

ISS100 Intercultural Communication

1st and 2nd quarters, Junior

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| Instructor | Ivan Lombardi, Walter Tsushima, Wayne Malcolm |
| Style of Class | Lecture |
| Number of Credits | 2 |
| Day and Period | Monday, period 4 |

Course Description

This course is an introduction to intercultural communication (or cross-cultural communication) through a selection of topics of major interest in the field. The aim of the course is to raise cultural awareness and respect of others in students interested in the diversity of human cultures. Students will become familiar with communication processes and problems that appear within settings made up of people from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds, and reflect on the notion of identity and its interaction with the global society.

Course Objectives

Students will:

1. acquire a basic understanding of some key notions in intercultural communication;
2. learn about the interaction between communication, culture and language;
3. critically evaluate how culture influences one's view of the world;
4. challenge stereotypes, myths and assumptions about different cultures;
5. discuss a selection of topics that play a fundamental role in a global society;
6. reflect on their own communicative competence and how this course enhanced it.

Prerequisites

None

Class Materials

Students will receive a critical reader at the beginning of each quarter. Additional materials for classwork will be distributed each week.

Course Methods

The course is set up as a workshop-style class, and active participation in class is expected. Each week the instructors will facilitate the introduction to a new topic and help students relate the content of the required readings to their personal experience, knowledge, and assumptions. Students will be asked to participate in in-class discussions, keep a learning journal, and work in small discussion groups to present their views on the course content to the class.

Evaluation/Assessment

Attendance and participation are strongly encouraged and taken into account when evaluating. Students will be asked to be consistent about homework and study, and to keep a learning journal to freewrite on their thoughts, doubts, and learning achievements between classes. The learning journal will be evaluated by the instructor at the end of the semester. In the last class of each quarter students will be asked to work in groups and give a presentation related to one of the topics discussed in class.

Grading

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| 25% | Group presentation |
| 25% | Homework and quizzes |
| 25% | Learning journal |
| 25% | Attendance and in-class participation |

Course Schedule

Week 1: What's Intercultural Communication?

Orientation and introduction to the field of intercultural (or cross-cultural) communication, its object of study and methods of inquiry.

Week 2: Communication and Culture

Defining culture and how it shapes human behavior and identity, and how diverse can communication be within and across different cultures.

Week 3: Language and Intercultural Communication

A discussion of the role of language in communication between cultures: the synergy between language and culture, how language unites and divides people, and the cultural considerations of the difficulties of interpreting and translating.

Week 4: Non-verbal Communication

An overview of the communicative value of gestures, interpersonal distance, movement, paralanguage and silence, and personal belongings from an intercultural perspective.

Week 5: Stereotypes and Prejudice

Discussing the notions of stereotypes and prejudice: how they are formed, the extent of their influence in everyday life and the media, their influence on communication, and how to overcome them at a personal level.

Week 6: Intercultural Conflict

Understanding the nature and the extent of intercultural conflict, how it generates from cultural values, and discuss possible ways to deal effectively with it.

Week 7: Immigration and Acculturation

A description of historical migration waves within countries and across cultural boundaries, and some phenomena that arise from migration: communication issues, culture shock, adaptation, acculturation.

Week 8: Group Presentations

In-class group presentations related to the topics discussed in the first quarter.

Week 9: Defining Identity

An insight on the notion of identity, its pervasiveness in communicative interactions, and its role in everyday contexts.

Week 10: Identity and Language

Discussing the influence of identity on language and of language on identity, and the scenarios this influence opens in cross-cultural communication.

Week 11: Gender and Sexual Identity

Discussing the role of cultural notions on gender identity, the different perceptions of sex and gender within cultures and across cultures, and the influence of gender and sexual identity on communication style.

Week 12: Age Identity

Discussing how, within cultural contexts, people establish conventions on how one should act, dress, and behave according to age, and the values and philosophies that different generations

attach to themselves and other generations.

Week 13: Racial and Ethnic Identity

Participating in the debate about race identity, how it came to be, its fluid nature, and its influence on communication, and an insight on the sense of belonging and shared history or tradition that shapes ethnic identities.

Week 14: Religious Identity

Discussing how religion influences many people's culture, values, and identity, its nature, and how it often combines with other social identities (national, ethnic, and so on) to bring about intercultural conflict.

Week 15: National and Regional Identity

Issues with citizenship and sense of belonging with examples from recent history, and how the identification with geographical subgroups can influence communication.

Week 16: Group Presentations

In-class group presentations related to the topics discussed in the second quarter.

Preparation and Follow-up

- Preparation: Read the relevant portions of the reference materials (about one hour)
- Follow-up: Review the content of the class and note any points you are not sure of (about one hour)