

African Psychology

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to the ideas, philosophies, knowledge systems, and frameworks emanating from Africa. This epistemological and methodological shift is done to affirm the idea that African experiences, realities, and ideas are important, that they matter, and are valid in the field of psychology despite the colonial perspective of western psychology . This course will examine a variety of topical areas in psychology from diverse African cultural perspectives and offer avenues for reflection on the interaction between African psychology and globalization.

Objectives: At the successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Critically, logically, and systematically engage with multiple African psychology/epistemology theories in different contexts.
2. Achieve an understanding of the African philosophical concept of Ubuntu and its ideas of the self in relation to self, community, wholeness, and collective consciousness.
3. Understand the characteristics of Africa's indigenous knowledge.
4. Conceptualize, analyze, and formulate African psychological matters using indigenous theorizations, worldviews, and conceptions in a culturally nuanced manner.
5. Contrast and compare African and Western theories of psychology and situate them within their historical-cultural contexts.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of spirituality in the lives of Indigenous people.
7. Understand African explanatory models of illness and well-being.
8. Reflect on the intersection of African psychology with globalization.

Schedule of Topics

1. Introduction to African Psychology & Definition of Key Concepts

(Is there African psychology? Philosophy; epistemology; ontology; culture; scope and questions about African psychology)

2. Justification for African Psychology

(Link between psychology and colonialism in Africa; Quest for relevance)

3. Methods of Knowing

(African ways of knowing & pedagogy; characteristics of African indigenous knowledge; Afrocentric methodology; proverbs as method of knowledge production)

4. Development & Socialization (in the context)

5. Self, Personhood, & Community in African Traditional Thoughts

(Ubuntu philosophy; contrasts between African conception of the person and Western conception of the person; conceptualizing personhood, agency, & morality for African psychology)

6. Mental Health & Illness

(Comparison of Western and African paradigms on mental health & illness; Afrocentric paradigm to clinical diagnosis and treatment; experience and meaning of recovery for an African population)

7. Globalization & the Future of African Culture

(Globalization & culture; globalization & the African experience; strategies for stemming the tide of cultural globalization; atrophy of African culture)

8. Indigenization of Psychology

(The concept of decolonization/indigenization & practical implementation; challenges of indigenization; indigenizing knowledge for development)

Recommended Text:

Myers, L. J. (1988). *Understanding an Afrocentric worldview: an Introduction to an optimal psychology*. Dubuque, IA : Kendall/Hunt Publishing

Recommended Readings:

Adair, J. G. (1999). Indigenization of psychology: The concept and its practical implementation. *Applied Psychology*, 48(4), 403–418. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1999.tb00062.x>

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Myers, H. F. (1982). The deep structure of culture: Relevance of traditional African culture to contemporary life. *Journal of Black Studies*, 18, 72-85. Myers, L. J. (1988). *Understanding an Afrocentric worldview—Introduction to an optimal psychology*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Mwamwenda, T. (1996). *Educational psychology: An African perspective* (2nd ed). Heinemann Publishers.

Ngara, C. (2007). African ways of knowing and pedagogy revisited. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, 2(2), 7–21. <https://doi.org/10.20355/C5301M>

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