



Cultural Psychology and Social Practice

Description

The professional programme in Cultural Psychology and Social Practice provides students with the knowledge and skills to apply cultural psychology to contemporary social issues. Some of these 'real world' issues are immigration, living in cities, fostering creativity and innovation, commemorative sites and practices, social conflict and change, the politics of diagnoses, the psychologization of contemporary culture, and public engagement with art, museums, zoos and aquariums. Students learn how to flexibly use cultural psychological theory and methodology to explore the complexities of different sites of social practice.

The programme is organized around intensive seminars that introduce students to key ideas in cultural psychology, help them to begin to define and develop a research project, and to provide them with perspectives to take into their internship. Many of these seminars will be lead by leading cultural psychologists from various universities around the World who are linked to the programme through its international network. The international faculty members of the Programme will visit AAU for short periods of time for intensive seminars, and will continue the advising of the students through videoconferences and other forms of contemporary collaborative techniques.

In addition, the Programme makes use of the more permanent international visitors who come to the Niels Bohr Centre of Cultural Psychology as post-doctoral or pre-doctoral scholars. Different faculty from other Danish universities will also be integrated into the work of the programme. **The goal is to establish a vigorous, substantive, and productive Professional Programme that becomes the internationally leading framework for education of cultural psychologists** for various functions in social contexts where such expertise is needed. This goal will be achieved through close linking of the educational functions of the Professional Programme with the research activities in the Niels Bohr Centre of Cultural Psychology.

Theoretical and Methodological coverage of the Programme

The Programme is original in its deeply trans-disciplinary orientation in all components of its educational mission—theory, methodology, and practice in internships in practical settings. It unites the theoretical traditions of Cultural psychology, Anthropology, Semiotics, Social Representations Theory, and Social Practice theory

In terms of methodological tools the students will master, the Programme offers top of the line preparation in Idiographic bases for generalizable knowledge: general knowledge in social practice, ethnographic methods, various strategies of interviewing, new IT-based research techniques, microgenetic, mesogenetic, and macrogenetic methods, and analytic techniques of human cultural practices through the Trajectory Equalfinality Model.

BASIC CURRICULUM

Semester 7

Higher Applied Cultural Psychology (10 ETCS-points):

This course offers an introduction to some of the basic themes, theories, concepts and methods used by cultural psychologists. It will begin with lectures and seminars lead by Aalborg faculty that will provide the foundations for further learning. Later in the semester intensive workshops will be held by leading cultural psychologists from in and outside the university. Some topics covered from a cultural perspective will be migration, creativity, geropsychology, urban environments, collective memory, community health, education, diagnoses and pathologies, as well as more theoretical issues, such as dialogical approaches, models of causality, and the history of psychology. The course aims to offer the requisite theoretical and methodological tools for students to pursue their internship and research in the proceeding semesters.

Semester 8

Expanded Higher Applied Cultural Psychology (15 ECTS-points)

The aim of this course will be on further applying cultural psychology know-how to concrete areas of social practice. The course will adopt an idiographic approach, focused on exploring the complexities of single cases, such as an immigrant family's struggles adjusting to Danish society or the organizational dynamics of a particular NGO.

Psychological Internship (15 ECTS-points)

Students will have a choice to work with faculty members on a research project with the aim of developing professional practice according to regulations decided by the studyboard. A description of different research projects offered by the programme is given below. Students will need to write a report describing their experience to a faculty member in the department.

Semester 9

Theory, Practice and Scientific Method (15 ECTS-points)

This course brings ideas from the previous two semesters together in order to work towards students producing a publishable scientific paper. It will provide students with the expertise to do this. Students will be able to do a project already designed by a faculty member or to invent their own. Instruction will happen through a series of seminars focused on developing students' projects.

Semester 10

In this semester students produce a Thesis. This project can involve empirical work framed with cultural psychological theory, though this is not required. Students also have the opportunity to integrate their internship work with their thesis.

Possible Internal Research Projects for Internship

Human migration: This will involve observing, interviewing and analyzing immigrant children and their families' interaction with Danish society. Students will work with families from the Middle East, Somalia and Europe to help them to cope with their new living circumstances. There will also be studies of Danes traveling to do work abroad.

Urban psychology: Aalborg is currently going through a major urban transformation. Students explore how the city becomes a resource and obstacle for individuals and families. It develops a 'walk-along' method, whereby participants experience is captured online as the move through the city. Students will help city planners to make more psychologically livable places.

Creativity and innovation: This project explores the emergence of innovations within a variety of contexts, such as academic researchers, sports teams and design centers. Analysis will involve looking at group discussions and observation as well as participants' own accounts of creativity occurring during group activities. Students will give feedback to the group to help further foster creativity there.

Collective Remembering: This project explores how individuals and groups reconstruct the past. This happens through public discourse and commemorations. With regard to the latter this project looks at how they are organized, the dynamics of decision-making and how publics engage with the event. The project will involve collecting interview and observational data as well as analyzing it. Students will help event organizers think through what they want to accomplish and how to do so.

Public Engagement with Contemporary Art: This project investigates how museums make decisions about what goes in an exhibit and how to display it as well as how the museum's visitors engage with work there. It will involve interviews and the use of SEBE cameras to record the subjective experience of

moving through an exhibit. Students will help museums attract more visitors and better engage them.

Dynamics of Diagnoses in Contemporary Society: This project explores how suffering is increasingly being interpreted through lenses offered by psychiatry and its diagnoses, both on societal and individual levels. It will involve interviews with people, who have received a psychiatric diagnosis, coupled with cultural analyses of public discussions of suffering in contemporary society.

Aalborg Faculty

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