

# Syllabus

## COMM 305 K0x: Foundations of Intercultural Communication

Department of Communication  
2021

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### Required Texts

Ting-Toomey, S. & Chung, L. C. (2012). Understanding intercultural Communication 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company.

Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., McDaniel, E. R., & Roy, C. S. (2015). Intercultural Communication: A reader 14th ed. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Other assorted PDF readings available via GMU Blackboard and email account.

### Course Description

Analysis of communication variables as they relate to intercultural encounters; emphasize the influence of culture on the communication process; particularly the influence of verbal and nonverbal communication and how messages are interpreted. 1. Prerequisite, COMM Majors are expected to complete COMM 200 before taking this course. 2. This course satisfies a General Education requirement for global understanding.

Note: The course can be and has been adapted to a fully online format. All classes can be held via Blackboard Collaborate; this will include student presentations, lab work and final capstone project.

### Course Learning Objectives

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. Develop and interpret alternatives as to the cultural influence upon the creation of meaning in a message exchange situation
4. Become more willing to interact in intercultural message exchanges
5. Develop a reflective process for improving the analysis of intercultural exchanges
6. **Recognize the influence of our own cultural situation** upon the sending and interpreting of messages

### Attendance

Following University policy, I expect students to be in class on time (defined as the time the class is scheduled to begin). Bring all textbooks, course materials, and this syllabus to each class. I will note absences and excessive lateness. Quizzes cannot be made up except for University-approved absences. More than two absences will result in lower grades due to your inability to participate and cover classroom material. You are responsible for material covered in class whether you are present or not. I will not offer a re-cap of material. Please make arrangements with a classmate to get copies of notes and materials covered in class. This material will be included on the midterm and final exams.

**Written Assignments and Late Work Policy**

1. All writing assignments completed outside of class must be submitted via blackboard. No e-mail attachments.
2. All written work submitted in this course must follow APA guidelines (APA Manual, 6th edition) - see University Libraries "Reference and Research Help." For additional support, visit the University Writing Center.
3. Specifics: white paper, black type, double spaced; indented paragraph format; Times New Roman font (no New Courier); 12 point type size; 1.25 inch margins. Please include page numbers and a reference page for all written assignments.
4. Points will be deducted for excessive typing errors and grammatical mistakes (excessive would be more than 8 total errors). Please follow page limits for all assignments. Papers that are more than one full page below or above the required number may be penalized.
5. Your work will be evaluated in terms of clarity, syntax, spelling, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun/antecedent agreement, etc. All papers are expected to have an introduction, a thesis statement, and a conclusion. Proofread your work; ask a friend to proofread your work, and visit the Writing Center for assistance.
6. All written assignments should be submitted before class. Each day late is a 10% deduction. If you know you will be absent on a day an assignment is due, please turn it in early. Grades of "Incomplete" will not be assigned.
7. All students enrolled in this course will be required to have access to, and utilize, a GMU email account

**Grading Policy and Methods of Evaluation**

Assignments are awarded points, not given individual letter grades. Total points will be added at the end of the semester to determine your final grade for the course.

<b>Grading Weights and Point Distribution</b>	
Class Participation	50 points
Midterm Exam	50 points
Intercultural Contact Paper	100 points
2 Reflection Essays (50 pts each)	100 points
2 Abstracts/Presentations (50 pts each)	100 points
Final Exam (cumulative)	100 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500 points</b>

Point Distribution:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A+ = 486 to 500 | C+ = 385 to 399 |
| A = 465 to 485  | C = 350 to 384  |
| A- = 450 to 464 | C- = 339 to 349 |
| B+ = 435 to 449 | D = 300 to 338  |
| B = 415 to 434  | F = 299 or less |
| B- = 400 to 414 |                 |

**Oral Presentation Policies**

Due to the nature of this course there are no scheduled make-up times for presentation of papers, group projects, in-class activities, and other assignments.

**Assignments and Learning Activities**

**Abstracts**

During the first week of class, you will be assigned two readings from which to create abstracts. If you do an unassigned reading, you will receive a 0 for the assignment. Each abstract is to be no more than two pages in length. Be prepared to present the abstracts to the class. Rescheduling will not be permitted. Handouts, visual aids, and creative approaches (video/audio clips, current events, etc.) are welcomed. Bring outlines

for the class. You may use PowerPoint to add clarity and a professional aesthetic to your presentation. The presentation should be 4 - 6 minutes. Conclude the abstract with three written thoughtful questions for the class.

More specifically: Begin the written abstract with the APA bibliographic reference. The rest of the abstract should be divided into three sections: summary, analysis, and evaluation. Abstracts will be graded on a) having a correct bibliographic entry on top; b) an accurate summary of the article; c) an analysis that includes methodology and references to IC terms, theory, and themes; and d) an evaluation that assesses the article's perspective, contribution to learning, and impact on your thinking about intercultural communication. Again, conclude the abstract with three related questions to be addressed in class. This is not a lecture but an opportunity to share your interpretation of the material.

### **Reflection Essays**

**Explore your own efforts at achieving intercultural sensitivity.** Essays are assigned to encourage you to reflect on your personal experiences with intercultural communication as you go through this course. The following essays should be 6 - 7 pages in length and typed, **Essays are graded on your ability to incorporate theories, ideas, and terms from class reading and discussion; clarity and articulation of these ideas; and APA and references.** Students will write on the following two topics:

1. **Write an autobiography.** Talk about yourself, your background, where you grew up, and how you grew up. What things were significant to you? What ideas were important? How would you define your personal values? Are they similar to the values of your family and/or friends? How rigid/flexible are they? How have your values changed/adapted/reinforced over time? What influences them? What would you like to get out of this course? Be sure to incorporate terms, ideas, and concepts from our reading and lectures up to this point. Cite sources.
2. **Read the first section (news) of a current national newspaper for three consecutive days.** It can be *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times*, etc. Please do not use USA Today or any tabloids. Discuss how individuals and groups are depicted in the news. Consider representations of race/color, gender, class, sexuality, age, (dis)ability, international communities, etc. Reflect on the experiences of the people shown in the news and address the ways in which their interests are represented publicly. If a newspaper is the only experience we have with people who are "different" then what do we come to "learn" about them? Please make sure to include copies of the articles, w/ dates.

### **Intercultural Contact Essay**

The goal of this assignment is to encourage you to **learn about a different culture**. The experience should provide you with an opportunity to explore and discuss themes of this course. Depending on time, a 2 - 4 minute discussion of your paper is required. You may choose from the following:

Attend an unfamiliar cultural event. Drawing from theories, ideas, and concepts covered in our readings, write about your intercultural interaction.

Discuss the experience.

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?

This assignment encourages you to learn about other individuals and groups. The easiest way to achieve that goal is to engage in social contact.

Ideas for activities include weddings, religious ceremonies, holiday celebrations, festivals, and sporting events. Also consider interviews, exchanging experiences over dinner, going through family photo albums, etc.

Moreover, the intercultural contact may occur through thoughtful interaction with a text (e.g., any unread chapter from our text books, a novel, movie, poem, song, etc.). Identify the text, then apply the theory, terms, themes you have learned in class. Begin with a short (one paragraph) review of the text. Next, analyze cultural patterns and illustrate principles from the readings. Again, be sure to relate theory, terms, articles, and themes from class. This is not a literary analysis for a literature class. **First, check with instructor for approval** of the event or experience.

Product: Write a 7 - 9 page, double-spaced paper analyzing what you learned from the encounter. Discuss communication, culture, and themes. It is important to ground your observations in relevant readings. Cite all sources.



**Attendance and Participation Policy**

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**Academic Integrity**

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own and developed by you specifically for that assignment during the current semester; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask your instructor for clarification. Under no circumstances is it permissible to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters relating to academic work. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct, and cases of academic misconduct will be treated seriously, will most likely result in a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and will be reported to the Mason Honor Committee. Another important aspect of academic integrity includes the free exchange of ideas, and there will often have vigorous discussion in this class. It's fully expected that all aspects of this class will be conducted dialogically with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. For more information, visit: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>.

**Campus Emergencies, Closures, and Class Cancellations**

George Mason University is dedicated to preparing staff and students in the event of an emergency. All students in this class are encouraged to register for Mason Alert, a system that allows university officials to contact the community during an emergency by sending a text message. In addition, take a minute to view the emergency procedures poster in each of your classrooms.

If campus is closed for any reason (power outage, snow, etc.), do not assume that class activities are cancelled. In the event of a snow day or other campus closure that prevents a class from meeting in its normal classroom, classes will typically be held online. Watch your email for messages from your instructors that provide instructions about how the class will proceed.

If your instructor is not present at the start of class, please check your emails for updates. If there is not an email from your instructor, wait until 20 minutes after the start of class and then you are free to go.

**Classroom Conduct and Professionalism**

Professionalism includes coming to class with a positive attitude, engaging in dialogic communication (e.g., respecting others' opinions, not interrupting in class, being respectful to those who are speaking, working together in a spirit of cooperation), and arriving to class on time and prepared for the class session. When students engage in any type of inappropriate behavior, they may be asked and required to leave for the remainder of that class session. If all goes well in the class, students tend to share information of an "interpersonal" nature"- it goes with the territory in a Communication classroom. You wouldn't want something said about you to people all around campus, so keep others' revelations confidential and do not talk about your classmates outside of class, and that goes for all your classes! Each student is expected to be conscious and respectful of classroom diversity. While students may disagree on many topics, every person should respect the perspective of fellow classmates, instructors, and invited guests.

Laptop computers, tablets, mobile phones, and other electronic devices may not be used during class unless the instructor has instructed students to use them for a specific class. Per University policy, cell phones should be set to silent mode and should not disrupt the learning environment in the classroom. Cell phones cannot be answered or used in the classroom except for emergency alerts. Students who fail to turn off such devices and disrupt the class will be asked to leave. See the undergraduate catalog for more information on classroom disruptions.

*Texts and SMS Communications.* There will be no text messaging during class time.

Students may use laptops and recording devices during class, but solely for 305 note-taking purposes. Do not disrupt other students. No e-mailing during class time. No recorded class lectures or interactions may be posted online or used for any profit-generating activity.

Bring the course textbook, syllabus, class notes, any needed assignments and drafts, papers and writing utensils to each class meeting.

Students who interrupt class discussions by frequently arriving late to class, constantly interrupting others without thoughtfully listening to their comments, or who ask questions (in class and over email) that would more appropriately be answered by a simple glance at the syllabus (e.g., "When is this due?," "What do we have to read for next class?," "Did we do anything important when I missed class?," etc.) not only reflect poorly upon themselves, they also actively devalue the educational experience of others. Keep a copy of the course syllabus and schedule on hand and refer to them often. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and to keep track of assignments and deadlines throughout the semester.

No electronic devices may be used when taking examinations.

**Other University Policies and Procedures**

This class adheres to all published University policies regarding sexual harassment and equal opportunity. The goal is to provide all of us with a safe, fair, and equitable learning and teaching environment.

If you have a disability, please visit or call the Office of Disability Services. This office will notify me directly so that appropriate accommodation can be made.

Spring 2020 Monday/Wednesday Schedule			
Week	Day	Do before class	Do in class
1	2/23	<b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Syllabus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Syllabus Overview</li> </ul>
	2/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to the Course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign Abstracts</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Literacy: Naming Ourselves</i>			
2	3/02	Imperatives & Approaches to Studying IC <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding Intercultural Communication (UIC), Ch 1</li> <li>PDF - Martin et al</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for Ch. 1 &amp; Martin</li> </ul>
	3/04	Theoretical Perspectives <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intercultural Communication A Reader (ICReader) (McDaniel et al, p. 5)</li> <li>ICReader (Collier, p. 53)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for McDaniel &amp; Collier</li> </ul>
3	3/09	Foundations of IC <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UIC, Ch 2</li> <li>ICReader (Korzenny, p. 42)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for Ch. 2 &amp; Korzenny</li> </ul>
	3/11	Identifying Cultural Value Patterns/Declare & Share <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UIC, Ch 3</li> </ul> <b>Do before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflection Essay #1 Due</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion &amp; activities for Ch. 3</li> </ul>
4	3/16	Cultural & Ethnic Identity <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UIC, Ch 4</li> <li>ICReader (Pratt, et al, p. 70)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for Ch. 4 &amp; Pratt</li> </ul>
	3/18	Identity Circles <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICReader (Pearson, p. 174)</li> <li>PDF - Corey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for Pearson &amp; Corey</li> </ul>
5	3/23	Language & Culture <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UIC, Ch 6</li> <li>ICReader (Fong, p. 209)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for Ch. 6 &amp; Fong</li> </ul>
	3/25	<i>Social Literacy: Engaging Others</i> Verbal Styles <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICReader (Roy, p. 224)</li> <li>ICReader (Cargile, p. 251)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for Roy &amp; Cargile</li> </ul>
6	3/30	Nonverbal Communication and Cultural Space <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UIC, Ch 7</li> <li>ICReader (Nishiyama, p. 260)</li> <li>ICReader (Rao, p. 329)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for Ch. 7 &amp; Nishiyama &amp; Rao</li> </ul>
	4/01	Racism, Prejudice, Privilege & Bias <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UIC, Ch 8</li> <li>ICReader (Martin, p. 76)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for Ch. 8 &amp; Martin</li> </ul>
7	4/06	<b>Midterm Examination</b>	<b>Midterm Examination</b>
	4/08	Popular Culture <b>Do before class</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and activities for Saucedo &amp; Braithewaite</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IReader (Sauceda, p. 85)</li><li>• IReader (Braithewaite, p. 162)</li></ul>	
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8	4/13	Intercultural Conflict <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UIC, Ch 9</li> <li>• Roppolo, PDF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for Ch. 9 &amp; Roppolo</li> </ul>
		Intercultural Relationships <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UIC, Ch 10</li> <li>• ICReader (Kale, p. 422)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for Ch 10 &amp; Kale</li> </ul>
9	4/20	Multicultural Contexts <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICReader (Ting Toomey, p. 355)</li> <li>• ICReader (Skow et al, p. 288)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for Ting-Toomey &amp; Skow</li> </ul>
	4/22	<i>Cultural Literacy: Valuing &amp; Leveraging Differences</i> IC and Global Identity <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UIC, Ch 11</li> <li>• ICReader (Evanoff, p. 417)</li> </ul> <b>Do before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reflection Essay #2 Due</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for Ch. 11 &amp; Evanoff</li> </ul>
10	4/27	Ethics and IC <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UIC, Ch 12</li> <li>• ICReader (Chen, p. 465)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for Ch. 12 &amp; Chen</li> </ul>
	4/29	<b>Read before class</b> ICReader (Chen, p. 465)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for Chen</li> </ul>
11	5/04	<b>Spring Recess</b>	<b>No Class</b>
	5/06	Mindset, Attitude, & Action <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDF - TBA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for</li> </ul>
12	5/11	IC Lessons <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDF – Marty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for Ch. 17</li> </ul>
	5/13	TBA <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for Ch. 18</li> </ul>
13	5/18	Crash Moments <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback Form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities</li> </ul>
	5/20	Crash Moments <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback Form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for</li> </ul>
14	5/25	Reviewing IC <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDF – TBA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for</li> </ul>
	5/27	Reviewing IC/ Pre-essay Activity <b>Read before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and activities for</li> </ul>
15	6/01	<b>Do before class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>IC Essay #3 Due</b></li> </ul>	<b>Attendance Required</b>
	6/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>IC Essay Discussion</b></li> </ul>	<b>Attendance Required</b>
16	6/08	<b>Reading Day</b>	<b>No Class</b>

**FINAL EXAM:** The Final Exam for this course will be delivered during a Block Exam timeframe



