

ICC 250E INTRODUCTION TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Term
Lecturer:
E-mail:

Office Hours:

Class Meetings:

Prerequisite: open to all language levels; taught in English.

Students: ISA students

Contact hours: 45

I. Course Description

This course examines questions of identity, culture, and global citizenship through self-reflection about experience outside one's home country or culture. It attends to the dynamics, and the slipperiness, of distinguishing between international and intercultural experience. Though it is intended for students who are engaged in transnational study abroad, its lessons are equally applicable to domestic study away or even to cross-cultural experience in one's own "back yard."

An immediate purpose of the course is to equip students with some of the tools and knowledge necessary for enhancing their experience abroad/away by coming to a fuller appreciation of how culture informs the beliefs, values and behaviors of groups and individuals. To this end, students will be asked to engage with texts and theories about the nature of experiential learning as well as some popular models for comparing cultures (Hofstede; Meyer) and for understanding and acquiring intercultural competence (Bennett; Paige; Harvey). We will explore travel abroad as an opportunity to learn how to be more flexible, mindful and sensitive when dealing with change, conflict, ambiguity and uncertainty as matters of cultural difference.

Collaborating cross-culturally and promoting intercultural understanding is more important now than ever. Therefore, developing intercultural skills in this new globalized world can be seen as essential to personal and professional growth beyond college, as a life-long pursuit. These skills may enable students to feel more at home in a complex and interconnected world, as well as to identify ways of acting ethically in pursuit of values associated with global citizenship. It is expected that discussions of topics such as the diversity of verbal and non-verbal communication styles, the nature of in-group ethnocentrism and prejudice against out-groups, and the plurality of morality codes found in the world will inspire ongoing global engagement that operates from a position of respect for otherness.

II. Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and explain several key theories, concepts and frameworks related to personal development through cross-cultural interaction on study abroad.
2. Be able to differentiate between cultural, universal, individual, and situational factors that form our subject positions/identities (corresponds to "Cultural Self-Awareness" on AAC&U rubric).
3. Increase our awareness of the dynamics of living and working in culturally diverse contexts; who already has intercultural skills, and who needs them?
4. Recognize dimensions of more than one worldview in order to understand events and behaviors experienced as foreign to your home culture or identity (corresponds to "Empathy" on AAC&U rubric).
5. Use theories of culture and intercultural competence drawn from various disciplines to improve the clarity with which we speak about factors comprising our individual and group identities.
6. Understand stereotyping, bias and prejudice in intercultural and international settings as features of a culturally pluralistic world—that is, as more than the moral failings of individuals.
7. Be aware of differences between *perception* and *perspective*, and develop the ability to shift frames of reference in pursuit of appropriate, effective cultural interactions.
8. Learn to situate contemporary discussions of tolerance, difference, multiculturalism and diversity within established frameworks provided by intercultural theory.
9. Learn some basic metacognitive strategies for mindful travel, enhanced self-awareness, and intercultural conflict resolution.
10. After careful engagement with various models for self-reflection, be able to accurately and diplomatically represent your perceived home culture while abroad.

III. Course Content (order of content may be modified)

1. Why intercultural communication?
 - a. Cultural diversity and the forces of globalization in the 21st century.
 - b. Distinction between international and intercultural relations
2. Cultural Identity negotiation
 - a. Students abroad
 - b. Doing business in intercultural contexts
 - c. Immigrants, transients,
3. What is culture and why does it matter? Why is it essential to modify our behaviors and communication styles when dealing with others whose beliefs and values may differ from ours?
4. Defining culture and recognizing cultural differences
 - a. Bennett's DMIS
 - b. The iceberg metaphor and the "silent" language
 - c. Why we ask Could this behavior be cultural?

5. Components of intercultural or “global” competence as measurable educational outcomes
 - a. Soft and transferable skills associated with study abroad
 - b.
6. Frameworks for comparing cultures
 - a. Edward Hall’s anthropological research and the Foreign Service Institute
 - b. Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions; critiques of the latter
 - c. Erin Meyer’s updating of Hofstede
7. Cultural humility
 - a. Kathryn Sorrell ethics and politics in intercultural settings
8. In-groups and out-groups: getting at the nature of “othering”
 - a. (racism, prejudice, negative stereotyping, ethnocentrism),
9. Cross-cultural intelligence
 - a. Politeness theory and rapport management
 - b. ‘Face’
 - c. Mindfulness
10. Uses and abuses of Global Citizenship
 - a. “Real” citizenship; passport markets, stateless populations
 - b. Cosmopolitanism
 - c. Patriotism and Nationalism.

IV. Required Text

A reader will be made available with any articles not available online. Other articles and web resources will be provided via Schoology.

Bibliography

We will read selections, articles and excerpts from the following education leaders, intercultural theorists and practitioners. Instructors may prepare a reader with selections from Gordon Allport, Milton and Janet Bennett, Tara Harvey, Kathryn Sorrells, Stella Ting-Toomey, Fons Trompenaars, Onwumechili et al., Guy Deutscher, Geert Hofstede, Erin Meyer, Beverly Tatum.

- Abrahamian, Atossa Araxia (2015). *The Cosmopolites: The Coming of the Global Citizen*. Columbia Global Reports.
- Allport, Gordon (1954). The Nature of Prejudice. [Excerpts about in-groups and out-groups.]
- Bennett, M.J (2004). “Becoming Interculturally Competent.” In J.S. Wurzel (Ed.) *Toward multiculturalism: A reader in multicultural education*. Newton, MA: intercultural Resource Corporation. [11pp]
- Dewey, John (1938). Students will have access to a slide deck with salient quotations from Dewey and David Kolb about the nature of experience and how one learns from it. “Experience and Education.” https://archive.org/stream/ExperienceAndEducation-JohnDewey/dewey-edu-experience_djvu.txt

- Douthat, Ross (2016). “The Myth of Cosmopolitanism.” *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/03/opinion/sunday/the-myth-of-cosmopolitanism.html>
- “The Others.” *The Economist* (2009). Editorial about global mobility and the concept of “home.” <https://www.economist.com/christmas-specials/2009/12/17/the-others>
- Harvey, Tara. “Cultural Dimensions.” *True North Intercultural Blog*. <https://www.truenorthintercultural.com/blog/cultural-dimensions>
- Hofstede, Geert (1990). *Culture’s Consequences*. [Excerpts.]
- Martin, Judith & Nakayama, Thomas (2018). "Culture, Communication and Conflict" [34pp.] <https://www.culturaldetective.com/files/pdf/Theory%20Underlying%20CD.pdf>
- Molinsky, Andy (2013). *Global Dexterity*. <https://www.andymolinsky.com/>
- Nussbaum, Martha (1994). “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism.” *Boston Review*. 01 October. Online. <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/martha-nussbaum-patriotism-and-cosmopolitanism/>
- Onwumechili, Chuka (2003). “In a Deep Valley with Mountains to Climb: Exploring Identity and Multiple Re-acculturation.” <https://works.bepress.com/chuka-onwumechili/1/>
- Pearce, W. B., & Littlejohn, S. W. (1997). *Moral conflict: When social worlds collide*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ray, Satyajit (1984). Film: *Home and the World*. Award-winning film thematizing issues of localism and national patriotic pride v. cosmopolitanism and universalism.
- Shweder, Richard (2021). “The Risky Cartography of Drawing Moral Maps.” In *Universalism without Uniformity*, ed. Cassinetti & Manon.
- Simmel, G., 1999. *The Stranger*. In: G. Lemert, ed. *Social theory: the multicultural and classic readings*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 184-189
- Sorrell, Kathryn (2020). *Intercultural Communication: Globalization and Social Justice*. <https://globalsolidaritylocalaction.sites.haverford.edu/about/facilitators-guide/>
- Spencer-Oatey, Helen (2016). Compendium of definitions of culture: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad-rip/openhouse/interculturalskills_old/core_concept_compilations/global_pad_-_what_is_culture.pdf
- Storti, Craig. *Figuring Foreigners Out*. (Excerpts featuring cultural incidents and case studies.)
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating across cultures*. New York: The Guilford Press. [Selections.]
- Zemach-Bersin, T. (2008). “American Students Abroad Can’t be Global Citizens.” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 54(26), p. A34.

V.I. How to succeed in this course:

To successfully complete this course, attendance is essential as enables the necessary **participation**. Both spontaneous and prepared interaction are categories used in the evaluation.

Due to the variety of topics covered in this course, come **prepared**. Becoming an **active learner** is one of the best ways to successfully finish this course: come always prepared to class: use the syllabus to be aware about will be covered or due in class, do all assignments before class, review before the class and be organized.

V.II. Course evaluation:

Grades will be determined according to the following.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Discussion Board Responses | 20% |
| Written Assignment: “Locating Yourself in Culture” | 20% |
| Midterm Knowledge Check. Date: | 20% |
| Group Project: Applying Cultural Dimensions | 10% |
| Final Analysis Paper or Presentation: Due date: | 30% |

Assignments and Assessments:

Each week students will be asked to read two short to medium-length texts: they can be book chapters, articles, blog posts, etc. Most, if not all, are available online. There will be an in-class assessment with questions about the content of the readings.

Written work: edited, written self-reflection is a key component of the course. Ability to communicate ideas and willingness to analyze and reflect will be a primary focus. Writing should be thoughtful, clear and free of major grammatical errors. The course assignments are organized as steps to a project, with the final step being demonstrated integration of course knowledge.

Topics to be covered fall into three modules, with a final assignment due for each

Assignments

Discussion Board: Weekly ‘Respond and Reflect’ Group Discussion Posts

Each week, there will be an article or topic (with summarized background) posted to the discussion board and you will be asked to demonstrate your understanding of the issue at hand and reflect on the broader implications inherent in the topic. This assignment will take the form of a discussion board, so you will need to be aware that you are not repeating ideas already shared by your classmates. You are, however, required to respond to at least one of your fellow students’ responses.

Written assignment: Locating Yourself in Culture

By the end of Week Two, write a brief paper (3-5 pages, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double-spaced, standard 1-inch margins) reflecting on the concept of culture as it informs your own background beliefs, customs, and identifications. Though this is obviously personal, you are expected to think critically about the subject matter at hand and bring original ideas, thoughts and experiences into your responses. Papers will draw from course materials and discussions, citing

any ideas that are not originally your own, to support your exploration. This is more of a reflection paper than an argument. The depth, coherence, and quality of your ideas and reflection matter most.

Midterm assessment

Students will demonstrate command of the core concepts and vocabulary with a short Schoology assessment at the midpoint.

Group Project: Applying Cultural Frameworks to one or more host cultures

After seeing examples modeled by the instructor, students will work in small groups during class time to compare two countries using cultural dimensions from Hofstede, Meyer, Hall, etc. The instructor will provide an intercultural scenario for you to analyze using materials, discussions and readings from class. This will require you to apply the readings, ideas and concepts raised up to this point in the course to a specific prompt that will be posted on Schoology.

Final Analysis Paper or Presentation:

There will be various options for the final 5–7-page reflection paper or pre-approved digital storytelling project. Topics to select from will include ‘From Perception to Perspective’; ‘Is Moral Conflict Cultural’; ‘Who Among Us Gets to Be Global?’; and ‘Mindful Travel as an Ethical Practice’. Additional topics can be proposed to the instructor. This final project is designed to allow you to incorporate the various self-reflective, theoretical and experiential pieces of the course while digging deeper into the cultures of the study abroad sites where you have traveled/lived. Students will be graded on how well they have integrated course materials into their own cultural productions.

Participation

Students will need to come to class prepared. Both the attitude and the meaningfulness of the participation will be considered.

Grade dissemination:

During the first week, the students will be explained how they will learn of their grades from assignments and assessments

IMPORTANT: the dates outlined for the exam, quizzes and delivery of the work, including the oral presentation if appropriate, are **NON-MOVABLE** except for **FORCE MAJEURE**. The exceptions will have to be approved by the professor and academic direction.

If a student considers that there is a force majeure, he/she will have to show the document to the teacher at the time of the request. Without the corresponding document, any exception will be accepted.

The following are considered forces of cause majeure:

- medical reasons
- academic issues justified by the home university
- safe issues (appointment at the consulate, embassy or police)
- job interview
- return to the country of origin due to the loss of a close relative

VI. Grading scale

Final grades will be calculated according to the following scale:

| Grading Scale (%) | |
|-------------------|----|
| 94-100 | A |
| 90 – 93 | A- |
| 87 – 89 | B+ |
| 84 – 86 | B |
| 80 – 83 | B- |
| 77 – 79 | C+ |
| 74 – 76 | C |
| 70 – 73 | C- |
| 67 – 69 | D+ |
| 64 – 66 | D |
| 60 – 63 | D- |
| 0 – 59 | F |

Grade dispute:

The deadline for claiming grades is 30 days from the receipt of the certificate at the university of origin.

VII. Course policies

VII.I. Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory and is taken every class day and reflected in the course attendance sheet.

An 85% attendance rate is required for the successful completion of the course. Perfect attendance will be taken positively into account in the participation section.

If a student exceeds this limit, 10 points will be taken off of the final grade. Reaching a 20% of unexcused absences means that the transcript for this subject will show “not attended course”.

Excused absences: Medical Certificates that will be considered only if issued by a physician (not notes from the family explaining the student’s absence). The certificates must include the exact dates for which a student should be excused for having missed classes. Courses cannot be audited, so attendance is possible only for students enrolled in a specific class.

Punctuality: Students are expected to arrive on time to class and to return directly to class after class breaks. Arriving 10 minutes late (or more) and/or early class departures are considered unexcused absences and will be taken into account as half an absence.

Attending class is not only the presence in the classroom. The professor will encourage active participation in the course.

Auditors: Courses cannot be taken as auditors, thus attendance is possible only for students enrolled in a specific class.

VII.II. Conduct in class

Students who actively participate in classroom activities and who maintain a professional and respectful attitude will be evaluated positively. Students must not eat or use laptops during the class (unless specifically authorized by the teacher).

VII.III. Late work

One half point will be taken off (from the learning activities grade) for homework that is submitted late repeatedly. Late assignments will be corrected but will not be graded.

Missing a class does not release the student from completing the homework assigned or studying the topics covered in class that day.

VII.IV. Make-up Exams

If a student cannot be present for an examination for a valid reason (see V.II.) and approved by the professor and academic direction, a make-up exam will be given.

VII.V. Exam retention

After exams are graded, the teacher will review the examination with the class and collect all exams. The exams will be retained for one semester following the current one, and then they will be destroyed.

VII.VI. Academic Honesty

Students are expected to act in accordance with their university standards of conduct concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

VII.VII. Special accommodations

Students with special needs who require reasonable accommodations, special assistance or specific aid in this course (either for properly making-up classes, taking exams, etc.) should direct their request to Academic Coordination during the first days of the course.

Teaching staff is required to report any disclosures harassment or violence of any kind.