Human Difference, Cultural Understanding and Social Healing

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Course Objectives

- Exploration of:
  - The relationship between culture, communication and conflict
  - The social, cultural and biological foundations of perceived human difference
  - One's own identity and how that is related to interactions with others and their perception of difference

Related Readings

- Rosenblum, Karen E. and Toni-Michelle C. Travis (eds), *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race, Sex and Gender, Social Class, and Sexual Orientation.* New York: The McGraw-Hill companies, Inc., 2000, 2011, and 2015.

- Powell, J.A., *Racing to Justice: Transforming Our Conceptions of Self and Others to build an Inclusive Society.* Bloomington and Indianapolis; University of Indiana Press, 2012.

- GudyKunst, WR, *Bridging Differences: Effective Intergroup Communication.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004 and 2017.

- Whitehead, T.L. various writings by the instructor, including some book chapters or journals, as well as excerpts from several of his working papers found on his website., —http://tony-whitehead.squarespace.com/. Some also will be uploaded to OLLI's Document storage for this class.

The Course's 14 Modules

- MODULE 1: Biological & Socio-cultural Assignments of Human Difference

- MODULE 2: The Human Self

- MODULE 3. Towards A Cultural Understanding of Human Difference

- MODULE 4: The Cultural Systems Paradigm

- MOD 5. The Self, Culture, (Mis) Communication, and Conflict

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The Course's 14 Modules (Cont.)

- MOD 6. Physical Sites of Human Difference, Communication Breakdowns, and Conflict: Sex, Gender, Age, Race & Disability.

- MOD 7: Cultural Constructions of Difference Based on Group Characteristics: Ethnicity, Religion, Race, Class, Municipality, Regional, National, and Transnational/Cultural

- Mod 8. Cultural Constructions Intersecting Culture, Class (or SES), Race, & Ethnicity

- MOD 9. Religion: The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly

The Course's 14 Modules

- MOD 10: Cross Cultural Contact and Conflict: The *Bad* & the *Ugly*—Causing Suffering to Others

- MOD 11: Transnational/Cultural Contact: The *Good*-Existential Suffering and Healing

- MOD 12: Personal Accounts of Ethnographic Contributions to Cultural Understanding & Existential Healing

- MOD 13. Recommendations to Others for Existential and Social Healing

- Mod 14: Improving Communications Between Self & the Other: An Exercise

MOD 1: Biological & Socio-cultural Assignments of Human Difference

- *Humans assign meanings to difference in the self and the other based on the biologically or socio-culturally based attributes of individual or groups.*

Biological & Socio-cultural Assignments of Human Difference

- Sex and Gender

- Race and Ethnicity

- Religion

- Region

- Cross National

- Age

- Physical Capacity (the Disable and the Ability).

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MODULE 2: The Human Self

- *"The Key to Cultural Understanding Begins with Understanding Self!"*

Various Perspectives on the Self

- The Unitary Versus the Multiple Self (Powell, Chapter 7)

- The Conscious and the Unconscious Self (Powell)

- The Conflicted Self (Powell) and the Fragmented Self (Whitehead)

- Multiple Selves and the "Core Self" (Whitehead)

- Racialized and Multi-racial Self (Powell)

- The "Gender Self."

- Intersectional Components of the Total Self (Whitehead)

Exercise 1: Exploring the Personal Self: Who am I?

- Professor hands out assignment asking class participants to explore their core and multiple selves, and the degree that they are influenced by various locations of self and difference.

- Instructor's Multiple Self: African American Male, Professor and Mentor,

MOD 3. Towards A Cultural Understanding of Human Difference

- *Exploring the Self and the Other in Socio-Cultural Contexts!*

What is culture?

- Holistic, flexible and non-constant system
- Rules and routines facilitating order, regularity, familiarity and predictability
- Provides meaning
- Primary source of a people's knowledge about world
- Shared phenomenon
- Contributes to communication/miscommunication

Defining Culture (cont.)

- Implies values
- May be ideal as well as real
- Tacit as well as explicit
- Horizontal (within generations) and vertical (intergenerational)
- Highly influenced by environment
- Historical product
- Functional
- Continually being created
- Questions and Comments?

MOD 4: The Cultural Systems Paradigm

- *"An Anthropological Perspective for Analyzing Human Difference & Cultural Understanding"*
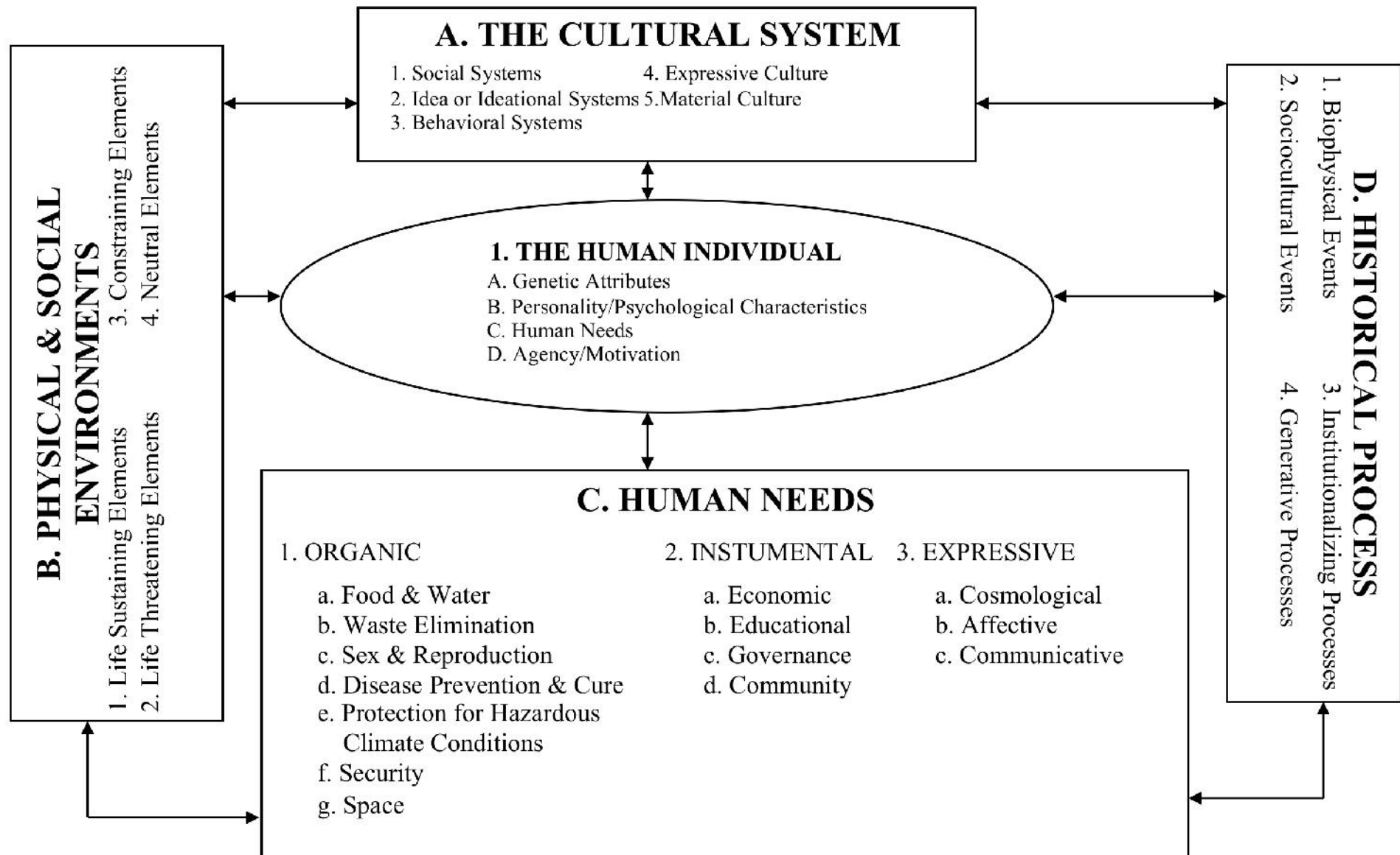
Further Defining the CSP

- The CSP as a Cultural Ecological or Systems Model for understanding Difference
- Graphic Illustration of the CSP
- The CSP: A System for Reading/Analyzing Human Similarities and Differences in the human condition
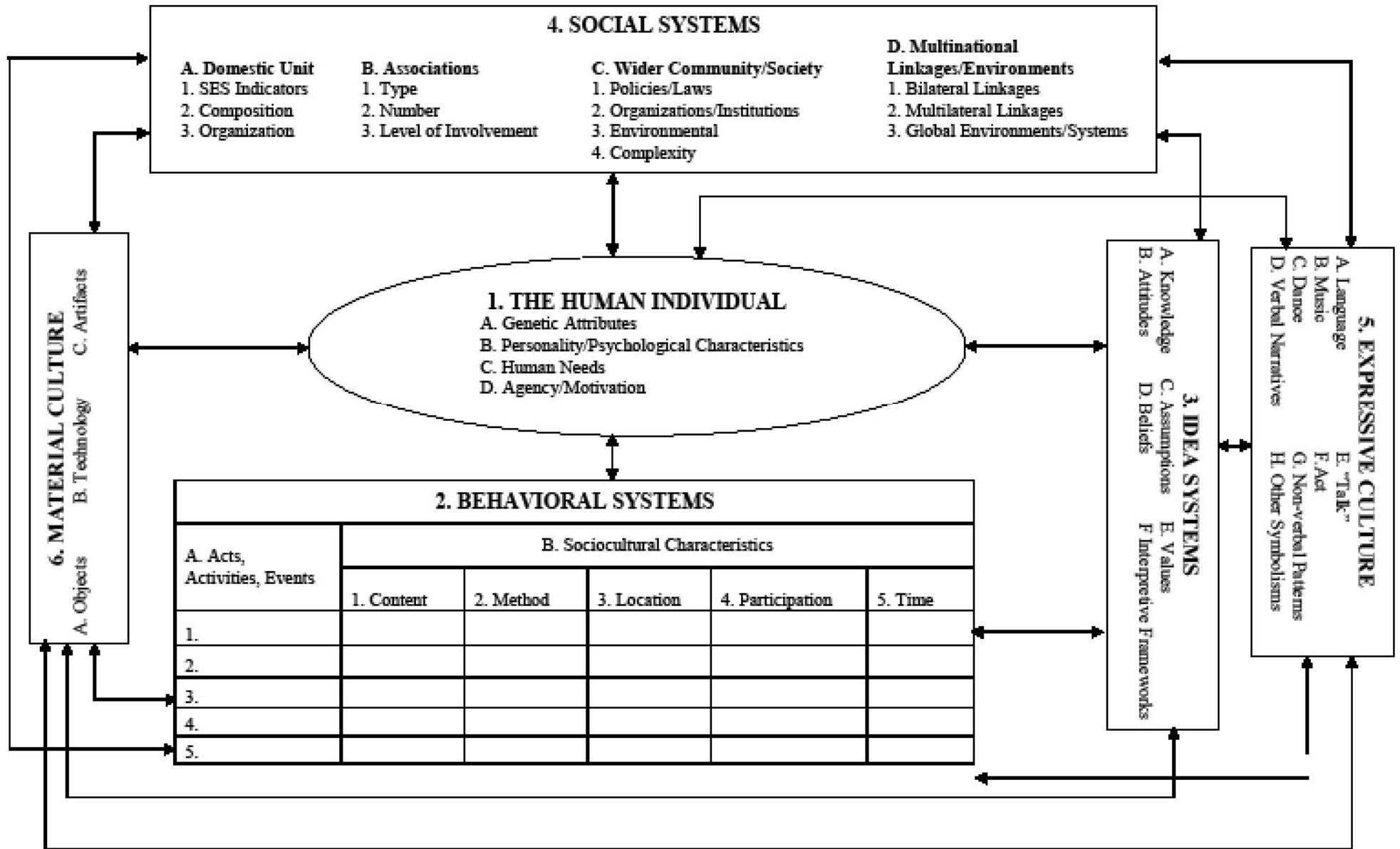
FIGURE 2A

THE CULTURAL SYSTEMS PARADIGM (CSP)
"THE HUMAN ECOSYSTEM"

A. THE CULTURAL SYSTEM

1. Social Systems
2. Idea or Ideational Systems
3. Behavioral Systems
4. Expressive Culture
5. Material Culture

B. PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS
1. Life Sustaining Elements
2. Life Threatening Elements
3. Constraining Elements
4. Neutral Elements

1. THE HUMAN INDIVIDUAL
A. Genetic Attributes
B. Personality/Psychological Characteristics
C. Human Needs
D. Agency/Motivation

D. HISTORICAL PROCESS
1. Biophysical Events
2. Sociocultural Events
3. Institutionalizing Processes
4. Generative Processes

C. HUMAN NEEDS

1. ORGANIC
a. Food & Water
b. Waste Elimination
c. Sex & Reproduction
d. Disease Prevention & Cure
e. Protection for Hazardous Climate Conditions
f. Security
g. Space

2. INSTUMENTAL
a. Economic
b. Educational
c. Governance
d. Community

3. EXPRESSIVE
a. Cosmological
b. Affective
c. Communicative

Source: Whitehead 1990a; Modification of Whitehead 1984

FIGURE 2A

THE CULTURAL SYSTEMS PARADIGM (CSP): "THE CULTURAL SYSTEM"

4. SOCIAL SYSTEMS

A. Domestic Unit	B. Associations	C. Wider Community/Society	D. Multinational Linkages/Environments
1. SES Indicators	1. Type	1. Policies/Laws	1. Bilateral Linkages
2. Composition	2. Number	2. Organizations/Institutions	2. Multilateral Linkages
3. Organization	3. Level of Involvement	3. Environmental	3. Global Environments/Systems
		4. Complexity	

1. THE HUMAN INDIVIDUAL
A. Genetic Attributes
B. Personality/Psychological Characteristics
C. Human Needs
D. Agency/Motivation

6. MATERIAL CULTURE
A. Objects
B. Technology
C. Artifacts

3. IDEA SYSTEMS
A. Knowledge
B. Attitudes
C. Assumptions
D. Beliefs
E. Values
F. Interpretive Frameworks

5. EXPRESSIVE CULTURE
A. Language
B. Music
C. Dance
D. Verbal Narratives
E. "Talk"
F. Act
G. Non-verbal Patterns
H. Other Symbolisms

2. BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS

A. Acts, Activities, Events	B. Sociocultural Characteristics				
	1. Content	2. Method	3. Location	4. Participation	5. Time
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

Further Defining the CSP: *The Human Ecosystem*

- The Bio-cultural Individual: genetic (genotype & phenotype) makeup, psychological/personality characteristics, human needs, sense of self/agency.

- The Physical Environment: Life Sustaining, Threatening, Constraining, and Neutral,

- Human Needs: Organic, Instrumental/Social, and Expressive/Cultural

- Historical Processes & Events (Individual & Group).

- Cultural System: Social Systems, Behaviors, Ideational Systems, Expressive Culture, and Material Culture.

Further Defining the CSP: *The Cultural System*

- The Human Individual

- Social Systems: Domestic Units, Extra-residential Associations, Wider Community/Society, & Multinational Linkages/Environments.

- Individual and Group Preferred Behaviors: Socio-cultural Characteristics of Behavioral Acts, Activities, & Events.

- Ideational systems: Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs, Values, Assumptions, and other Cognitive Constructs.

- Expressive Culture: Language, Art, Music, Dance, Narratives, Non-verbal patterns, and Other Symbolisms

- Material Culture: Objects, Technologies, and Artifacts.

Understanding of the Self and the Other in Socio-cultural Contexts Via the CSP

- The role of historical (experiential) processes and events in the evolution of the group and the individual self

- Individual and group living necessitating the formation of social systems, group preferred behaviors, and shared ideational systems and expressive culture,

Understanding of the Self and the Other in Socio-cultural Contexts Via the CSP

- The Self as a product of biology, as well as social structure and culture

- Role of genetics and physical characteristics and the self

- Necessity of the self to adapt to physical and social and physical environments and to meet organic, social, and ontological/expressive needs

- Ontological/Expressive Needs: Cosmological, Affective, & Communicative

- The need of individuals & groups to find meaning in day-to-day life

MOD 5. The Self, Culture, (Mis) Communication, and Conflict

- *As stated earlier, various attributes of Culture as a systemic framework for interpreting phenomena in the physical and meta-physical worlds, including the self, help to facilitate communication, as well as miscommunication and conflict*

The Self, (Mis-communication), and Conflict

- Evolution of the self: life stages, social systems, culture (Whitehead)

- Intra- and Interpersonal Conflict (Whitehead)

- The Self, Suffering, and Personal Spirituality (Powell, Chapter 8; More on this later).

- The Unconscious Self and Implicit Bias (Powell)

- Expectations of "Normalcy."

- The Projection of Self from the Other. (To engage versus not-to engage-Powell, Chapter 8)

- Questions and Comments?

Socio-cultural Locations of Self, Culture, Conflict & Communication Breakdowns

- Intra-personal and Interpersonal

- Family and household

- Kinship Groups and Voluntary Associations

- Neighborhood : Homogenous vs Pluralistic

- Community and County/State 1 : Workplace, Schools, Churches, service organizations, etc (symmetrical and asymmetrical relationships).

Socio-cultural Locations of Self, Culture, Conflict & Communication Breakdowns

- Community, County, State and and Nation: Institutions policies and programs
- Cross national
  - Symmetrical and Asymmetrical Relationships
  - Impact of Globalism (Economic, Communications, Political, etc)
  - High & Low Context Cultures
- Questions & Comments?

Attributes of Culture, (Mis) Communication, and Conflict

- Language, Other Forms of Expressive Culture, and Communication

- Environment and Cultural Interpretation: Space & the Objects in that Space

- Historical Process, Cultural Interpretation, and Human Difference

- Human Needs, Suffering (Powell, Chapt. 8), and Cultural Interpretation

- Material Culture and Other Symbolism: Whose memories are monumentalized

- Humans as Symbols

- Para lingual Communication

- Non-Verbal Communication

- Questions and Comments

Attributes of Culture, (Mis) Communication, and Conflict

- National personalities? Are these racist?
- High & low contact cultures (See Gundykunst) and personalities
- High & low expressive cultures and personalities
- Difference based on personal values and style
- Cultural rules, social roles, control, conflict
- Collective subconscious
- Questions and Comments

6. Physical Sites of Human Difference, Communication Breakdowns, and Conflict: Sex, Gender, Age, & Disability.

- *Earlier we identified biological or physical, and socio-cultural locations of self, culture, conflict & communication breakdowns. We will return to them here but in a little more detail.*

Recommended Readings

Readings listed in the syllabus under the title, "Male vs. Female," and "Beyond Male and Female," from Travis and Rosenblum,

Individual Sites of Human Difference Lack of Understanding,& Breakdowns: Sex & Gender

- Cultural scripts based on sex (gender constructs)
- Sex based cultural scripts (gender constructs) based on role expectations based on sex
- Enculturation of gender constructs for identity formation: The "Gender Self."
- Gender Constructs and intrapersonal conflict.
- Inter-gender and inter-personal communication

Individual Difference & Communi-cation Breakdowns: <u>Sex and Gender</u> (cont)

- Are platonic heterosexual relationships possible?
- Sexual flirtations, dating, rape: When does No mean No?
- Family Systems: Intra-& Interpersonal Conflicts.
- Sexism in the Workplace: Hiring & Promotion Decision Making
- Sexism in Institutional Settings: Schools (boys & female teachers), churches (female membership but female leadership), etc.
- Community practices and policies
- Others?

Sex and Gender: Male, Female & Beyond

- Cultures with cultural constructions of 2 genders and issues of communication.

- LBGTQ-What does these letters stand for? How do you differentiate between them.

- Not 2 sexes, but 5 sexes (male, female, and 3 types of hermaphrodites, or inter-sexuals: true hermaphrodites, mermes, and fermes-Fausto-Sterling, 2000:89).

- Intersexual Humans: 1 in every 2,000 births are intersex

- Cultures that allow more than two genders (See Williams on the "Berdarche" in R&T)

- Homophobia & perceived threats of homosexuality & disease (e.g., HIV/AIDs as exclusive to homosexuals).

- Questions & Comments

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Other Socio-cultural Constructs Based on Physical Attributes: Age and Physical Capacity

- While age and physical capacity (or disabilities) are important areas of interpretations of human difference, there is not the time in this class to cover them.

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MOD 7: Cultural Constructions of Difference Based on Group Characteristics

- *Interpersonal conflicts and communication breakdowns often occur because humans tend to group individuals based on certain similar characteristics, either biological (e.g. sex and "race") or socio-cultural (e.g. ethnicity/tribe, family/kinship system, religion, regional, national, and Transnational/cultural).*

Recommended Readings

- Readings from Rosenblum and Travis, listed in the syllabus and titled Ethnicity and Class

Cultural Constructions of Difference Based on Group Characteristics: Ethnicity, Domestic Units, Family, and Kinship Systems

- What is ethnicity? What is a Tribe?
- Household, Family, Kinship Systems, and Clans
- Such social systems emerged from the human needs of cooperative survival strategies, community, and group and personal identity. (Straddling all three sets of needs in the CSP, the organic, the social, and the existential).
- Multi-Ethnicity in the US and Other Nations.

Constructions of Difference Based on Group Characteristics: Regionalism

- The North won the Civil War but not the national sphere of influence?
- "This Place is Too Yankeefied"
- "Yankees can't Cook"
- Language, Region, and Status: Speech in the US North & the South

- Regionalism and Sexism: "Good Old Boys" and "Tight-Ass Bitches."

Cultural Constructions of Groups:
Race & Racism

- Recommended Readings for discussions of race, racism include those listed for this topic in the syllabus found Rosenblum and Travis.

- Recommending readings discussing race, racism, and the self can be found in Powell, Chapters 1-6.

Cultural Constructions of Groups: & Racism (cont)

- Race and culture seen as immutable marks of inferiority (Culture of Poverty, Lower Class Culture)
- "Race Fatigue" and the cultural reproduction of racism as a core cultural construct
- Does race and racism as core cultural constructs have an impact on US global relationships?
- Welfare cheats are black/Ignoring White Poverty.
- White space, Bigotry, Prejudice, Discrimination and Experiential/Spiritual Suffering.

Cultural Constructions of Groups: Race, Racism, & Racialization

- Biological difference or cultural construction
- Racism: biological difference and cultural construction
- Racialization: Race as a verb, rather than a noun (Powell, 2012).
- The Racialized Urban Ghetto (Whitehead).
- Race, religion, capitalism, and individualism as core US cultural constructs.
- Actions on the part of Reformers and Progressives on the Persistence of Racism as a core of US cultural constructs.

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Cultural Constructions of Groups: Race & Racism (cont)

- Race and culture seen as immutable marks of inferiority
- Racism Fatigue and the cultural reproduction of racism as a core cultural construct
- Does race and racism as core cultural constructs have an impact on US global relationships
- Welfare cheats are all black.
- White space, Bigotry, Prejudice, Discrimination and Spiritual Suffering

Mod 8. Cultural Constructions Intersecting Culture, Class (SES), Race, & Ethnicity

- Academic Contributions to Intersectional Constructions
  - Culture of Poverty
  - Lower Class Culture
  - Mainstream, Spurious, and Genuine Blacks
- Food as Symbols of Intersectional Constructions:
  - "Neck bones are poor peoples food"
  - "Neck bones are soul food."
  - "Neck bones are nigger foods."

MOD 9. Religion: The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly

- *Religion is one of those areas in which it is difficult to discuss as a socio-cultural constructions, because it is based on peoples faith, and belief in divine phenomena. But there are also many people who do not hold such beliefs, resulting in biases on both sides. Thus my approach to the understanding different positions on religion is that there is a good, a bad, and ugly, regarding religion.*

Religion: The Good.

- Exploring Differences between Spirituality, Religion, and Systems of Worship (e.g. Churches, Synagogues, and Mosques.

- Religion, the Good
  - Religion provides an orderly view of the both the physical & the meta-physical world, and the place of the self and the group within that world.
  - Religious Faith provides an unwavering model for answering unanswerable questions about these worlds, as well as issues of morality & ethnics with regards to relationships with others.

Religion, the Good

- Religion provides framework for moral and ethical behavior.

- Religion as control: To keep the oppressed masses from killing the more privileged elites.

Religion, the Good (Cont)

- Religion provides a vessel for spiritual fulfillment, which is a basic human need for addressing the ever presence of human suffering. There are few other formally recognized systems to meet this need, with the exception of certain eastern philosophies, etc. (See Powell, 2012: 197-2001 for discussion on two types of suffering:

  - Spiritual/Ontological/Existential: Suffering related to the sense of self: the sense of lack and disillusionment inherent in material existence and in the presence of consciousness, particularly self consciousness. We all grow old, and we all die. Things, including the self, fall apart.

  - Social Suffering: largely the result of our social arrangements. It is visited upon different people to varying degrees. Indeed, because social practices institutionalize subjugation and suffering that need not exist. (thus Powell also refers to as Surplus Suffering).

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Religion: the Good(cont.)

- <u>Organic Suffering</u>: Terminology not used by Powell, who identifies a type of suffering that falls outside of the ontological or spiritual, such as physical pain, such as a stomachache, or other pain that is not caused by social arrangements or related to the sense of self.

- The idea of Organic Suffering is borrowed from Whitehead's CSP category of Organic or Physical Needs.

- Similarly, the CSP Need categories can be used to discuss Powell's other two types of needs, social and ontological.

- Because the CSP is a systems model, these three types of needs are interrelated, as any one of the three can lead to any of the other three. (e.g., the existential fear of death, interrelated with social or organic suffering actually leading to death).

Religion, the Good(cont.)

- Religion also provides a framework of transcendentalism: Cognitive escapism from a physical world of suffering to a meta-physical world of non-suffering.

Religion: the Good (cont.)

- The preceding functions (orderly world view, explanatory models, addressing suffering) provided by religion have contributed to the establishment of *Places of Worship* (POWs such as churches, mosques, synagogues), which then work to meet a range of other existential, social or organic needs.

  - According to Powell, one of the greatest areas of existential suffering for humans is the fear of the other (because of its existential threat to the self), and thus there is a natural human desire is to avoid the other.

  - On the other hand, however, he explains that the key to overcoming the fear of the other is not only engagement, with the other, but actually the love of the other.

  - POWs provides not only the communal setting for collective engagement with others, but also the repetition of themes of community engagement, service to others, and love for the other (love-the positive value that heals (Powell, 2012:204).

  - POWs, then, meet the powerful human need of community.

Religion, the Good (cont.)

- Religion helps to not only address humans' existential problem with death, but POWs are places in which this "solution" is collectively, and repeatedly addressed.

- POWs meeting a range of various basic human needs (i.e. overcoming suffering) in human spaces where other support systems are absent (Plantation America) or are inadequate (e.g. Missions in Former European colonies in Third World Societies).

  - POWs as Communal Institutions: Building social systems, society, and the persistence of expressive culture and social action (The Plantation America Examples).

  - POWs attempting to address health, housing, providing meals, and other organic needs or suffering ("ministries" of the black church).

Religion, the Good: Addressing Human Suffering (cont.)

- POWs attempting to meet the economic needs of those economically suffering.

- POWs attempting to meet the socializing needs of cultural novices (children and new adult members) so that they might become contributing members of the community.

- POWs attempting to meet the governance needs of leadership selection and decision making for the group (politics) and conflict resolution (law).

Religion, the Good: Addressing Human Suffering (cont.)

- POWs responding to existential needs beyond the spiritual, orderly world view, and the moral/ethical, including those of developing a sound personal and group identity, social status, patterns of being loved and loving others, and ways of communicating about the physical and metaphysical worlds.

Religion, the Bad

- Attitudes of Superiority and the Inferiority of the Other.

- Tendency towards Proselytizing ("One can only get to heaven through Jesus Christ)"

- Accepting Suffering, including death by suicide in this life (self induced matyrdom), provides automatic entre into the next.

- Exploitation of Others in the Name of Religion.

Religion, the Ugly

Religious Beliefs and Practices that Bring Pain, Suffering, and/or Death to Others.

- Religious Wars, Inquisitions, and Other Human horrors in the name of religion.

MOD 10: Transnational/cultural Contact and Conflict: The Bad & the Ugly

- *The human history of transcontinental and transnational contact has been characterized by "the good" of trade, cultural exchange and the expansion of human knowledge. However, there have also been a "bad" and an "ugly" resulting from such contacts as exemplified in various forms of human suffering resulting in Eurocentric hierarchical bio-cultural categorization of peoples and cultures (the Bad), as well as Eurocentric European political and economic domination, subjugation, slavery, genocide, and unplanned decimation of human populations (Ugly).*

Transnational/cultural Contact with Peoples of Other Continents: *The Bad*

- The Europeanization of an African Based Religion: Christianity.

- Hierarchical bio-cultural categorization of peoples and cultures: The "Chain of Being" and the Rise of Eurocentric Social Sciences:

- The Misunderstanding and Mischaracterization of Non-European Cultures

- Indigenous Cultural Identities, Lost, Appropriated, and Intentionally Destroyed.

Transnational/Cultural Contact: *The Ugly*

- Occupation, Subjugation, Transnational Hegemony, and Slavery

- Discovery of the New World and the Extinction of Indigenous Populations and Cultures

- Plantation Slavery, The Triangular Trade, and the Rise of Capitalism—the good, the bad, and in the present discussion, the ugly.

- The negative impacts of European Colonialism

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Transnational/Cultural Contact: *The Ugly*

- Transnational/continental wars

- Resistance, Guerilla and Terrorist Warfare

- Interethnic Strife, and Warfare,

- The Mass Migration and Displacement of Populations

MOD 11:Transnational/Cultural Contact, Existential Suffering and Healing: *The Good*

- *As mentioned earlier, historically there has been a good associated with transnational/cultural contact, with regards to the expansion of trade and economic opportunities, cultural exchange, and human knowledge. However, immersion in another culture can bring short term pain and intra-conflict, or existential suffering. At the source of this suffering are: (1) the fact that one's own national (and ethnic) cultural attributes are major contributors to the evolution of one's self identity; (2) one may be categorized by members of their host culture that are in contradiction to the sense of identity one brings to this setting; and (3) immersion into another culture can lead to unconscious and unwanted attributes of self, as well as intra-conflicts of guilt and shame. It is our premise however, that working through these conflicts can lead to cultural understanding of the other, as well as a social healing, and further spiritual healing of the self.*

Personal Examples of The Existential Pain and Joy of Others in Transnational Settings Offering a Definition of Self Different from One's Own.

- Turkey and the Good Life!: From Negro to Black, to American, to African American.

- Personal Examples of the Self as Constructed by the Cross-Cultural Other.

    - Fellow Oppresse of the American System: From Slavery to the Ongoing Struggle for Emancipation (US Civil Rights Battles)

    - Haji Comes Home!

    - Muhammad Ali, The Big O, James Brown, and Patricia Roberts Harris (Under representation of African Americans in the US Diplomatic Corps).

Personal Examples of Existential Pain and Joy of Others in Transnational Settings Offering a Definition of Self Different from One's Own.

- The Big Brown, Pretty Talking Man in a West Indian Community.

- Rum, Cannabis, and the Strong Man in the Caribbean

- A West Indian Construct of "No Such Thing as an African American."

- What is an American?: The African American At Risk in Africa

- Being White in Africa

Self, Sex, and Gender in Cross Cultural Settings

- Interactions with the Opposite Sex in the Middle East.

- "I just hope that none of my boys back in DC can see me now.

- Transactional Sex and the Big Man in the Caribbean & Africa: "When I can Afford it, and You can't, My wife is My Wife, and Your Wife is My Wife."

- African Hospitality and HIV/AIDS Risks for the Big Man

- Problems in Going Native

Cross Cultural Immersion, Culture Shock and Intra-personal Conflict

- "I find these people irritating and annoying." "I actually hate these people."

- Addressing the guilt and shame associated with such discoveries.

- Addressing one's own subjectivity is the quickest way to enculturation and comfort with self, and objectivity about the other.

- Accepting ethnocentrism as a normal state in starting the processes of enculturation and adaptation.

- Returning to one's own culture, reverse culture shock, and accepting the self as weird.

MOD 12: Personal Accounts of Contributions of Ethnographic Research to Cultural Understanding & Existential Healing

- Basic ethnographic research is the immersion of oneself into a culture so as to understand that culture. Michael Agar talks about a process of *breakdown*, *resolution* and *coherence* in coming to an understanding of the other. The self of the ethnographer also goes through a similar process of *breakdown*, *resolution,* and a new understanding of self and *existential healing* as discussed in the preceding section. In the current module the instructor will provide some examples of several ethnographic experiences contributing to this process.

Ethnography, Natural Cultural Learning, Cultural Understanding & Existential Healing

- Ethnography and Natural Cultural Learning Defined
- Using Cultural Translators in Ethnography and Understanding
  - Working with "Cultural Translators" in Africa and the US
  - Understanding Protocol in Africa and the "Need for Cultural Translators"-
- Understanding the Role of Silence in the Rural US, Africa, and Finland
- Studying Plantation Culture in Jamaica Help in Understanding of the Self (The Contexts of Being African American & Male)
- Discovering the African Novel for Leisure, Learning, Method, and a Greater Understanding of the Self.

Basic Ethnography: Natural Cultural Learning, Cultural Understanding, & Healing the Fragmented Self.

- Ethnographically Studying Rural Southern US, Jamaican, and African communities in the Understanding of the Self and the Other.

- Ethnographically Studying the Afro American Christian Church and Understanding the Basic Self.

- Ethnographically Studying the HIV/AIDS and Incarceration Epidemics, Relationship Between Engaging in Healing the Suffering of Others, and Healing a Fragmented Self.

MOD 12. Recommendation to Others for Existential and Social Healing

- *While the preceding module provides experiences over the instructor's professional life course that contributed to his understanding of human difference, cultural understanding, and existential healing, this final module offer his and other's recommendations to others in achieving similar transformations.*

Recommendation to Others for Existential and Social Healing (cont).

- Working on the Self First (R&T, pgs).
  - Overcoming your sense of feeling powerless
  - Increase your tolerance for making mistakes
  - Appreciate the statuses you occupy (Overcoming shame and/or guilt about your sense of privilege or lack of privilege status.
  - "Learn to sit in the fire."

- Turning Knowledge and Understanding into Action: "Make the Road by Walking." (Rosenblum & Travis, pps 481-482)

Recommendation to Others for Existential and Social Healing (cont)

- The Power of Dialogue (Horton and Freire, in Rosenblum & Travis, pps. 481-83).

- Providing a "Safe Place" for dialogue where everyone can express themselves, both items from their conscious & unconscious selves.

- Try to understand that various points of difference may not the usual "isims," such as racism or sexism; but may be due to differences in communication styles or statements or actions of implicit or unconscious bias.

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Recommendation to Others for Existential and Social Healing (cont)

- In dialogical formats, use a Socratic approach to sharing personal knowledge or information.

- The key to overcoming intra-personal conflict and existential suffering, as well as interpersonal conflict and communication breakdowns is through empathy and engagement with the suffering of others.

- As such this approach to the healing of self and the other is at the heart of spirituality.

Recommendation to Others for Existential and Social Healing (cont)

- Some of my spiritual heroes in this regard: Jesus, Ghandi, Nelson Mandela, and King.

- Powell also these same spiritual leaders; but his discussion of spirituality goes beyond simply empathy and engagement to include love of the Other.

- These qualities of empathy, engagement, and love as the keys to healing one's own (existential suffering, as well as the suffering of others, are also part of the teaching of most religious systems.

- How religions have become the vessels for teaching of opposite views—social exclusion, fear and hatred of the Other-is worthy of its own area of study and discussion.

Mod 14: Improving Communications Between Self & the Other: An Exercise

- *This module consists of an exercise that I created 30 years ago, and continue to use in interpersonal and cross cultural communications workshops. Basically it asks workshop participants to explore: (1) their own "values," many of which remain at an unconscious level: (2) behaviors reflecting values; (3) contrasting behaviors observed in others; (4)value interpretations of behaviors observed in others; (5) alternative possibilities; and (6) Other's possible interpretation of values based on your behaviors.*