

San José State University
Psychology
Psyc 139, Personality & Culture, Summer 2025

"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime" (Mark Twain, Innocents Abroad, p. 407)

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Gregory Feist
Office Location:	Zoom & Hotel
Office Telephone:	(408) 924-5617
Email:	greg.feist@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Zoom & Hotel Lobby
Class Days/Time:	T-R for the first 1 weeks before June 9 departure and 1 week post departure
Classroom:	Zoom, Canvas, and Italy (Island of Ischia, a volcanic island in Gulf of Naples)

Course Description

Current approaches to the study of personality and personality processes.
Prerequisite: Psyc 001 (General Psychology)

Course Format

Online and Study Abroad (hybrid course)

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on Canvas Learning Management System course login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU on [Spartan App Portal](http://one.sjsu.edu) <http://one.sjsu.edu> to learn of any updates. For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources) (http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources)

Course Goals

This section of the Psychology of Personality will focus on how culture shapes human personality in many distinct and interesting ways. Here are some of the main questions and topics we explore in this course: what is personality? What is culture? How does travel affect our personality? How does national income affect happiness? How does language affect personality? How is being in love affected by personality and culture? How does climate and climate change affect our personality? And, how does culture affect our physical and mental health?

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) (Required)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO 1: Students will be able to –identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts related to historical and contemporary issues in psychology and multicultural/cross-cultural psychology. Assessment for this will be on midterms, class discussions, and presentations.

CLO 2: Students will be able to –describe, and communicate the major issues and theoretical perspectives associated with culture, its associated schemas, values, and thinking styles. Assessment for this CLO will be conducted in the midterm and class presentations.

CLO 3: Students will be able to –identify, describe, and communicate experimental approaches and associated empirical findings for various methodological approaches in cross-cultural studies. Assessment for this CLO will be conducted primarily in the final paper.

CLO 4: Students will be able to – think critically and creatively about cultural approaches to address issues related to real world outcomes across psychological subfields, including parenting, consumer behavior, and mental health. This CLO will be assessed in exams and the final research paper.

CLO 5: Students will be able to – apply cross-cultural and multicultural principles to individual, interpersonal and group processes. This will be assessed on the final presentation.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):

Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements...

PLO1 -- Knowledge Base of Psychology -- Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

PLO2 -- Research Methods in Psychology -- Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.

PLO3 -- Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology -- Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.

PLO4 -- Application of Psychology -- Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO5 -- Values in Psychology -- Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Study Abroad & Away Learning Outcomes

Personal Growth and Development--Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate awareness of their own values and identities
- Adapt to new and unexpected situations and demonstrate increased tolerance for and comfort with ambiguity.
- Demonstrate increased confidence in navigating challenges independently
- Develop critical thinking skills, specifically the ability to learn through observation, analysis, interpretation, reflection, evaluation, inference, explanation, problem solving and decision making

Career Readiness--Students will be able to:

- Develop skills that are essential for participating in a global workforce, including problem solving, flexibility and collaborating with individuals from diverse cultures, experiences and perspectives

- Identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained during their study abroad and away experience that are relevant to the [NACE career competencies](#) and articulate them within their professional documents and career search
- Reflect on how to integrate their study abroad and away experience into their professional development and future careers

Intercultural Competence--Students will be able to:

- Describe, interpret, and demonstrate an appreciation for the differences and similarities between their home and host cultures, and within their own communities and peers' experiences
- Recognize cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication and begin to participate in creating a shared understanding based on those differences
- Consider the value of diverse perspectives and increase their understanding of others' worldviews and experiences
- Develop an awareness of one's own identities, privilege, biases and cultural values and how those shape their experiences in the world and interactions with others

Global Citizenship and Community Engagement--Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an increased understanding of global issues and how they connect with their local realities
- Develop the skills required to be active global citizens who engage with community and reflect on social justice issues
- Develop an understanding of the realities of privilege, inequality and diversity in relation to one's personal experience and within a global context

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook: none

Readings & Videos: Posted on Canvas under FILES>Required Readings & on Syllabus

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Course structure This class is "hybrid" and will have **both** SYNCHRONOUS (i.e., pre departure Zoom meetings; in-person activities abroad) and ASYNCHRONOUS parts (videos/activities you do on your own online on Canvas). This means we will both be meeting online during the weeks before departure and afterwards, you will do additional activities posted on Canvas on your own time (e.g., videos, exams, assignments).

2. Course Readings /videos (see syllabus schedule below)

3. Two page critical reflections on readings

4. Interview one American adult and one Italian adult

Interview one adult in the US and one adult in Italy. The American can be either before or after we are in Italy. This should take about 30 minutes (not less than 20 and no more than 45). The American will be someone you know (family, friend) and the Italian will have to be

Five questions to ask each person:

1. What would you say your main personality traits are?
2. When would you say these first showed up in your personality?
3. Have you been abroad for a month or more? If so, did it affect your personality during and after your travel?
4. If you lived in a non-Western country, would you have these same traits?
5. If you had to describe the "American" (or "Italian") personality in one or two words, what would it be?

5. Participation

As a hybrid (part online, part in person) Study Abroad course, **it is very important that you read assigned papers, view each zoom lecture, and respond to other people's questions on Canvas Discussion. All of these will make up your "participation" grade. Quality of comments is valued more than quantity, so it is not simply a matter of speaking/asking questions a lot.** Participation also happens on the **Canvas Discussion board** and responding to fellow students' weekly questions. I will evaluate your overall course participation at the end of the semester. **Worth 25% course grade.**

6. **Final Paper (total about 7 to 9 pages):** Write up summaries from the interviews of each person on each question. Make a heading per question (Your Personality, When, Travel Abroad, Non-Western Country, and "American/Italian" Personality) (about 4 to 5 pages).

How would you describe the personalities of American and the Italian in your own words? Do you think the difference is due to their natural temperament or their culture? (1 to 2 pages)

End with a reflection on how your personality traits interacted with your experience in Italy (helped or got in the way in certain circumstances). 1 to 2 pages

Late Papers: I do accept late papers. For every day, however, after July 3 paper will be automatically docked 5 points/day. That is ½ a letter grade. So it is in your own best interest to make sure the paper is turned in on time. Papers will be turned in on Canvas.

Grading Information (Required)

Source of Grade	Points of 250	% of Course Grade
Reflections on Readings (2x)	100	40%
Participation (class, reading, discussion)	50	20%
Final Paper & Interviews	100	40%

Late papers are accepted at 5 points/day penalty (including weekends)

Determination of Grades

Your grade will be determined by the total number of points you earn throughout the semester. **250 points** for the semester. Calculate your exam grades and final course grades using the following percentages:

A+ = 94.5% and above	B+ = 86.5-89.4%	C+ = 76.5-79.4%	D+ = 66.5-69.4%
A = 91.5-94.4%	B = 81.5-86.4%	C = 71.5-76.4%	D = 61.5-66.4%
A- = 89.5-91.4%	B- = 79.5-81.4%	C- = 69.5-71.4%	D- = 59.5-61.4%

Rounding is Included in the Grading Scale

The point totals reflect rounding up to the nearest percentage. For example, an A- would normally require 90%. With rounding, it only requires 89.5%. Because rounding is built in to the grading scale, your grade will be based on your final point total, rounded to the nearest whole percentage point (so, 89.5% is an A-, but 89.4% is a B+). **To be fair to everyone in the class, these are FIRM cutoffs, so please do NOT ask for additional bumping up.**

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>

Summer 2025, Course Schedule

Week Lesson Module	Topics & Activities, Excursions	Readings (all on Canvas) Homework/Field
Pre-departure: June 2, Mon	Introduction and Course Syllabus (asynchronous lecture, zoom, posted by 10am)	100 Phrases Every Beginner Must Know Travel Survival Italian Course, Online Chapter 3 (Traditions) of Cultural Orientation (Codes of politeness, Status of Women in Italy, Hospitality, Eating Customs, Dress Codes, Do's and Don't's)
Predeparture: June 3, Tue	What is Personality? (asynchronous lecture, zoom, posted by 10am)	Introduction to Personality Psychology (King on YouTube) Take a Personality Questionnaire (self rating)
Pre-departure: June 4, Wed	What is Culture? (asynchronous lecture, zoom, posted by 10am)	Triandis & Suh 2003
Pre-departure June 5, Thur	Culture and Personality (asynchronous lecture, zoom, posted by 10am)	Feist et al (2025) Non-Western Theories of Personality
Pre-departure, June 6, Frid	Cross-Cultural Studies of Personality, (asynchronous lecture, zoom, posted by 10am)	Personality & Culture (Oishi YouTube) Studying & Living Abroad and Personality Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zimmerman & Neyer, 2013, (selective pages)
Pre-departure: June 7, Sat		2 page reflection (strengths/weakness/reaction/questions) on the readings/videos on personality, culture, and culture and personality
DEPARTURE June 9 Mon	DEPARTURE FOR ITALY	
June 10, Tue	Welcome to Italy! We hope your travel was smooth and you were able to rest. Remember, travel days are hard. Hydrate and eat. We will see you at the Naples airport around 3pm where we then bus to Salerno.	
June 11, Wed	Student Orientation Day Trip to Sorrento	
June 12, Thur	Amalfi Coast (Positano & Amalfi)	
June 13, Frid	Mozzarella Company & Tasting Transfer to Ischia Welcome Dinner	Read Living Abroad & Creativity paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maddux & Galinsky (2009)
June 14, Sat	Half Day in Procida—free time for lunch Return to Ischia Bus Tour of Ischia with Dinner at Local Restaurant	Read Bicultural Identity & Personality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benet-Martinez & Haritatos (2005) Ramirez-Esparza et al (2006)
June 15, Sun	Immersive Cooking Course in Ischia Hospitality School	
June 16, Mon	Yoga and Meditation Session Aphrodite Thermal Park with Free Time in Sant'Angelo	Two page reflection/critique (strengths/weaknesses) and discussion questions from living abroad and creativity and bicultural

		identity and personality articles (turn in on Canvas)
June 17, Tue	Class in Hotel, 9 to 11am Afternoon free time to refocus, rejuvenate (optional: conduct your interview)	Discuss Living Abroad and Creativity and Bicultural Identity and Personality Papers (Maddux & Galinsky, Benet-Martinez and Ramirez-Esparza)
June 18, Wed	Pasta Factory visit Guided Tour of Pompeii	
June 19, Thur	Hiking and Beach Free time for lunch	
June 20, Frid	Capri	
June 21, Sat	9:30 to 12noon: Conduct your Interview Afternoon at Poseidon Thermal Park	
June 22, Sun	Boat Tour of Ischia Farewell Dinner	
June 23, Mon	Castle of Aragon Entrance Transfer to Naples Check in Hotel	
June 24, Tue	Departure to Airport	
June 26 to 29	Work on Final Paper	
June 30, Mon	Final Paper Due	

Readings (on Canvas)

- Benet-Martínez, V., & Haritatos, J. (2005). Bicultural identity integration (BII): Components and psychosocial antecedents. *Journal of Personality*, 73(4), 1015-1050.
- Feist, G.J (2025). Non-Western Theories of Personality. In G.J. Feist et al, *Theories of Personality* (11th edition). McGraw-Hill. (pre-print)
- Maddux, W. W., & Galinsky, A. D. (2009). Cultural borders and mental barriers: the relationship between living abroad and creativity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(5), 1047-1061.
- Ramírez-Esparza, N., Gosling, S. D., Benet-Martínez, V., Potter, J. P., & Penebaker, J. W. (2006). Do bilinguals have two personalities? A special case of cultural frame switching. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 40(2), 99-120.
- Triandis, H.C., & Suh, E. M. (2002). Cultural influences on personality. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53(1), 133-160.
- Zimmerman, J. & Neyer, F.J. (2013). Do we become a different person when hitting the road? Personality development of sojourners. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 105, 515-530.