

## **Self and Culture Seminar**

**Dr. Yu Niiya**

<http://niiyalab.ws.hosei.ac.jp/>

In spring 2017, the Self and Culture Seminar will welcome 5 ~ 7 third year students interested and committed in conducting research in social psychology. The seminar meets for 2 periods in a row (2 komas, 4 credits).

### **Goals of this seminar**

#### **[1] Get a deeper understanding of yourself**

We will co-create a class in which you will learn about the self by reading and discussing current research while exploring how the self works in your own life. Specifically, you will learn how to recognize the costs and benefits of ego mechanisms, how to identify ego threats, how to respond constructively to ego threats, and how to shift from reacting to creating.

#### **[2] Discover how your socio-cultural context influences your thoughts and behaviors**

We will read and discuss seminal theories and current research in cultural psychology. Our focus is to challenge stereotypical views associated with interdependence and independence and to gain a deeper understanding of the goals we pursue for the self in East Asian and North American cultures.

#### **[3] Gain research skills**

You will develop your research skills in social psychology by empirically examining your own research question related to the self and culture. Identifying important problems, proposing solutions, and checking the validity of your conclusions are all crucial skills that should serve you well in your future career. You will also gain useful skills in statistics.

### **What we do in this seminar**

- ✦ **During the spring term**, we will devote most of our time to reading and discussing empirical and theoretical articles on either the self or culture, alternating every year. In 2016, we focused on culture; in 2017, we will focus more on the self. Everyone is expected to read 2-3 research articles every week and provide questions/comments to the discussion leader.
- ✦ **During the fall term**, third year students will develop their own empirical research relating to the self and culture. This consists of finding a research question, formulating hypotheses, conducting a literature review, designing an experiment, and preparing materials for that proposed experiment.

- ✦ **During 4<sup>th</sup> year**, you will run your own experiment(s) and collect data. You will analyze your data and write up a research paper, submitting your final product as a senior thesis. (I might be away for a sabbatical leave in 2018. If so, you will be working with a substitute teacher).

### **Examples of research topics students have pursued in the past**

- Does self-compassion increase compassion toward others?
- What kind of feedback motivates people to overcome challenges?
- Do mastery goals increase learning from failure more than performance goals?
- Does self-enhancement increase well-being among the Japanese too?
- What kind of self-disclosure promotes interpersonal relationships?
- Is there a gender difference in how acceptable amae is?
- Does a threat toward one's national identity fuel outgroup hostility?
- Are the Japanese more self-enhancing when comparing to strangers but more self-effacing when comparing to friends?
- Does holding a hot pack influence one's evaluation of a person as warm and kind?
- Does a reminder of a good childhood memory increase one's satisfaction with current relationship?

### **Qualifications**

To join this seminar, you must:

- ✦ Commit to this seminar until the end of your 4<sup>th</sup> year. (If you plan to go abroad during this period, let me know beforehand so that we can plan your research accordingly.)
- ✦ Have successfully completed Interpersonal Relations (Social Psychology) I or II (preferably both) AND Research in Social Psychology (Social Research Methods).
- ✦ Take a statistics course prior to, or in conjunction with, this seminar.
- ✦ Recognize that it is a demanding course—students are expected to do a lot of work outside of class time.

### **Interested in joining this seminar?**

- ✦ Come to our seminar try-out: Friday Oct 14 in the 1<sup>st</sup> and/or 2<sup>nd</sup> period (S 601)  
Please e-mail me [REDACTED] by Oct 11 if you plan to attend.
- ✦ Explain why you are interested in psychology and what you want to achieve through this seminar in the application essay (Oct 24-28).
- ✦ Set up an interview: Monday Nov 7, 3~4 periods in [REDACTED].
- ✦ Send your questions to [REDACTED]