

**SPC 408**  
**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**  
**SPRING 13**

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Office Hours: M, 1000 – 1230; T, 0730 – 0800; W, 1000-1230 ; R, 0730 – 0800\*  
\*And By Appointment

### **Course Description**

This course explores issues related to the intercultural communication process. We will consider the important role of context (social, cultural, and historical) in intercultural interactions (both verbal and non-verbal). We will examine the complex relationship between culture and communication in education, health, and business.

### **Required Course Materials**

Samovar, L.A., Porter, R. E. & McDaniel E.R. (2007). *Communication Between Cultures* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). United States: Wadsworth.

### **Student Learning Objectives**

You will be able to answer five broad questions concerning intercultural communication upon the completion of the course:

1. What is intercultural communication?
2. How do cultures differ communicatively?
3. What influences and impedes intercultural understanding?
4. What makes up cultural identities and cultural ways of speaking?
5. How do perception and context influence the process of communication, and how do cultures differ along these dimensions?

## **RULES OF ENGAGEMENT**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

If you know you will be absent for an extended period of time contact your Professor. The professor may excuse certain absences such as those authorized by the administration for participation in athletics and personal **emergencies** (severe personal or family illnesses, personal or family tragedies, work-related emergencies). Proof for excused absences must be documented within two weeks of the absence and must clearly state that the emergency **required** that the student miss the course on the date and at the time of the absence. If you are taking part in University-sponsored activities notify your Professor well ahead of absence. If you are absent for evaluated activities such as exams, papers, and presentations, you must have documentation for your absences. (Undocumented excuses will not be accepted.) When your absence is clearly beyond your control, and is documented, there is no penalty for make-ups. When your absence is not beyond your control, or is not documented, or you are not prepared, your grade for that assignment will be reduced by 50 percent. **NOTE:** if you are absent for any reason, you are responsible for material covered and any announcements made while you are gone. If you are absent on a day when presentations are made or exams administered there will be a 10 percent reduction in your grade for that assignment. You are allowed to miss class two times. The third absence will lower your grade to a D. After the fourth absence you will **FAIL**, and may be dropped from the course. It is your responsibility to drop the course. If you have not completed 67% of the course work, at any given time, or if the instructor does not believe you are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of the course you will be dropped from the course

## **TARDY POLICY**

You will be considered tardy if you are not in your seat when the professor starts calling roll. You will be considered tardy if you are in your seat and talking while the professor is trying to call roll or begin class. If you are not in the classroom when the professor closes the classroom door you are absent. Do not knock on the door. You are allowed to be tardy three times on the fourth time your grade will be lowered to a D, After the fifth time you will be dropped from the course.

**NOTE: Hats, Caps and Head Coverings of any type are not permitted on your head during class!!! Failure to remove your head covering upon request of the instructor results in an absence for the class.**

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Turn off all cellular phones, pagers, CD players, lap top computers, and any other electronic devices that might in any way disrupt class or disturb others. There will be a box to place these devices in when you enter the classroom. You may pick them up when you leave. If I see one of these devices in your hands or on or about your body during class time or any time I am present in the room or hear one you will immediately be dropped from the course.

## **PREPARATION AND PERFORMANCE**

It is your responsibility to come to class and come to class prepared. If your computer or printer does not work that is your problem not mine. If you are not ready to present do not blame your computer or printer. See attendance policy above. I do not care if your best friend has a pet that died that is no reason for you to miss class. I do not care if your best friend or roommate needs a ride to the doctor, someone else can take them that is not your responsibility and an excuse for missing class. Make your Doctor and Dentist appointments on your time not mine. I do not care if you have been arrested and have to go to court that is your problem not mine and not an excuse for missing class. See attendance policy above.

It is your responsibility to come to class prepared. If you need to go to the library to print your outline then do that before class begins. If you need to use a printer of a friend then do that before class begins. I am interested in results not excuses.

**Academic Honesty:** Honesty is expected. Plagiarism, or representing the work of another as your own, is grounds for failure for the assignment or for the course. Statements lifted verbatim from publications must be cited as quotations. Ideas, summaries or paraphrased material, and other information taken from literature, must be properly referenced.

**Special Accommodations for Disability:** Students requiring special accommodations for learning are encouraged to share their concerns or requests with the professor as soon as possible.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop the course with written approval of the professor through 27 March 2009, the last day to drop classes. After that date, students with extreme emergencies must contact the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Incomplete:** An incomplete will be awarded to students who have passing grades and who, in the three weeks of the course, become seriously ill or suffer tragedies that prevent them from otherwise completing the course.

**Disabled Student Resources:** A variety of services are available to students who need special accommodations for success in this class. These students should contact the professor during the first week of class.

**School Excused Activities:** Students who miss class for these reasons are responsible for contacting the professor to pick up returned assignments and to review class announcements. It is your responsibility to obtain class notes from other students. Students who miss exams or graded in-class activities as a result of their participation in a school excused activity will be allowed to complete these activities on an alternative date. Contact your professor at least two weeks prior to these absences to reschedule activities.

**Grading:** Grades will be determined by student performance in the following areas:

Exam 1	10%
Exam 2	10%
Final Exam	10%
Term Project	25%
Reaction Reports	10%
Class Business/Attendance	10%
Group Report	25%

Final grades will be based on the total number of points earned in the course. Letter grades will be assigned according to the following standard curve:

A = 100% - 89.5%	
B = 89.4% - 79.5%	
C = 79.4% - 69.5%	
D = 69.4% - 60%	Majors receive no course credit for this grade
F = 59% and less	No one receives credit for this grade

**Grievances:** Students with concerns or questions about assignment grading should address those grievances to the instructor in memo form within one week of receiving the grade. The graded assignment should accompany the memo. Your professor will consider the concern and respond or request a meeting with the student to discuss the matter. If a student feels that a correct response was marked incorrectly on a test, the student may submit a written case for his/her answer. This case should include evidence supporting the student's response from the text or lecture materials. Other concerns may be discussed with the instructor during regularly scheduled office hours or by appointment.

**Course Standards:** Students enrolled in this course are expected to demonstrate professionalism in the following areas:

1. *Course Assignments:* All class assignments submitted for grading will follow APA 4<sup>th</sup> ed. style, should be neatly typed, double-spaced, on standard 8 1/2 x 11 paper. No late papers will be accepted. Assignments are to be placed on the front desk at the beginning of class on due date.
2. *Course Communication:* Students are expected to show respect for the professor, guests, and one another regardless of opinion, value, cultural, and other group differences. Students should give one another equal opportunity to express opinions, experiences, and ideas. All students should be supportive of a co-operative learning environment in the classroom.
3. *Course Facilities:* Students are responsible for keeping the room orderly and clean.
4. *Course Preparation:* Students are expected to read assigned material prior to class. They should be prepared to answer questions related to the material in the text and may be called on to do so. Students should also be prepared to ask questions about issues of interest or for clarification of concepts during class. No assignment will be accepted beyond the due date unless a prior written request is made of the professor and written consent provided. No assignments will be accepted after the final exam.

**Academic Misconduct:** Students discovered cheating (turning in non-original work, engaging in plagiarism, and so on) will lose points on the assignment/test in question. The instructor may also pursue disciplinary actions according to university policies and procedures.

### **Course Format**

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, group activities, and special presentations. Students may be asked to write brief reaction papers, give group reports, or complete quiz questions that they will submit for class participation points. Students who have excused absences for a class in which participation points were available are responsible for meeting with the instructor to find out how they can make up the points they missed. The lectures are designed to promote dialogue on issues addressed in the text chapters and to provide additional information beyond what is included in the text.

**Class Business/Attendance 10%** Class business helps build a strong sense of community in the class. At the beginning of each class students can bring in evidence of intercultural communication either from news items, films, or television. Each item will be copied and presented along with a one paragraph description. Students will lead class discussion on the topic. The copy and paragraph will be submitted for points. A total of 5 individual reports may be made for a total of 55 points. All Class Business will be completed by the end of the 13 week of school. Attendance and class participation will be assigned on a scale 1.5 points per day for 30 days, 45 points. Class business and attendance can make the difference in one letter grade.

### **Course Assignments:**

**Group Report: 25%** Students will be randomly assigned to groups. Each group will then select a group, with instructor approval, from another culture to become acquainted with during the course. You will record your impressions and observations from these meetings (at least 6) in a group journal. The instructor will ask for entries to be submitted periodically during the term. Each member of the group will be responsible for at least one entry. After you have completed the required interactions and journal entries summarize your experience in a two and a half to three page double-spaced typewritten report. (Each member of the group is responsible for at least one report. Your entire report will then be 12.5-15 or 15-18 pages in length depending on the number of group members. In this report you should address the following:

1. How did you feel when you first received this assignment? Have our feelings changed? If so, in what ways have changed? If not, why?
2. Describe the interaction that was most enjoyable. What made it enjoyable?
3. What have you learned about intercultural communication competence from experiences you have had with your group? Be specific!
4. Evaluate the success of your experience. What was successful? What were some of the difficulties you faced? Did you overcome the difficulties? If so how?

**Toward the end of the semester three or four members of your selected group will be invited to a forum each group will present. Invited guests will be asked to complete survey questionnaires that help instructor assess individual group members grasp of life or existence in another culture.**

**Reaction Reports: 10%** During the semester, you can earn points from reaction reports. Two films will be shown in class and students will be asked to write a critique and evaluation of each film. Grades will be assigned on the student's ability to integrate intercultural communication theory in their review.

**Term Project: 25%** See attached.

**Examinations: 30%** There are two midterm examinations and one final examination. **The final will not be comprehensive.** Exams will consist of true/false, matching, multiple-choice, and some short-essay questions. Each exam will cover approximately one-third of the material in the course. Students must take exams when they are scheduled. Makeup exams are allowed in the case of excused absences and are arranged according to guidelines on attendance.

**Students with Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

**Texas A&M University-Commerce**

**Gee Library**

**Room 132**

**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**

**Fax (903) 468-8148**

[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

Tentative Class Schedule

<b>Class Period</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Weekly Reading</b>
<b>Week 1</b>		
1	Introduction to Course	Chapter 1
2	Communication and Culture: The Voice and Echo 1	
<b>Week 2</b>		
3	The Deep Structure of Culture:	Chapter 2
4	Roots of Reality	
<b>Week 3</b>		
5	World View:	Chapter 3
6	Cultural Explanations of Life and Death	
<b>Week 4</b>		
7	Culture and the Individual:	Chapter 4
8	Cultural Identity	
<b>Week 5</b>		
9	<i>For Angela</i> /Review	
10	<b>Midterm Exam #1 Chas 1-3</b>	
<b>Week 6</b>		
11	Alternative Views of Reality:	Chapter 5
12	<i>Cultural Value</i> Reaction Paper Due 2/22	
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Reaction to <i>For Angela</i> due Monday</b>	
13	Words and Meaning:	Chapter 6
14	Language and Culture	
<b>Week 8</b>		
15	Review	
16	<b>Exam #2 Chas 4-6</b>	
<b>Week 9</b>		
17	Nonverbal Communication:	Chapter 7
18	The Messages of Action, Space, Time, and Silence	

Week 10 19 20	<b>Texas, Florida, California, etc etc., etc., etc. BE CAREFUL, BE BACK</b>	
Week 11 21 22	Movie: A Time to Kill	
Week 12 23 24	Cultural Influences on Context: The Business Setting	Chapter 8
Week 13 25 26	<b>Reaction Paper to A Time to Kill due Monday</b> Cultural Influences on Context: The Educational Setting	Chapter 9
Week 14 27 28	Cultural Influences on Context: The Health Care Setting Becoming Competent: Improving Intercultural Communication Epilogue: Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?	Chapter 10 Chapter 11
Week 15 29 30	Report 1 Report 2 Last day to drop class or withdraw from School 3/27 Reaction Paper Due 4/29	

**Final Examination TBA**  
**Chas. 7-11**

## Research on a Specific Culture

**Objective:** To encourage the student to learn specific information about a culture of personal interest.

**Description:** The outcome of this research project is a literature review that summarizes the student's research on the culture he/she has chosen.

### Part A: Instructions for Research Project

1. Select a culture that you wish to research.
2. Research this culture using research reports published in academic journals, published ethnographies, interviews, encyclopedia, and other published materials. A minimum of six sources should be used to document information in the literature review. Two of these sources should be research reports published in academic journals or published ethnographies. Students are encouraged to use members of the culture in their communities for at least two of the remaining sources.
3. The paper should have a cover page on the front that includes the title of the paper, the course number and title, and your name. On the back of your paper, please print your name.
4. The literature review itself should be 3-5 pages, double spaced, and typed in a regular 10- or 12-point font. The literature review should begin with an introduction that identifies the culture you have chosen and why you think it is important to study. This introduction should be no more than 1 1/2 pages in length. The rest of the literature review should contain a logically organized and detailed report from the available literature that answers four to six questions listed in Part B.
5. The information included in the literature review should be cited using in-text citations (APA style).
6. At the end of the literature review, include a "Reference" page that lists the full references for the citations used in the literature review. Only include those references that are actually cited.
7. Write the paper according to APA style guidelines. This especially applies to the use of in-text citations and the reference section. **Note:** This paper is a formal research paper and should be written in third person.
8. You are encouraged to meet with your professor for help in completing this project. Please start your project immediately.

### Part B: Suggested Term Project Questions

1. What are some of the value differences between the culture and our own?
2. What are the predominant religious beliefs espoused by members of this culture, and how do you think these beliefs influence their behaviors?
3. What are some non verbal communication differences found in this culture?
4. What are some communication style differences found in this culture?
5. What are some language or dialectical differences found in this culture?
6. How are social roles/gender roles viewed in this culture?
7. Do the family structure and roles differ in this culture?

8. Are there differences in interpersonal/romantic relationships in this culture?
9. If you were a person travelling to do business in this culture, what information would you need?
10. For someone going to this culture for a study abroad or a brief work assignment, what information would aid his/her cultural adjustment?
11. How does this culture's history influence perception and communication between this culture and your own culture?
12. How does this culture's government influence perception and communication between this culture and your own culture?
13. What are some of the stereotypes people of your culture have about people in the culture you have chosen? Is there any truth to them? Explain.
14. Does the education system in this culture differ from the one in your own.

**Note:** This is not a comprehensive list. There are many important questions that could be investigated about the culture you have chosen. You may use other question if they are approved by your professor.

**Information Sheet**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Class Level \_\_\_\_\_

Major and Concentration \_\_\_\_\_

What are some other communication classes you have taken, and where have you taken them?

What are our career objectives, and what do you hope to gain from this course to meet those objectives?

Do you have any concerns about completing this course?

What grade will you be working towards?

Do you understand the policies set forth in the syllabus? If you do and you agree to abide by them, please sign below. If you have any questions or concerns, please see your Professor as soon as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Note:**

**Complete this form and give it to your professor during the first two weeks of \_\_\_\_\_ classes.  
If your Professor does not have this sheet signed and in his files NO GRADE WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE COURSE !!**