

Intercultural Communication Syllabus, COMM 2042
Spring 2013
10:20-12:10 pm
CIMBA Program
Paderno del Grappa, Italy
Matt Cohen, Ph.D.

Course Description: Culture may be defined as a way of life that is shared by a group of people. It is a system of taken-for-granted assumptions about the world that influences how people think and act. When individuals with different cultural backgrounds come in contact with one another, they have opportunities to learn new ways of thinking, and potential problems may occur. Differences in thinking and practices among people can produce misunderstandings, prejudice, and conflict. On the other hand, the similarity of certain rituals and worldviews may mislead people to think that everyone is the same, which may cause even deeper misconceptions and frustrations. Cultural differences produce challenges of communication, and this course is designed to understand cultures in terms of communication. Although the course focuses more on the possible “problems,” intercultural communication can be fruitful, productive, and fascinating. When cultural “shocks” occur, people can examine their taken-for-granted assumptions and learn from the encounter. Individuals can view the world from multiple perspectives and angles, and gain more comprehension of the complexity of communication. Better understanding can lead to positive changes, and new friendships can be established. The primary goal for this course is to overcome some of the communication challenges mentioned and enjoy the richness among cultures.

Goals of the Course

In this course, you will 1) learn how culture shapes your worldviews, values, and behavioral norms; 2) understand the function of language and narratives in communication; 3) identify the potential difficulties or problems in intercultural communication; 4) analyze cases of intercultural contact and 5) apply knowledge of culture and communication to life in a multicultural society.

Texts

Hall, B.J. (2005) *Among cultures: The challenge of communication* (2nd edition)

I will assign other readings that can be acquired through ICON. You will be required to print out and bring the readings to class on the day we discuss the assignments.

General Class Expectations

- Please be on time every day
- Read and respond to all assignments
- Homework: You will receive assignments that require you to work outside of class. Plan on three or four hours per week outside of class for readings or assignments. These need to be completed before class on the day they are due.
- No credit earned for late assignments.

- Communicate with instructor directly with any concerns or questions and reply to all emails sent to you from him.

Grading System and the Use of +/-

Plus/Minus grading will be used in this course.

Grading Scale

| | |
|------------|------------|
| 93-100 = A | 73-76 = C |
| 90-92 = A- | 70-72 = C- |
| 87-89 = B+ | 67-69 = D+ |
| 83-86 = B | 63-66 = D |
| 80-82 = B- | 60-62 = D- |
| 77-79 = C+ | 0-59 = F |

Written Assignments and Presentations

A=outstanding work that is carefully thought through and prepared critically and reflectively

B=above average work, but appears to have been completed in a somewhat rushed manner

C=average work with little to no critical or reflective thought

D=below average

F=assignment is poorly executed and lacks the required quality for an upper level class

Assignments and Percentages of Final Grade

Two Response Papers (25%):

At two times during the semester, you will be expected to write a 2-page paper about intercultural communication. I'll post more information about this on ICON.

Final Paper (20%):

At the end of the semester, you will write a 6-page ethnographic research paper. More details about this will be posted to ICON soon.

Midterm: (20%)

Final Exam (20%)

Participation: (15%): 1) attendance, 2) active class engagement (based on preparation which includes the assigned readings and bringing answers to questions posed to class from the readings, constructing thesis statements, or providing a summary of the readings, 3) short presentation from both two-page response papers.

Course grades will be approximately distributed according to the recommended guidelines:

Grade Distribution Chart

| | A | B | C | D | F | Average |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|---------|
| Elementary courses | 15% | 34% | 40% | 8% | 3% | 2.50 |
| Intermediate courses | 18% | 36% | 39% | 5% | 2% | 2.63 |
| Advanced courses | 22% | 38% | 36% | 3% | 1% | 2.77 |

The College recommends grade distributions according to the level of the course:

- An **elementary course** is broad and introductory; open to first-year students; lacking prerequisites; often numbered from 1000-1999.
- An **intermediate course** generally is not open to first-year students and requires prerequisite(s) or assumes prior knowledge; often numbered from 1999-2999.
- An **advanced course** ordinarily is for students earning a major, minor, or certificate in the area; requires assumed prior knowledge or prerequisites; and focuses on a particular topic or specific area of knowledge within a discipline; often numbered over 3000.

Course Policies

Course attendance: Attendance is required for this course and at all classes and CIMBA sanctioned activities. All unexcused absences will have the following consequences:

- 1st absence will result in a loss of a 1/3 of a letter grade in that class
- 2nd (cumulative) absence will result in a loss of an entire letter grade in that class
- 3rd (cumulative) absence will result in a dismissal from the program

Absences due to illness require a note from the CIMBA Undergraduate Office Staff and/or the Istituti Filippin medical staff. If a student is sick and cannot attend class, he/she must inform the CIMBA Staff immediately. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence.

Participation: The class is discussion based rather than lecture-centered. Your active and engaged participation is critical to your learning and overall success of the course. By participating, whether it's through the questions you ask, or the observations you make, we all will benefit and ultimately grow as life long learners. By participating, I can also observe whether you are staying up to date with assignments and applying the skills we are covering to the topics under consideration. I will assign participation grades like this: **A and B** grades are reserved for those who speak regularly, offer insightful comments, and raise questions. A **C** grade means that you successfully attend class and speak once in a while. I will often ask all of you to write and bring to class answers to questions from the reading, a thesis statement, or a summary of the readings for the day. During class discussions, I may call on you to share what you have written.

Email: I'll always attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours.

Format for Written Work

All written assignments should be typed in Times New Roman, 12pt. font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins on the bottom and top, and no more than 1.25 inch margins on the sides. Save extra copies of all your work on a computer disk, as a paper copy, or both. Submit your work to ICON dropbox. Adopt and successfully incorporate a citation style of your choice (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.). All citations and the reference page should be consistent with a citation format.

Late work will only be accepted in the case of a university excused absence. With an excused absence, your late work is due at the start of the next class period. If you know you will be absent when the assignment is due, you will need to make arrangements with me to submit your assignment before the due date. Unexcused late work is generally unacceptable. Each day that is late will bring a reduction of one letter grade.

Tentative Class Schedule

The finalized course schedule will be distributed the first or second day we meet as a class, at which point CIMBA will have finalized all course schedules (A & B bands) and other program- and course-related activities; Here is a brief overview of what we will cover:

Course Meeting #1: Syllabus, Expectations

Course Meeting #2: *One, Two, Three* (dir. Billy Wilder, 1961) Hollywood filmmaking and cultural stereotypes

Course Meeting #3: *Among Cultures*, Chapter 1

Course Meeting #4: *Among Cultures*, Chapter 2

Course Meeting #5: Edward Hall's *Silent Language* "Culture is Communication," Chapter 5

Course Meeting #6: *Among Cultures*, Chapter 3

Course Meeting #7: *Prisoner of Zenda* (dir. George Cukor, 1937) Understanding individual values through role play

Course Meeting #8: *Among Cultures*, Chapter 4

Course Meeting #9: Carillo-Rowe, "Unhinging Whiteness"

Course Meeting #10: *Among Cultures*, Chapter 5, **Take Home Midterm Instructions**

Course Meeting #11: *Silent Language* "Voices of Language" Chapter 1

Course Meeting #12: Tanno and Jandt, "Redefining the 'Other', **Take Home Midterms Due**

Course Meeting #13: Nakayama and Martin "Worldview, Religion, and Intercultural Communication"

Course Meeting #14: Reza Aslan, *No God But God*

Course Meeting #15: *Among Cultures*, Chapter 6

Course Meeting #16: Louise Soutar, "British Female Converts to Islam"

Course Meeting #17: *Among Cultures*, Chapter 7

Course Meeting #18: *Among Cultures*, Chapter 8

Course Meeting #19: *Among Cultures*, Chapter 11

Course Meeting #20: Review for Final Exam, *City of Joy* (dir. Roland Joffe, 1992)

Course Meeting #21: **Take Home Final Instructions**, Course Wrap Up

Course Meeting #22: **Final Exams are Due**

CLAS & UI Teaching Policies & Resources

Administrative Home

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other

related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook>.

Electronic Communication

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences ([Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11](#)).

Accommodations for Disabilities

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Honesty

All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](#): "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the [IOWA Challenge](#). I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled ([CLAS Academic Policies Handbook](#)).

CLAS Final Examination Policies

The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the tenth day of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS [Academic Policies Handbook](#)).

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning.

Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI [Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment](#) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. Follow CIMBA staff guidelines.