



Course Syllabus

Course Number

COMM 5350

Course Title

Intercultural Communications

Credit Hours

3

Instructor Contact Information: Bert Barry Primary E-Mail: barrybe@webster.edu

Course Description

In order to function effectively in an interdependent world we need to understand ourselves and get along with and understand people who are vastly different from ourselves. In this course students will gain a better self-understanding as they develop their interpersonal communication knowledge and skills and explore the extent to which thoughts and perceptions are shaped by cultural experience. Each week includes the following:

1. Study of theory and research pertaining to intercultural communication.
2. Participation in experiential learning activities to enhance self-awareness and the understanding of others.
3. Exploration of the values and customs of one of the cultural groups in your area.
4. Application of the knowledge gained in the class to classroom and other educational environments.

Course Prerequisites

While there are no prerequisites for this course, COMM 5350 Intercultural Communications is a requisite course at Webster University for the TESL/TEFL emphasis program. Students are expected to have study habits and writing and research skills to ensure academic success in graduate-level studies.

Course Objectives / Expected Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of intercultural communication and develop a working vocabulary of terms and concepts that relate to intercultural communication. Students will:

- Explore the importance of the roles of history and context in studying intercultural communication.
- Analyze a variety of representations of cultural communication in the media.
- Examine and become more sensitive to the complex relationship between culture and communication.
- Recognize the influence of cultural and ethnic groups on intercultural communication interactions.
- Become more willing, tolerant, flexible, self-reflexive and open in intercultural communication.

Required Textbooks / Readings

- Intercultural Communication [A Reader] by Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter and Edwin R. McDaniel (2004), 11th ed.
- Intercultural Communication in Context by Judith N. Martin and Thomas K. Nakayama, McGraw Hill (2004), 3rd ed.
- Selected readings/articles will be available online

Online Participation Expectation

The Discussions area is where we learn a lot about specific subjects through weekly discussion questions. You must post your original responses to the discussion question(s) before Sunday of each week. Early postings are strongly encouraged so your classmates will have more time to respond to your initial thoughts. Discussions are an important part of the course. Participation in the Discussions will count for 25 percent of your grade; you do not want to overlook this requirement.

To earn grades in the A and A- range, you will have to post your original responses to the discussion questions and give constructive responses to at least two classmate postings for that week. You must demonstrate a solid grasp of the

subject matter. The discussions must be uniquely insightful and you should be able to initiate thoughtful questions. A simple "I agree" is not a constructive response. I do not grade by the pound. Quality is very important.

During the 16 weeks of the course you have to post a minimum of 27 good original postings to earn a B for participation (270 out of 320 points). At B and B- range you must demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter, and be articulate. At the C level participation you must demonstrate a satisfactory comprehension of the subject matter. Obvious gaps in knowledge and understanding, and rare participation in discussions will contribute to a lower grade.

This course requires the reading of some controversial materials. To foster an effective learning environment, it is very important that we maintain civility and respect for each other, and be open to one other's viewpoints. We have the freedom to express our positions while avoiding personal insults and confrontations. Remember the Universal Golden Rule and "Treat others as you want to be treated."

DO NOT use attachments to post anything to the Discussion area.

Course Requirements

The Assignment area identifies assignments for each week as well as the weekly journals and provides the links for you to access each of them. Please do not get too far ahead of what we are working on in a particular week. Check the weekly schedule and plan your work accordingly, but please do not post information until the week that it is due. If you have any questions regarding this please contact the instructor.

Please note that I will not necessarily respond to every posting made. Also, technological and other delays will occur from time to time. If you need to contact me please send an e-mail to barrybe@webster.edu. I do not recommend sending e-mails through the Blackboard Vista site, as they often get lost in cyberspace.

Intercultural Experience Movie Reviews

You will be required to watch and review a number of movies over the course of the term. This assignment requires that you watch the assigned movies that deal with intercultural communication and write a 1-2 page critical review that you will submit via the assignments area by the assigned due date.

The goal of the movie reviews is for you to apply your understanding of intercultural communication to cultural interactions within movies. As you watch the movies, you should be reflecting on the ideas we have read and discussed for this class. Make an argument about some aspect (s) of the movie as they relate to intercultural communication.

Using Valle's layers of culture (Why is Culture Important? The Power of Culture, Multicultural Education a Caring-Centered, Reflective Approach by Valerie Ooka Pang), discuss the cultural aspects that you see in the film. What are the artifacts of culture that you recognized? What were the interactional patterns between people? What were the underlying values that you saw portrayed? Can you take one aspect of culture and look at the three layers?

1. Language, Symbols, and Artifacts (means of communication) â€" language, dialects preferred, proverbs, signs, jokes, stories, myths, analogies, folklore, art forms, heroes, dances, rituals, children's games, currency, holidays, history (family, national, and global).
2. Customs, Practices, and Interactional Patterns (means of interaction) â€" verbal (tone of voice, phrases used) and nonverbal (eye contact, proximity of stance, gestures) communication patterns, family behaviors, governmental and social institutions, conversational styles (formal-business, casual, ritualized), friendship patterns, community roles, gender roles.
3. Shared Values, Beliefs, Norms, and Expectations (values driving people, groups) â€" attitudes, religious and spiritual beliefs, fears, laws, standards, levels of political participation. Your reviews should provide critical, thoughtful insight and should be well organized and clearly written.

The following is a list of questions that may help you to determine a thesis. You may choose to specifically answer one or some of the questions provided, however, you are not tied to them.

- How do our perceptions of our own cultural identity influence our communication with others?
- How do stereotypes influence communication between different groups?
- How is language a means of preserving identity?
- What is the relationship between language and the way the reality is perceived?
- How do the character(s) resist being completely oppressed and disempowered by the dominant culture?
- What impact did incidents have on the development of character(s)?
- What were the primary challenges the character(s) faced in trying to get along?
- How did the character(s) react to these challenges?
- What the movie suggests about cultural differences, similarities, stereotypes and overgeneralization?
- What insights can we draw from this movie about intercultural communication?
- How this movie helps us understand the relationships among cultures, communication, context and power?

The following is a list of movies we will be reviewing for this class. These movies have been chosen because they portray

some of the characteristics of intercultural communication discussed in this class.

- Week 3 Do the Right Thing (1989)
- Week 4 Crash (2005)
- Week 7 Saving Face (2005)
- Week 8 Fools Rush In (1997) or Jungle Fever (1991)
- Week 9 Forest Gump (1994) or Whale Rider (2002)
- Week 11 My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)
- Week 14 Mississippi Masala (1991)

You can locate these movies at your local [Blockbuster](#). Also, I would recommend [Netflix](#), an online DVD movie rental service.

Reflective Journals

Keep a log of your reflections. Each week, you will write a short reaction paper describing how you will apply what you have learned this week to your future work in the classroom or other situations requiring intercultural communication.

Journal writing can assist you in better understanding yourself and can also help you to see your growth.

You should write a journal entry of approximately one page (you can exceed this limit if you wish) each week, for a total of sixteen entries.

Journal entries will be evaluated on the basis of your ability to engage in a meaningful way with the issues we are discussing and your ability to apply them in real world. Use your experiences to help you and I understand challenges and successes of intercultural communication.

Additional information on assignments is available in the Assignments area.

After the student submits an assignment the instructor will grade it and provide feedback in a timely manner. The student is encouraged to review the feedback by clicking on the Assignments link and then clicking Graded to learn what grade you earned and to review additional comments that the instructor may have made on the assignment.

Intercultural Experience Assignment You will be required to write a 10 page paper on an intercultural experience. Additional information on the project is available in the Assignments area. This final project will be completed step by step.

This final project, an Intercultural Experience paper, is designed to give you more familiarity with other cultures. Having actively reflected on your experiences with culturally different people can help you make sense of what happened. Also, it will allow you to assess what you have learned and changes in your communication in order to be a successful intercultural communicator.

After completing all of the below mentioned assignments, write a 10 page paper about your observations, reactions, thoughts, feelings elicited by the experience. You should then make connections between your experiences, assignments and concepts/theories of intercultural communication discussed in class.

- Week 2: Immigration Assignment
- Week 5: Intercultural Interview
- Week 6: Cultural Event Observation
- Week 12: Understanding Unfamiliar Cues
- Week 15: Intercultural Experience Paper (Pulling it all together for the final paper)

At this point you should be in the final phases of completing your Intercultural Experience project in preparation for turning it in by midnight Sunday of the sixteenth week.

The final project Intercultural Experience paper will be evaluated on the basis of your ability to engage in a meaningful way with the issues we discussing and your ability to apply them in the real world. To earn an "A" you have to exceed a typically competent fulfillment of this paper. Your paper must illustrate mastery of concepts/theories and penetrating insights in real-life context and extend the typical understanding of certain issues or concepts and their complexities. A "B" means that the connections between your experiences and concepts/theories are clear, and your research, thinking and writing are acceptable. The paper must illustrate general understanding of concepts/theories and applicability in real-life context. A "C" means a paper is complete but lacking in insightfulness, reflexivity. Research, thinking and writing are barely acceptable. A "D" is not acceptable.

The Intercultural Experience project will count for 30 percent of your grade.

You will lose 15 points (out of 300 points) for each day that it is late.

Your Intercultural Experience Project will be due by midnight (US Central Time) Sunday at the end of sixteenth week.

Assignment Submission

You are required to submit all assignments in a timely manner via the Blackboard Vista Assignments area. Blackboard Vista will stamp your submission date/time automatically. You are also recommended to contact your instructor right away and submit your assignments to your instructor personal email account as suggested.

Policies on Late Assignments

Due dates for each assignment are identified in the Assignments area. Assignments submitted late will likely be penalized unless there is a valid reason provided by the student.

Feedback Schedule

I will monitor the weekly student Discussions at least every other day and more often as time permits. The class-wide Discussions area should be used for all questions and comments so the entire class can benefit from the issues and questions you raise. If you have a private matter to discuss with me, send me an e-mail. If you are responding to a posting, you also have the option to post your document using the "Reply Privately" option.

Course Grading

Assignments	20% [50 points each]
Journals	20% [20 points each]
Discussions	25% [10 points each]
Quizzes	5%
Intercultural Experience Project	30% [300 points]

A*	93 - 100
A-	90 - 92.9
B+	87 - 89.9
B	83 - 86.9
B-	80 - 82.9
C+	77 - 79.9
C	70 - 76.9
F	0 - 69.9

* The University does not award A+ grades.

Policies on Plagiarism or Cheating

Academic Dishonesty: Students who are discovered cheating or committing plagiarism will be awarded a failing grade for the course, and may be subject to dismissal or further discipline.

I reserve the right to alter class policies and information in this syllabus. Students will be notified of changes by e-mail.

The Missouri Show-Me Standards are addressed within the content of this course. Identification of specific standards are included within course assignments. Integration of Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) standards and grade levels will be integrated into this course when appropriate.