Psychology 366. Advanced Development/Social Seminar: Cognition, Culture, and Development
Class meetings: Spring, 2005; Wednesdays 8:30-11:30 a.m.
Professor Lynne Bond
Email: lynne.bond@uvm.edu
Office: 338 John Dewey Hall
Office hours: Wednesdays 3-4 and by appointment

PLEASE NOTE: We will review this draft over the first couple weeks of class, engage in
discussion about interests, skills, and priorities of class members, and revise the syllabus
in light of that discussion, if needed. Therefore, please think carefully about what you
hope to get from this course and share your views with the rest of us.

Course Description:
This course examines cognitive processes from the perspective of cultural psychology. The
emergence of cultural psychology is relatively recent and has resulted from the interaction and
intersection of scholarly work from a variety of sciences and social sciences. Therefore, from
multiple perspectives, this is a trans-disciplinary course. It draws from scholarship in psychology,
anthropology, sociology, education, and related fields. Moreover, it incorporates diverse sub-
disciplines from within psychology including cognition, memory, emotion, motivation, perception,
cross-cultural, social and developmental psychology. The course will consider models and research
methods for examining cognition and culture, recent advances in understanding how cognitive
processes both reflect and contribute to culture, and the interplay of cultural tools and cognition.
Cognitive foundations of culture and their behavioral ramifications will be considered.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:
• Explain the relationship between cognition and culture from the distinct perspectives of
cultural psychology, cross-cultural psychology, and other major psychological frameworks
• Explain at least four prominent research methodologies for examining cognitive processes
from the perspective of cultural psychology as well as their advantages and disadvantages for
addressing varied types of relevant questions
• Distinguish between culturally distinct conceptions of knowing and learning
• Provide examples of empirical evidence for the social foundations and contexts of cognitive
development
• Explain the meaning and significance of “culturally situated cognition,” “apprenticeship
learning,” and provide empirical examples of these processes
• Describe links between social cognitive processes and cultural contexts
• Identify specific psychological foundations of culture and its formation
• Explain the interplay between language and cognitive processes in cultural contexts
• Illustrate the complex relationships between cultural tools and cognitive processes

Course Expectations:

A. Class Participation and Contributions. This is a seminar course that will focus on discussion of
assigned readings and other relevant material that class members bring forth for consideration. Your
active and thoughtful participation is critical to shaping the quality and quantity of your own learning
experiences as well as those of others in the seminar. Therefore, you are expected to attend every
class and to be an active participant in both guiding and engaging in the discussion (if you must miss
a class, please inform me beforehand). Before coming to class, be certain to identify those issues that
you feel are most important and relevant for discussion, debate, questioning, and integration. In
addition, please take responsibility for creating a constructive dialogue in class by responding to,
building on, and helping to develop the ideas of others as well as your own ideas. This means
that, when relevant, you:

(a) ask for clarification and elaboration by others (e.g., "Can you say more about that?"
"Would you give some examples of what you mean?" "How are you using the term `x' when
you say that?" "I don't think I fully understand; do you mean to say ...?" "How does your
perspective relate to Student X's comment [or the article we read]?")

(b) Ask good questions of one another that will foster constructive and collaborative thinking
and problem solving (e.g., "Why do you think that there's so much [or so little] consensus
among us on this?" "How does your personal experience [or theory x] fit with what the
readings were saying?" "Could we build on one another's perspectives to try to make sense
of this question?")

B. Analytical/critical reflection. These brief (1 ½ -2 page single spaced, typed) papers are to focus
specifically upon the week’s reading assignment. The goal is not to summarize the readings. Rather,
you should analyze and critically reflect upon a couple significant issues raised in the readings.
Ideally you will critically reflect upon those readings by linking them with one another as well as with
other material from our course (readings, discussion), your professional work and scholarship, and
personal experience and knowledge (e.g., personal history, observations, etc.). Occasionally we will
agree to focus our analytic/critical reflection papers on a common topic for a particular week.

C. Discussion Questions. Following the analytical/critical reflection, write several (2-3) discussion
questions that you would like us to address in class. Craft these questions so that they engage us to
discuss, for example, key themes, questions, similarities and/or disagreements within and across the
readings. Construct your questions in a way that will help all of us in the class to clarify and
develop our thinking. That is, the discussion questions should also engage critical/analytic
reflection. Begin each question with your own discussion of different ways of looking at this issue,
perhaps even arguing with yourself or offering different ways of approaching and/or thinking about
the matter at hand. Be clear why this question or issue is interesting and complex!

Please submit your papers and discussion questions to me (and keep another copy for yourself) no
later than Tuesday at noon. This will give me the opportunity to read and consider your questions
before our Wednesday class.

E. Course Evaluation. Both in the middle and at the end of the semester, I will ask you to provide
me with written feedback on your own course-related progress and performance to date. I will also
ask you to evaluate the strengths of the course and ways in which it could be improved (we’ll use the
mid-semester feedback to try to make mid-semester improvements!). At both the middle and end of
the semester, I will also provide you with a written narrative regarding my sense of your progress and
performance in the course. At the end of the semester, your participation in this seminar course will
be graded on an “S”-“U” basis (Satisfactory vs. Unsatisfactory).
Schedule of Topics and Readings (due on dates listed)

**Jan. 19. Introduction to course: Reflecting on our own Culture and Cognition**

**Jan. 26. A Cultural Immersion Experience into Culture and Cognition!!**


**Feb. 2. Frameworks & methods for considering culture, cognition, and development**


**Feb. 9. Everyday Cognition**


**Feb. 16. Social foundations and contexts of cognitive development**


Chapter 2: Processes of change: The “How” of cognitive development
Chapter 3: The sociocultural context of cognitive development
Chapter 4: Acquiring knowledge: Inter-subjectivity, joint attention, and social referencing
Chapter 5: Remembering: The social construction of the past

[NO CLASS Feb. 23]
March 2. Culturally situated cognition & its development


Chapter 6: Interdependence and autonomy (pp.194-235)
Chapter 7: Thinking with the tools and institutions of culture (pp. 236-281)


Guest: Carlos García- Quijano, Dept. Anthropology (UVM & Univ. Georgia)

March 9. Self, Social Relations, and Human Inference


March 16. Language, communication and cognition across cultures


[Spring Break March 23]
March 30. Psychological Foundations of Culture/Formation of Cultures


April 6. Concepts of “knowing” and learning


April 13. Thinking with Tools of Culture—Schools


April 20. Linking Cognition to Cultural Practice & Socialization of cognition and emotion


*Chapter five: Inside the mind* (pp. 123-146).
April 27. Parents’ cultural belief systems and cognition


May 4. Synthesis. How does this course relate to your own research?

Each class member will present an example of how the course material could be used to significantly improve a line of research in her/his own sub-discipline of psychology. We will use class time to discuss and build upon each of these re-visions.” Each student is to submit a written paper summarizing their “re-vision” no later than May 11, 2005, at noon.

May 11, noon. Your written “re-vision” of your line of research is due in Lynne’s mailbox. Please type; maximum of 5 double-spaced pages.