Courses



Abstract: This document outlines the relevant American Psychological Association learning outcomes for my social and cultural psychology courses. Along with the learning outcomes, this document briefly identifies where in the course these outcomes are taught or addressed, how they are directly assessed, and how students receive feedback about their achievement. Students are strongly encouraged to examine these outcomes.

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Overview of Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes for My Social and Cultural Psychology Courses

In 2007, the American Psychological Association (APA) officially published a list of student learning outcomes for all psychology curricula. These guidelines are useful in that they identify a common set of potential goals for instructors to use in their teaching. These learning outcomes are important because they provide an essential set of building blocks for both curriculum and assessment.

APA recommends that instructors identify a set of objectives for each course and assess the extent to which students meet these objectives. Thus, I have chosen the following set of learning outcomes for my Social Psychology and Cultural Psychology courses. Students completing each of these courses should be able to effectively:

- Use the concepts, language, and major theories of the discipline to account for psychological phenomena. (APA Objective 1.3)
- Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life. (APA Objective 4.4)
- Seek and evaluate scientific evidence for psychological claims. (APA Objective 5.3)
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills. (APA Objective 7.4)

How the Learning Outcomes are Addressed in My Courses

The relevant learning outcomes are outlined on the first day of the course, are explicitly emphasized throughout the course, and form the cornerstone of the grading rubric used in the course (see Wendorf, 2007).

In Table 1 (whose format is adapted from Fink, 2003), I have outlined how my social and cultural psychology courses are designed around these learning outcomes. The table briefly describes the learning experiences and assessment techniques that are directly relevant to each outcome. In general, I encourage all of my students to be familiar with this information because it explains why and how the various portions of the course are important.

References

- American Psychological Association. (2007). *APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved July 7, 2008 from www.apa.org/ed/resources.html
- Fink, D.L. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Wendorf, C. A. (2007). *The grading rubric explanation for all of my courses*. Available for download at http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/cw/portfolio/Wendorf_GradingRubricExplanation.pdf

Table 1: Explicit and Assessed Learning Outcomes for PSYC 320 (Social Psychology) and PSYC 322 (Psychology and Culture)

Learning Outcomes What specific learning outcome is explicitly addressed in this learning experience?	Course/Unit/Experience Design What do students specifically do to address the learning outcome during this learning experience?	Assessment Context What is the assessment method and its context/setting for this learning experience?	Formal Feedback What formal feedback do students receive about their representation of learning in this experience?
1.3: Use the concepts, language, and major theories of the discipline to account for psychological phenomena.	In-class lectures and discussions emphasize the use and application of relevant principles.	In-class multiple-choice and essay questions assess the extent to which students accurately use these concepts.	Students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the exam.
4.4: Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life.	Students complete in-class small-group exercises targeted at applying the relevant principles. They typically create their own examples that demonstrate applicability.	In-class essay exams explicitly require students to provide relevant everyday examples (although some multiple-choice exam questions do as well).	Students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the exam.
5.3: Seek and evaluate scientific evidence for psychological claims.	Students complete out-of-class exercises that require them to identify relevant empirical studies (from class or text) and describe their applicability.	In-class essay exams explicitly require students to provide empirical evidence for major conceptual claims.	Students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the exam.
7.4: Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills.	Students write about the everyday and evidentiary examples.	In-class essay exams require students to communicate the applicability and relevance of their examples in good essay structure.	Students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the exam.