

Florence Semester – Institute at Palazzo Rucellai

PSYCH 431: Special Topics in Psychology: Cross-Cultural Psychology

Credits: 3

Instructor: Sarah L. Barker, D. Psych.

Schedule: TBA

Prerequisite: None

Course Description:

The ease of international travel, access to the World Wide Web, the globalization of business, immigration, as well as the maintenance of ethnic and culture(s)-of-origin identity of those living in the USA, Italy and many other countries all mean that contact between members of various cultures is inevitable in the rich tapestry of cultures that we live amongst in our world today. It is therefore vital that we understand culture, cultural differences, and the ways that culture influences the thinking and social behavior of every person. Students will be exposed to the psychology of people in other cultures (with a particular focus on those in Italy), and learn to appreciate similarities and differences. The course will assist students to challenge their own experiences and (possibly Western) ideas about what it is to be a person. It will also encourage students to think critically about universal principles in psychology.

Cross-cultural theoretical frameworks will be explored using experientially-based activities (e.g., role-plays, skits, simulations, interviews of Italians from various regions, small and large group discussions, the sharing of your cross-cultural experiences) that make the most of your cross-cultural experience here in Florence, using Italy and its culture as a kind of ‘experimental classroom’ to facilitate intercultural awareness. You will have the opportunity to reflect deeply on your growth through journaling, skits and other means as you experience the Italian culture and become more aware of changes, both positive and negative, as they occur within you.

Course descriptions may be subject to occasional minor modifications at the discretion of the instructor.

Textbooks: Students will be provided with all course readings in a course reader.

During orientation at the Institute, students will receive a list of textbooks they are required to purchase. Students should not purchase any texts before orientation.