



KIIS Argentina Program, Summer 2026

PSY 299 Emotions Around The World

Professor: Dr. Alison Heck

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

Course Description

This course examines scientific theories and research on human emotion, addressing questions such as: Are emotions universal or do they depend on cultural values and social contexts? How do people perceive and express emotions across cultures, and how do they regulate them in everyday life? Students will study classic and contemporary theories, explore emotion's role in cognition and social behavior, and analyze cross-cultural findings with special attention to Latin American perspectives. Class activities and local observations in Buenos Aires will provide opportunities to connect theory with lived experience. By the end of the course, students will develop a richer, more culturally informed understanding of the human emotional experience.

Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

Students will...

- 1) Differentiate between major scientific theories of emotion, including evolutionary,

- cognitive, and sociocultural perspectives.
- 2) Analyze how cultural values and social contexts in Argentina shape emotional expression, regulation, and interpersonal dynamics.
 - 3) Apply cross-cultural and emotion research methods to observe and interpret emotional behavior in everyday settings in Buenos Aires.
 - 4) Synthesize theory and lived experience to articulate a culturally informed understanding of human emotion through written and oral reflection.

Major Topics Covered in the Course

Emotion theories, emotion perception (i.e., detection, discrimination, recognition), emotion expression (through face, voice, body, art, and language), emotional intelligence (e.g., emotion regulation, emotion understanding), research methods in emotion.

Required Readings and Materials

Most readings will be provided to students using a shared Google Classroom prior to the beginning of the course. Students will need to have the readings available (either as hard copies or digital copies on a laptop or tablet) when we cover them during the program.

Additionally, I will ask you to purchase and read the following book (available in print or digital formats):

Between Us: How Cultures Create Emotions by Batja Mesquita

Publication Date: 2022

ISBN-10: 1324002441

ISBN-13: 978-1324002444

Attendance

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

Graded Assignments

The course will involve the following assignments:

- Pre- and Post-Quiz
- Reading Discussions and Activities
- Inside/Outside Emotion Journal
- Emotion-in-the-Streets Photo/Video Essay
- *Between Us* Book Review
- Creative Comparative Project

More information will be provided in class and in the class Google Classroom folder for the various assignments – the section below is a brief summary of each assignment type.

Pre- and Post-Quiz

This is an assessment that will be given during our first and last class days – you will be asked questions about the psychology of emotions that will be relevant to the material we will be covering during the course of the program. This will allow me to assess whether the key learning outcomes have been achieved by the end of the program.

Reading Discussions and Class Activities

During the program, you will be assigned required readings and activities that relate back to the topics we will be discussing during our time in Argentina. Reflections/discussions will occur during class sessions.

Inside/Outside Emotion Journal

You will keep a weekly journal (written or multimodal, e.g., audiovisual) that focuses on a self-reflection on your “inside” emotions (i.e., an emotional moment you experienced that week in Buenos Aires) vs. field observations of “outside” emotions (i.e., a situation in which you observed others’ emotional expressions in public). You will be asked to reflect upon your experiences and do a cross-cultural comparison (own vs. Argentine culture) based on that experience. The purpose of this assignment is to get you to develop a deeper, more culturally informed understanding of emotion by documenting both your own and others’ emotions while abroad.

Emotion-in-the-Streets Photo/Video Essay

During the heart of our time in Buenos Aires (~Week 2), you will submit a short digital project (5-7 minute video or 10-12 curated photos with captions). When on your excursions and in your time exploring Buenos Aires, you should be looking out for ways in which emotions are publicly expressed – through body language, murals, street performances, tango, music, or protests. The goal is for you to apply theory and concepts related to emotion to lived culture and to analyze how Argentine society makes emotion visible in urban life. *Note: when taking pictures or recording, respect the privacy of those around you – you should not be singling out individuals and taking pictures/videos without their permission.*

Between Us In Buenos Aires: Book Review

In addition to the readings assigned over the four weeks, you will also submit a review of the assigned book, *Between Us: How Cultures Create Emotions*, by Batja Mesquita around Week 3. The format you choose may vary (i.e., short written view, podcast/video reflection, visual/digital poster or infographic). The purpose of the assignment is for you to critically engage with the book by connecting its key ideas to your observations and experiences of emotional life in Argentina as well as developing your conclusion on your stance on the great debate: are emotions universal or are they learned (i.e., socially constructed)?

Creative Comparative Project

The purpose of this culminating project (Week 4) is to have you compare the emotional norms in Buenos Aires (and Argentina more broadly) with those of your home culture, using fieldwork, readings, and creative expressions. The format is flexible – choose a medium (e.g., podcast episode, zine, short film, illustrated essay, etc.) that best fits your strengths.

AI Statement (Student Use)

Specific assignments in this class could permit or even encourage the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools, such as ChatGPT. The default is that such use is disallowed unless otherwise stated. Any such use must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. It is each student's responsibility to assess the validity and applicability of any GAI output that is submitted: you bear the final responsibility. Violations of this policy will be considered academic dishonesty. Different KIIS classes could implement different AI policies, and it is student responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

Statement on Faculty Use of Generative AI in Course Materials

Portions of the materials developed for this course, including assignment prompts, excursion guides, and activity outlines, may be created or refined with the assistance of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT by OpenAI). These tools will be used under the direction of the instructor to support clarity, structure, and alignment with learning objectives. All content will be reviewed and adapted to meet the specific needs of the course and student learning outcomes.

Grading

Course grades will be based on the total number of points earned on each of the activities. Letter grades for the course will be assigned as follows:

90-100% of the total points available = A

80-89% of the total points available = B

70-79% of the total points available = C

60-69% of the total points available = D

0-59% of the total points available = F

Source of points	Percentage of Total Grade
Pre-/Post-Quiz	10%
Reading Discussions and Class Activities	20%
Inside/Outside Weekly Emotion Journal	20%
<i>Between Us</i> Book Review	15%
Emotion-in-the-Streets Photo/Video Essay	15%
Creative Comparative Project	20%

Late Work/Make-up Work

Late work or make-up work will be given at the discretion of the instructor. The validity of an excuse given as a reason for missing an exam or assignment will be determined by the instructor with consultation from the program director if needed. The instructor reserves the right to not allow late work or make-up work, or to give late or make-up work which is more difficult, less convenient, or in a different form than the original.

What to bring to class

1. The reading for the day (can be electronic version or paper).
2. Laptop, tablet, phone, camera, or any device that can access the web and take pictures.
3. Something to write with and on.

Disability Accommodation

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1- 270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867/ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of

Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eeo/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.

Tentative Topic Schedule – Will Change As Itinerary Finalized

Week 1: Foundations of Emotion & Theories (May 21st – May 24th)

- Themes: What is emotion? Biological vs. cognitive theories; universality vs. cultural relativity.
- Readings: Classic emotion theory (e.g., Darwin, Ekman) and critiques (Barrett).
- Local Connection: Orientation walk in Buenos Aires: observing expressions, gestures, and emotional tone in public spaces. Field observations in cafés, plazas, and markets (e.g., San Telmo Market). Focus on greetings, conflicts, laughter, and displays of affection.
- Planned Excursions: City Center walking tour; Feria de San Telmo
- Activity: Small-group discussion: Are observed emotions recognizable/universal, or context-specific?
- Assignments:
 - *Inside/Outside Journal Week #1*
 - *Pre-Quiz*

Week 2: Emotion in Cultural Contexts (May 25th – May 31st)

- Themes: How culture shapes emotional norms; collectivist vs. individualist perspectives.
- Readings: Studies on emotion in Latin America, with a focus on *familismo*, *simpatía*, and expressive culture.
- Local Connection: Attend a tango class/performance to explore embodied emotion and identity in Argentine culture.
- Planned Excursions: Central Bank Museum, Tango class, Teatro Colon, Milonga
- Activity: Guided analysis of artwork/performances as emotional expressions tied to cultural history.
- Assignments:
 - *Inside/Outside Journal Week #2*
 - *Emotion-in-the-Streets Photo/Video Essay*

Week 3: Emotion in Everyday Argentine Life (June 1st – June 7th)

- Themes: Emotion and social interaction: politeness, intimacy, conflict, and public expression.
- Readings: Ethnographic accounts of Argentine emotional culture; research on emotional regulation strategies.
- Local Connection: Visit a local cultural institution (e.g., Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires - MALBA), examining how Argentine art conveys emotion.
- Planned Excursions: La Bomba de Tiempo, Central Bank Museum/Congress Tour, Ex-ESMA & Espacio Memoria, Evita Museum & MALBA
- Activity: Conduct brief ethnographic field notes on “emotional scripts” observed in public spaces.
- Assignments:
 - *Inside/Outside Journal Week #3*
 - *Between Us* Book Review

Week 4: Emotion, Identity, and Global Perspectives (June 8th – June 15th)

- Themes: Emotion and identity; globalization and changing norms of emotional expression.
- Readings: Contemporary cross-cultural research integrating neuroscience, psychology, and anthropology.
- Local Connection: Emotion and cultural display rules – considerations for government officials and other leaders
- Planned Excursions: US Embassy Foreign Service Officer Talk, La Casa Rosada, Asado & Wine Lecture
- Activity: Final group discussion comparing theories of emotion with embodied experiences in Buenos Aires.
- Assignments:
 - *Inside/Outside Journal Week #4*
 - *Creative Comparative Project*
 - *Post-Quiz*