

COMS 3370
Intercultural Communication
Section 01 – T/TH 12:30-1:50pm

Professor: Melinda R. Weathers, Ph.D.

Office: DRCB 322E

Office Hours: T/TH, 11:00am-12:00pm & 2:00-3:00pm,
or by appointment

Classroom: DRCB 326

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Phone: 936.294.1848 (email is best)

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description:

Intercultural communication is a course in which students will be introduced to the process of communication between and among individuals from different cultures or subcultures. This course emphasizes the effect of cultural practices within various communication relational contexts such as interpersonal, small group, and organizational communication.

Insight into intercultural communication processes is fundamental to finding and implementing solutions to relational problems. Individuals who understand the communication processes and problems that occur in intercultural relationships should be able to achieve mutual satisfaction in their own relationships. At the very least, individuals with a background in communication should be able to assess and increase their own awareness of the importance of intercultural communication in their lives. Class sessions will include some lectures, but will mostly consist of guided discussions, activities, and student presentations.



Course Objectives:

These are the objectives I hope you accomplish in this course:

1. Develop perspectives about the influence of culture on the sending and interpreting of messages.
2. Discover the complexity of communication in an intercultural communication exchange.
3. Become more willing to interact in intercultural message exchanges.
4. Develop a reflective process for improving the analysis of intercultural exchanges.
5. Recognize the influence of our own cultural situation upon the sending and interpreting of messages.

Course Expectations:

This is an upper-level course in intercultural communication with a specific concentration on the complicated relationship between communication and culture. Students are expected to come to class ready to participate and discuss scheduled topics. Therefore, students must complete reading assignments and think about topics *prior* to coming to class.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical Thinking Description:

This class is a critical thinking seminar developed to increase and enhance your critical thinking skills. What is critical thinking? For this class, we will work with the definition from the Delphi report: “We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based” (Facione, 1990; 1998). The judgments we will focus on are those regarding knowledge claims in research, popular culture, and news.

What are critical thinking skills? Critical thinkers strive to:

1. Determine the relevance of information for evaluating an argument or conclusion.
2. Recognize flaws and inconsistencies in an argument.
3. Evaluate competing causal explanations.
4. Evaluate hypotheses for consistency with established facts.
5. Evaluate the appropriateness of procedures for investigating a question of causation.
6. Evaluate data for consistency with established facts, hypotheses, or methods.

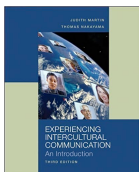
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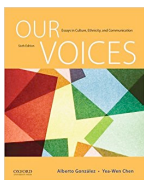
1. Explore complex challenges associated with impacts, meanings, and uses of communication.
2. Analyze communication research, news, and narratives using multiple lenses.
3. Identify historical patterns in communication research, news, and narratives.
4. Communicate complex ideas effectively.
5. Identify, recognize, and describe various approaches to studying communication.
6. Succinctly summarize and present communication scholarship.
7. Demonstrate uses of selected multimedia communication tools.
8. Apply class concepts to current events and news.

REQUIRED TEXT

The following books are required and may be available at the University Bookstore. Most online retailers also sell these books.



- Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2018). *Experiencing intercultural communication: An introduction* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.



- Gonzalez, A., & Chen, Y. (2015). *Our voices: Essays in culture, ethnicity, and communication* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Your course grade will be determined from the number of points you earn over the course of the semester. *There are no extra credit opportunities.*

Final Course Grades, 500 total points

- A. 450+ points
- B. 400-449 points
- C. 350-399 points
- D. 300-349 points
- F. < 299 points

Assignment Points

<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter Summary Forms (10)	100 points
<input type="checkbox"/> Midterm Exam	100 points
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Exam	100 points
<input type="checkbox"/> Intercultural Film Critique Paper	50 points
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Identity Paper and Presentation	50 points
<input type="checkbox"/> Intercultural Contact Paper	50 points
<input type="checkbox"/> Intercultural Portfolio and Presentation	50 points

Letter grades should be interpreted based on this rubric:

- A. *Excellent*. The student's work and contributions to the class are exemplary.
- B. *Very Good or Above Average*. The student's work and contributions to the class are consistently and remarkably strong.
- C. *Acceptable or Average*. The student's work meets and sometimes exceeds expectations for undergraduate performance in courses of this nature.
- D. *Problematic or Below Average*. The student's work may sometimes meet expectations for undergraduate performance in courses of this nature, but is sometimes deficient or flawed.
- F. *Failing*. The student's work does not meet the expectations for undergraduate performance in courses of this nature.

Chapter Summary Forms: For each chapter (10), students are required to fill out a Chapter Summary Form. Filling out the form helps prepare students to successfully participate in class discussion. You will summarize relevant theories, including the theorists, key claims or propositions, and significance. At the end of the summary form, each student is required to raise two thoughtful discussion questions or quotes that assess the quality of the readings and how they contribute to learning. You should also respond to each question or quote that you pose. See additional handout for detailed instructions. *Late forms will not be accepted.*

Midterm and Final Exams: You will take two exams over the course of the semester. These exams will assess your understanding and mastery of the lecture material and assigned readings. Exams may take any form (e.g., multiple choice, essay, short answer, blended formats). Dates of exams are listed in the course schedule in this syllabus. *There are no make-up exams.*

Intercultural Film Critique Paper: Film is an important way we can learn about other cultures. What counts as entertainment varies greatly by culture. For this assignment, you will watch an intercultural film and provide a 5-7 page, double-spaced, analysis paper which connects the film with concepts we learn in the course. Dates of movie viewings are listed in the course schedule in this syllabus. *Late critiques will not be accepted.*

You should consider the following questions as you view the film:

1. Describe the context in which the action takes place. Which elements of the film give information about the context? How does the context affect communication patterns between the characters?
2. Describe different social and cultural identities that emerge in the course of the film. How are these identities constructed? How can the communication perspective help in understanding the identities of the characters? What is the relationship between identity and context? Do identities and associated issues change for particular characters over the course of the film? What influences these changes?
3. How does history affect the standpoints of the characters? What do you learn about perceptions of history from the film? What is the relationship between history and the identity issues of the main characters?
4. What can you say about communication styles and language use in the film? What did language reveal about particular characters? What social structures affect the use of language?
5. Analyze the use of nonverbal and spatial codes that are present in the film. How do characters use these codes? How is space constructed? Identify the elements that reveal these elements.
6. What cultural and social issues of power, hierarchy, and political concerns are present in the film? Whose perspectives are considered? Why are those used and note others?

Cultural Identity Paper and Presentation: In order to become better intercultural communicators, we should start by examining the effects of culture on ourselves. You will write a 3-5 page, double-spaced, paper that *critically analyzes* your cultural identity. You will examine how you communicate your identity to others, and how your identity influences your relationship with others as well. You may discuss as many or as few cultures as you like, but must explain how your membership in each influences your thinking and actions. While this paper is about YOU, outside sources are expected and will strengthen your paper, especially when explaining the culture(s) you have selected. Your paper will be graded on the depth of your analysis. *Late papers will not be accepted.*

You will then create a presentation based on your cultural identity. This presentation should be informative, professional, polished, and fun! Each student should prepare a brief story/summary/overview of one aspect about their cultural values, beliefs, customs, norms, etc. Presentations will most likely take the form of a PowerPoint presentation, but you can include other kinds of media to enhance your presentations. To do this, you could put together a video, pass around cultural artifacts, perform a dance or ritual, bring a cultural dish to share, etc. It is up to you on how you will present the information; creativity is strongly encouraged! Each presentation should not exceed 10 minutes. *There are no make-up presentations.*

Intercultural Contact Paper: The purpose of this assignment is to learn about a person who is a stranger to you [different native language or culture] in a way that allows you to experience intercultural communication. This experience should provide you with an opportunity to discuss some of the themes of the course with a person from a different cultural background.

Select a person whose culture is not yours and who is willing to spend some time with you in an intercultural dialogue. The expectation is that this task will involve at least 8 hours spent in an intercultural dialogue with a person who is a stranger to you. The easiest way to achieve this goal is to engage in some social contacts or activities. These may vary from such activities as, or a combination of:

- a) spending a day at the mall visiting museums and having lunch
- b) going to a cultural event
- c) visiting a park
- d) visiting a festival or a series of sporting events
- e) going to athletic events—a SHSU game, an Astros game, soccer matches
- f) going fishing or boating for the day

- g) exchanging a series of evenings with dinner and going over family photo albums together to explain how your family has celebrated special occasions and then learning how his/her family celebrates
- h) attending special rituals such as wedding or baptisms.

Once you have spent the required 8 hours with this person, write a 5-7 page, double-spaced, paper analyzing what you learned from this encounter about communication in that particular person's culture and themes in this course. Make sure to identify how you spent your eight hours together. Discuss communication, culture, and themes. It is important **to ground your observations in related readings and to cite them**. These observations should start from what you have learned from the person you are interviewing. It is expected that you will select questions before this event. These questions must be listed and included as an Appendix (not part of your page count). The more thorough your questions, the greater chance you have of learning from your partner. The questions should reflect the vocabulary and principles from this course. *The key is that this other person is the expert and you are the learner.* A most successful contact allows you to host the other person so that they also have new experiences.

To document the experience, part of your paper submission will be to include photos of yourself with the other person wherever you choose to spend your time. These photos should be included as an Appendix (not part of your page count). *Late papers will not be accepted.*

Some questions you might consider while spending time with the individual and as you write the paper: *Was there a separation between the culture and aspects of your lived experience? How does the culture see itself in relation to other cultures? How are values enacted/reflected/communicated within the culture? How is this similar to or different from your own experiences? What are basic foundations of the culture?*

Intercultural Portfolio and Presentation: As we move through our course, you will collect material(s) and artifacts that illustrate ideas relevant to intercultural communication. By the end of the semester, you will compile these resources (no less than 10 artifacts) into a portfolio, complete with a paragraph (at least one paragraph, but no more than one page) addressing what each artifact tells us about intercultural communication and what it means to you. Your first entry for preliminary feedback will be due October 17th. The entire portfolio will be due on November 28th. The way in which you choose to assemble your portfolio is up to you, but remember, professionalism is a must and creativity is always encouraged!

You will present one or two of your entries from your Intercultural Portfolio to the class. You should organize this presentation using a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. You should also make sure the artifact(s) that you are presenting can be visible to everyone in the room. This presentation will be informal, but should still be polished and creative! Each presentation should not exceed 3-6 minutes. *Late papers will not be accepted.*

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy: You are expected to attend every class session, unless otherwise stated in the syllabus or ahead of time by the professor. **Students with more than two unexcused absence will be docked 10 points per class.** Attendance will be taken each class. It is your responsibility to ensure that if you are present you are counted as such. If you participate in University activities, please notify me within the first two weeks of class of any classes that you will miss. Along with attending class, I also expect you to be in class on time. I make an effort to begin and end class on time. I expect the same from you. If you are late, please make all efforts not to disturb the class. Excessive tardiness will result in a grade penalty.

It is critical that you stay in touch with me by phone or e-mail when you are experiencing illness or difficulty. If you wait until your problems are over to talk to me, I may have no option but to fail you based on course policies. This is a communication course; communicate with me to discuss options.

Assignment Deadlines: All written work is expected in class on the day it is due. I do not accept papers by e-mail, fax, left under my office door, left in my mailbox, or left with the main office. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** All presentations will only be accepted on the day you are assigned to present. If you do not show up on your assigned day, you will receive a ZERO.

Papers and assignments should be prepared in MSWord format, 12-point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides, stapled in upper left corner, and follow current APA documentation format. Papers that do not meet these guidelines will receive less credit.

Cell Phone and Laptop Policy: All electronic devices should be *put away (with cell phones turned off or set on "silent")* while class is in session. My cell phone receives SHSU Safe Alerts, and I will keep it on so that we will be alerted in case of an emergency. This policy means: No laptops; no mp3 players; no IM'ing; no e-mailing; no Tweeting; no YouTubing; no Facebooking; no audiotaping; no videotaping. If it runs on battery power and is not medically necessary, turn it OFF and put it out of sight. If a student is caught using his/her cell phone during class, points will be deducted from his/her FINAL COURSE GRADE.

Classroom Climate and Student Conduct: At all times, we will maintain a classroom learning environment that is respectful of and safe for a range of people and perspectives. Civility and tolerance of diversity are demanded of students in our class. I will not allow behavior that is violent, threatening, sexist, racist, or otherwise disparaging. Please speak with me immediately if you are uncomfortable with some aspect of your class experience.

Additionally, students should respect the presentation times of their classmates. Students who interrupt a speaker verbally or nonverbally (such as by walking in late during a classmate's presentation or working on iPads, laptops, or cell phones) may lose points off their FINAL COURSE GRADE. Students who appear uninterested or uninvolved in a particular presentation (texting, working on a laptop, etc.) may be asked to provide a synopsis of the presentation once it is completed.

Consultations: My door is always open to students. E-mail is the most reliable way to reach me. If you cannot reach me, call the department office. Please do not wait until the week an assignment is due to realize that you are unsure of what is expected. It is my intention to do everything I can to help you learn the material of the course. If you do not understand an assignment, ask. Meet with me during my regular office hours or make an appointment. The excuse, "I didn't know what was expected," will not be accepted as justification of poor performance. *Remember, you are responsible for your end of this course: You get out of it what you put into it. If you are having a problem that impacts your performance, it is your responsibility to inform me.*

Coursework Reuse Policy: In this class, you may not reuse work (in part or as a whole) that you have submitted or developed for other classes (previous or concurrent). Any exception to this policy must be explicitly negotiated with me in advance. Violations of this course policy will be treated as violations of the SHSU Academic Integrity Policy.

E-mail Accounts: Students must activate their SHSU e-mail accounts to receive important messages related to this class. This is the only e-mail account I will use to contact you. Make sure it's activated and you know how to use it! You are responsible for checking your SHSU e-mail account regularly for assignments and information.

Incompletes or Withdrawals: It is extremely unlikely that an incomplete will be assigned. Students requesting an incomplete must be passing the course, must still complete all of the assignments, quizzes, and exams allowable (not all can be made up if missed), must provide compelling evidence justifying an incomplete, and must sign an incomplete contract with the course instructor. Mid- to late-semester withdrawal requests are evaluated by the Dean's office on a case-by-case basis.

Waiting Policy: In the event that I am late for class, please wait 15 minutes. After that time, class will be considered cancelled. In such instances, please check for messages at your email account or elsewhere online (e.g., Blackboard).

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity (Plagiarism/Cheating): The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary actions. No student shall engage in behavior that, in the judgment of the instructor, may be construed as cheating. This may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty such as the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials and/or distribution of these materials and other academic work. This includes students who aid and abet as well as those who attempt such behavior. For more information, visit www.shsu.edu/syllabus/

If caught, a student will receive a ZERO for any assignment on which they plagiarized or failed to document ethically according to college and professional standards or cheated. The student will be referred to the Dean for disciplinary action. This may include receiving an "F" for the course.

Reasonable Accommodations: It is the policy of SHSU that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (936.294.3512; disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to let me know during the first week of class if you will need accommodations. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodations can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For more information, visit: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/index.html>

Observance of Religious Holiday: Colleges and universities must recognize the mandatory observance of religious holy days for students. The university must permit students to celebrate religious holy days, including travel for the same purpose. Please notify the instructor in writing of any observed religious holidays during the course of the semester. The instructor will not only excuse absences resulting from religious holiday observances, but will also allow students to make up examinations and assignments. I need in writing from students their intention to miss class for the purpose of holy day observances prior to the planned absence.

Visitors in the Classroom: Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

Tentative Schedule

Readings should be completed *before* the day on which they are listed. In *every* class, readings will be supplemented with lecture material that is not in the book. Exams are based on *all* course materials.

Aug 24 Introductions, Partner Guess, Course Overview, Syllabus

Aug 29 What is Intercultural Communication?
Assign: Cultural Identity Presentations

Aug 31 What is Intercultural Communication?
Assign: Contact Partners

Sep 5 Studying Intercultural Communication MN 1; GC 14 & 43
Due: Chapter Summary Form

Sep 7 Intercultural Communication MN 2; GC 41
Due: Chapter Summary Form

Sep 12 History and Intercultural Communication MN 3; GC 7 & 12
Due: Chapter Summary Form

Sep 14 Cultural Identity Presentations
Due: Cultural Identity Paper

Sep 19 Class Movie Viewing

Sep 21 Class Movie Viewing

Sep 26 **Due: Intercultural Film Critique Paper**

Sep 28 Cultural Identity Presentations
Due: Cultural Identity Paper

Oct 3 Identity and Intercultural Communication MN 4; GC 5 & 21
Due: Chapter Summary Form


Oct 5 Cultural Identity Presentations
Due: Cultural Identity Paper

Oct 10 Verbal Issues in Intercultural Communication MN 5; GC 25 & 27
Due: Chapter Summary Form

Oct 12 Nonverbal Communication Issues MN 6; GC 33 & 35
Due: Chapter Summary Form

Oct 17 Midterm Review
Due: Intercultural Portfolio First Entry

Oct 19 Midterm Exam MN 1-6
GC 5, 7, 12, 14, 21, 25, 27, 33, 35, 41, 43

Oct 24	Popular Culture and Intercultural Communication Due: Chapter Summary Form	MN 7; GC 17-18
Oct 26	Cultural Identity Presentations Due: Cultural Identity Paper	
Oct 31	Due: Intercultural Contact Paper	
Nov 2	Culture, Communication, and Conflict Due: Chapter Summary Form	MN 8
Nov 7	Intercultural Relationships in Everyday Life Due: Chapter Summary Form	MN 9; GC 30
Nov 9	Cultural Identity Presentations Due: Cultural Identity Paper	
Nov 14	Intercultural Communication and Health Care Assign: Teaching Evaluations Due: Chapter Summary Form	MN 13; Perloff (pdf)
Nov 16	Due: Intercultural Portfolio Presentations Due: Intercultural Portfolio	
Nov 21-23		Fall Break 
Nov 28	Final Exam Review Due: Teaching Evaluation	
Nov 30	Final Exam	MN 7-9, 13 GC 17-18, 30 Perloff (PDF)