Course Description

Objective:

Human beings have created the most colourful cultures in the world that not only contextualize our behaviour but shape our mind and brain as well. Do people's behaviour vary across cultures? Whether and how cultures influence human cognitive processes and underlying brain activity? Do individuals engaged in Western and East Asian cultures have distinct cognitive styles during perception and attention? Can we understand cultural differences in social behaviour by examining cultural effects on brain functional organization? Can we modify individuals' brain activity in laboratory by short-term exposure of new cultural values? How does culture interact with genes to modulate brain functions and behaviour? Can we predict future changes of human behaviour by examining current cultural differences in multiple neurocognitive processes? There has been a long history of human thoughts of these interesting issues. However, only recently have these questions been examined by empirical studies that combine psychology, neuroscience, brain imaging, genetics, etc. This 4-weeks course aims to illustrate the important issues regarding the interactive relationships between culture, behaviour and brain, to explain psychological paradigms and brain imaging methods that have been integrated to study cultural influences on cognitive and neural processes, to introduce our current knowledge/theory about the sociocultural brain, and to discuss future questions regarding the interactive relationships between culture, behaviour, and brain. The first three weeks will focus on class teaching and discussion and, during the last week, students in small groups will be required to finish proposals of independent research project proposals related to cultural effects on behaviour, mind, and brain. There'll also be opportunities for students to visit the brain imaging facilities at Peking University and to get involved in experimental studies.
### Pre-requisites / Target audience

Undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in culture and human behavior. Psychology and brain imaging are NOT pre-requisites for this course.

### Proceeding of the Course

- **Week 1-3:** teaching and discussion
- **Week 4:** prepare and submit project proposals, visit brain imaging facilities at Peking University

### Assignments (essay or other forms)

Students will be given review and empirical articles for reading and discussion and for preparing their project proposals.

### Evaluation Details

Evaluation will be conducted based on students’ motivation and activity in classroom and their final project proposals.

### Text Books and Reading Materials

About 20 essays and articles will be assigned to students

### Academic Integrity

Participation in this class commits the students and instructor to abide by a general norm of equal opportunity and academic integrity. It implies permission from students to submit their written work to services that check for plagiarism (such as Turnitin.com). It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism. Violations of the norm of academic integrity will be firmly dealt with in this class.

### CLASS SCHEDULE

(Subject to adjustment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1: <em>Cultural differences in behavior</em></th>
<th>Date: July 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>【Description of the Session】</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>This session aims to outline cultural differences of human behavior at both individual and group levels and to introduce psychology/neuroscience perspectives on how to understand and explain human behavior across cultures.</td>
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<td><strong>【Questions】</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there any cultural difference in human behavior? Do people behave differently at the individual and group levels across cultures? Can we and how do we understand these?</td>
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### Session 2: Cultural differences in mind  
**Date:** July 6

**Description of the Session**
This session aims to outline cultural differences of mental processes (including perception, causal attribution etc) that help to understand cultural differences in behavior.

**Questions**
In what aspects of human mind is there cultural difference? How people from different cultures perceive the world and make causal attribution of others' behavior?

**Readings, Websites or Video Clips**

### Session 3: Cultural difference in brain activity underlying perception  
**Date:** July 8

**Description of the Session**
This session aims to outline cultural differences of brain activity underlying visual perception revealed by brain imaging studies. Brain imaging techniques will be introduced at the begin of this session.

**Questions**
Do individuals from different cultures perceive the world in the same way? Does the brain work in the same way to perceive different cultural environments?

**Readings, Websites or Video Clips**
## Session 4: Culture and self

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<th>Date: July 11, 13</th>
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### Description of the Session
How people think of the self plays a key role in our behavior. This session aims to introduce current theories of culture influences on self-concept and to outline cultural differences of brain activity underlying self-recognition and self-reflection.

### Questions
How do we recognize the self in a mirror? How does the brain perceive and reflect the self? How does East Asian and Western culture shape brain activity underlying self-recognition and self-reflection?

### Readings, Websites or Video Clips

### Assignments for this session (if any)

## Session 5: Culture and others

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### Description of the Session
This session aims to outline cultural differences in social cognition and brain activity underlying others' gesture, emotion and belief.

### Questions
How does the brain understand others' mental states? How does culture shape the brain activity underlying social cognition?

### Readings, Websites or Video Clips

### Assignments for this session (if any)
### Session 6: Cultural priming

**Date:** July 18

**Description of the Session**
This session aims to outline behavior and neuroscience findings that demonstrate that cultural priming in laboratories influence human brain activity underlying multiple sensory, perceptive, cognitive and affective processes.

**Questions**
Can we shift people’s cultural knowledge system in a short period of time? Can temporary shift of cultural value/belief modulate our behavior and related brain activity?

**Readings, Websites or Video Clips**

**Assignments for this session (if any)**

### Session 7: Culture-gene interaction

**Date:** July 20

**Description of the Session**
This session aims to outline behavioral and brain imaging evidence for culture-gene interaction at the individual level.

**Questions**
Do genetic influences on behavior show the same pattern across cultures? In what way does gene interact with culture to shape human brain activity?

**Readings, Websites or Video Clips**

**Assignments for this session (if any)**
### Session 8: *Culture-behavior-brain loop of human development*

**Date:** July 22

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<th>Description of the Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>This session aims to outline a new model of human development by considering the key role of brain in culture-behavior interaction. This session will also discuss whether and how we can predict variations of human behavior and brain in future.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do culture, behavior and brain interact during individual and group development?</td>
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<td>What's the relationship between gene and the culture-behavior-brain loop during human development?</td>
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### Session 9: *Research proposal*

**Date:** July 25, 27, 29

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<td>This session will require students to search and read additional literatures and to figure out their own questions regarding culture, behavior and brain. Students will finish research proposals and present and discuss these proposals.</td>
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