

Cultural Studies

Course # HUSS 1033

Credits 3

Course Description

The course examines the concepts of *culture*, *tradition*, and *change* in Central Asia, emphasizing how geography, environment, and economy shape cultural landscapes and practices. It explores the factors that have produced the region's cultural complexities and how life-cycle events (such as marriage and death), verbal arts, music, films, and dance embody and transmit cultural memory and values. Customs and practices are considered dynamic, continually adapting to ecological conditions, socio-economic transformations, and global influences. The course highlights how cultural traditions and values shape economic behavior, labor practices, and institutional development, offering insights into the interplay between culture and economic growth, as well as foregrounding the role of natural resources, climate, and ecosystems in shaping livelihoods, settlement patterns, and cultural adaptation, while addressing the challenges of modernization, globalization, and environmental change. Students will also engage with debates about the role of state and non-state institutions, as well as global organizations, in safeguarding and revitalizing cultural and ecological heritage. Cultural expressions are approached not only as legacies of a complex past but also as vital resources for fostering sustainability, innovation, intercultural understanding, and cooperation in contemporary societies.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Explore values, customs, and social systems and practices of various cultures to interpret the diversity of Central Asian cultures.
- Analyze the diversity of Central Asian cultural traditions, life-cycle rituals, and expressive arts, and explain how they are shaped by geography and environment.
- Evaluate how cultural heritage (festivals, sacred sites, crafts, music) contributes to local and regional economies, including tourism, livelihoods, and creative industries.
- Design and present a creative exhibition that integrates cultural, economic, and environmental perspectives.

Course Assessments and Grading

Item	Weight
<i>Class participation</i>	10%
<i>Self-Reflection Essay: "Me and my culture"</i>	20%

(300-400 words): Week 1	
Cultural – Economic -Environment Mapping	20%
Group Oral Presentation (7-10 minutes)	20%
Creative Exhibition: “Traditions in Transition”	30%