

Multi-cultural Identity in a Global World

A course focusing on the concepts of “Culture” and “Identity”, in the context of present-day globalization.

20 / 30 ECTS credits

Approved by the Board (Avdelingsstyret) October 8, 2004

Minor revision approved by Dean January 16, 2006

An English language international course at Oslo University College, Faculty of Education, to be implemented from the Spring of 2005.

Introduction

We live in a time of rapid changes, where information travels around the globe within seconds, and where we as ordinary people are influenced by impulses from all over the world. Children and young people from different cultures are influenced by the same rock-stars, whether they live in Nairobi, Tokyo, New York, Buenos Aires or Berlin. We see some of the same channels on TV, we use the same internet, we eat the same fast-food, and we travel from one continent to another more than ever. We live in a global world. We have become internationally conscious to a degree that was unthinkable in previous generations. This globalization affects everybody, also children in kindergartens and schools. Many children are also brought up in a country different from their parents' home-country. -- We will, in this course, attempt to probe into the complex matter of Culture and Identity, with special reference to Childhood.

Target Group

This course is designed to offer a full-time study-program in English for students of Early Childhood and Primary School Teacher Education, but students from other academic areas may also be accepted. Students must have fulfilled at least one year of their undergraduate degree studies at their home institution in order to be accepted.¹ The period of the course is 3 months for 20 credits and 4 months for 30 credits. The language of all teaching and supervision is English, and the students should therefore have a working knowledge of both spoken and written English.

Objectives

This course aims at giving impulses to the students to reflect upon the many aspects of Culture and Identity, the primary objectives being the following:

1. To focus on the concept of “Identity”, in order to increase the awareness of what factors constitute a persons identity, with special reference to childhood and learning process.

¹ The course can also be taken as an elective in-depth study program by Norwegian students in their final year of the Early Childhood Education program at Oslo University College.

2. To focus on the concept of “Culture”, in order to increase the awareness of what factors are considered central in one’s understanding of culture in general, and the culture of the individual student in particular.
3. To focus on both theoretical and practical aspects in the field of Intercultural Communication.
4. To give students the opportunity to make first hand experiences of each other's languages and cultures, the cultural background of the students being a vital resource in the discussions.
5. To give students the experience of learning to communicate across cultural and language borders.
6. To give students first-hand experience of the multiple cultural settings in kindergartens / schools in the Oslo region.
7. To create an inclusive international group, and to provide opportunities for contact with Norwegian students in the Faculty.

Content

The course is concerned with the topics of Culture and Identity with special reference to Childhood and Education, and will address some basic questions:

1. What is Cultural Identity?
2. How to live in a changing Globalized World?
3. How to develop Multi-cultural Competence?

These fundamental questions will be treated through the following topics:

- Cultural Identity and Cultural Awareness
- Childhood and Identity Construction
- Intercultural Communication, theory and practical experience
- Culture and World-view
- Culture and Religion
- Culture and Ethics
- Human Rights and Childhood
- Cultural Identity and Racism
- Traditions, Festivals, and Rituals
- Processes of Globalization
- Global Consciousness
- Cross-cultural Competence
- Social Commitment in a Globalized World

Each theme will be treated from both a theoretical perspective, as well as from a practical point of view. The cultural background of the participants will be a vital resource in our discussions. The setting of Oslo, as an increasingly multi-cultural city, will also be an arena for contextualization.

The primary context for the discussions will be that of Kindergartens and Schools.

For the fieldwork, the students may choose their topic of interest in consultation with the supervisor, but it should be a topic within their area of professional interest, having an element of multi-cultural comparison.

Organisation

This is a full-time study-program covering a period of 3 months, where the topics will be treated through lectures, seminars, student-presentations and discussions. In addition to the period of regular hours of teaching, there will be a period of fieldwork, report-writing, and presentation. There will also be arrangements for a variety of excursions to museums, cultural and other institutions relevant to the course. The period of study will be from February to April, for 20 ECTS-credits, and from February to May, for 30 ECTS-credits. The students may decide to prolong their length of the stay from 3 to 4 months after arrival.

Students will be expected to share aspects of culture and language from their own countries as a basis for their own presentation and the discussions in the class.

The course will give opportunities to interact with Norwegian Students, who will be able to assist in practical matters and give some guidance for exploring the Oslo region.

The course includes fieldwork: Those who stay for 3 months (20 credits) will be expected to undertake an individual piece of fieldwork, for a period of 2 weeks. They are to submit a written presentation of approx. 4000 words, in English using a PC, and make an oral presentation of 20 minutes for the student group and its teachers. Those who stay for 4 months (30 credits), will have fieldwork over a period of 4 weeks. They will submit a written presentation of 7000 – 8000 words, and make an oral presentation of 30 minutes for the student group and its teachers.

The course will have its own website, with relevant background material. Students will be expected to contribute actively towards building this website, including the presentation of their own culture.

The students will be given e-mail addresses and may use computers in the student-areas of the department. Necessary guidance and support will be given.

Assessment and Credits (ECTS)

Applicable to Norwegian students only: Suitability

Student participation in course work is assessed in relation to suitability for the teaching profession. “Assessment of suitability will be a part of the overall evaluation of the students’ subject-specific, pedagogical and personal qualifications for work as a teacher.” (Cf. regulations pertaining to suitability assessment in teacher education, from the Ministry of Education, 1999).

Course Requirements

The right to take the examination depends on the successful fulfilment of course requirements. Obligatory course assignments which are not completed by the agreed closing date will not be accepted, and the students lose their right to take the examination. Students are responsible themselves for keeping informed about relevant deadlines. In cases of illness or other inconveniences, students must make an appointment with their tutors for an extension, within the time limit of the course requirement. Requirements which have been handed in at the right time but which have not been accepted, will be given a new deadline. In cases where course requirements are on time but are not accepted, students are entitled to at least one and maximum two new attempts. Students who have lost their right to take the examination because of unaccepted course requirements, must get in touch with their tutors to make another appointment about completing the requirement the following term/study year.

Requirements for all students, 20/30 ECTS credit-points:

1. Active participation in classes and discussions (minimum 80% attendance)
2. Individual presentation of one's own culture with reference to educational challenges

Exam

Exam portfolio for 20 ECTS credit-points:

1. One paper on a subject treated in the course, of approx. 2000 words (25% of final grade)
2. Fieldwork paper, of 4000-5000 words, with following presentation in class (75% of final grade)

Exam portfolio for 30 ECTS credit-points:

1. One paper on a subject treated in the course, of approx. 2000 words (pass/fail)
2. Fieldwork paper, of 6000-7000 words, based on an expanded period of fieldwork, with following presentation in class (51% of final grade)
3. Oral examination based on fieldwork report and course syllabus (49% of final grade)

The final certificate will be awarded upon the completion of the above-mentioned requirements and examinations. The overall and final grade will be based on the grading of each of the exam-components, according to the percentage indicated for each one. The award of a certificate at the end of the course will give 20/30 European Credits.

The exam portfolio will be assessed by internal examiners.

Grading scale

Grading will be according to the ECTS-grading scale, with A-E as pass grades and F as fail grade. Criteria for the different grades will be presented to the students at the beginning of the course.

Re-examination

In case of failing the exam or in case of valid absence at the time of the exam, the student is entitled to make a renewed attempt the next semester. The re-examination will be arranged in the same manner as the regular exam. The students are themselves responsible for registering for the re-examination within given deadlines.

Literature

For 20 ECTS credits, approximately 920 pages, and for the 30-credit option additional 300 pages of elective literature

Culture:

- Adler, Peter S.: "Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Multiculturalism", in Bennett, Milton J. ed. (1998). *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press. pp.225-246 (22pp)
- Bennett, Janet M.: "Transition Shock: Putting Culture Shock in Perspective", in Bennett, Milton J. ed. (1998). *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press. pp.215-224 (10pp)
- McGuire, Meredith B. (1997) 4th edition. *Religion. The Social Context*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, chaps.1-4 (total 148pp). Book
- Samovar, Larry A. & Richard E. Porter (2004), 5th edition: *Communication between Cultures*. Wadsworth Publishing Company, chaps. 1-5, 7, 9-10 (total 283pp) Book.

Ward, C., S.Bochner & A.Furnham (2001) *The Psychology of Culture Shock*. East Sussex: Routledge. Chaps. 11-12, pp.247-281 (35pp)

Pedagogics:

- Alderson, Priscilla (2000). "The rights of young children", in Penn, H., *Early Childhood Services*. Buckingham: Open University Press, pp.158-169 (12pp).
- Bae, Berit (1995): "The Child's Experience as a Learner in Pre School Institutions", in E. Befring, ed.: *Teacher Education for Equality*. Papers from the 20th Annual ATEE Conference, Oslo College, 1995: 452-458 (9pp).
- Bae, Berit (2001): "Qualitative Aspects of Dialogue between Children and Adults in Pre-school Institutions". Paper at the 23rd World Congress of OMEP, Santiago, Chile, 2001 (7pp)
- Bæck, Unn-Doris Karlsen (2005) "School as an arena for activating cultural capital", i *Nordisk Pedagogikk* 3/2005, pp 217-228 (12s)
- Eide, Brit, og Nina Winger (2005) "From the children's point of view: methodological and ethical challenges", in Clark, A., A.T.Kjørholt and P.Moss: *Beyond Listening*. Bristol: The Policy Press, pp 71-89 (17s)
- Jans, M. (2004). "Children as citizens. Towards a contemporary notion of the child participation", in *Childhood 2004:1*, 27-44 (18pp).
- Jenssen, A-M & S-E Claussen, (2004) "Children and family dissolutions in Norway. The impact of concensual unions", in *Childhood 2004:1*, 65-81 (17pp)
- Kjørholt, Anne T.(2001): "The participating child. A vital pillar in this century", in *Nordisk pedagogik* 21, 65-81 (17pp)
- Kjørholt, Anne T.(2003): "'Imagined communities'. The local community as a place for 'children's culture' and social participation in Norway". Chap.10 in K.F.Olwig & E.Gulløv, eds. (2003) *Children's Places. Cross-cultural perspectives*. London: Routledge, Introduction (20pp)
- Lidén, Hilde (2003): "Common neighbourhoods – diversified lives: growing up in urban Norway". Chap.6 in K.F.Olwig & E.Gulløv, eds. (2003) *Children's Places. Cross-cultural perspectives*. London: Routledge, Introduction (20pp)
- Rasmussen, Kim (2004): "Places for children. Children's places", in *Childhood 2004:2*, 155-173 (19pp)

Sociology:

- Giddens, Anthony (1989) *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Chap.2 "Culture and Society", pp.36-43; chap.3: "A changing World", pp.50-76; chap.15: "Mass Media and Communication", pp.454-457, 465-486 (total: 62pp).
- Giddens, Anthony (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Chap.1 "The Contour of High Modernity", 10-34p, chap.3 The Trajectory of the Self", 70-108, chap.6 "Tribulations of the Self", 181-208 (total: 92pp). Book.
- Steger, Manfred B. (2003). *Globalization. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford Univ. Press Chaps. 1, 2, 5, and 7 (total: 40pp, average size)

Music:

- Gravlie, Tom (1993) "The Resonant Community". *Nordic sounds*, no. 3/1994: 3-8 (6pp)
- Knudsen, Jan Sverre (2001). "Dancing cueca "with your coat on": the role of traditional Chilean dance in an immigrant community". *British journal of ethnomusicology* 10, no. ii: 61-83.
- Ruud, Even (1998): *Music Therapy: Improvisation, Communication, and Culture*, chap.3: "Music and Identity", pp.31-47. Gilsum, New Hampshire: Barcelona Publishers (17pp).
- Skyllstad, Kjell. "The Resonant Community. Fostering Interracial Understanding through Music". Summary Report 1993:3-18, University of Oslo (16pp)

The list of Literature may be subject to revision upon approval of Head of Studies.