

Utah State University
Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies
CMST 3330: Intercultural Communication

Fall 2017, Tuesdays
4:30-7 PM, Old Main 201

Instructor: Mollie Murphy

Office: Old Main 341

Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30 or by appointment (appointments must be made at least 48 hours in advance)

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Course Description

This course will focus on the relationship between culture and communication. The major objective of the course is to increase your understanding and appreciation of cultural influences on communication as it occurs within and between people of different cultural groups. Ideally, the knowledge you gain in this course will prove beneficial to your ability to communicate in personal and professional contexts. It will also help increase your appreciation for communication practices that are culturally different from your own. Because we increasingly live in a global society, you are highly likely to have regular contact with a variety of cultures different from your own. This creates both challenges and opportunities. Knowledge of intercultural communication is vitally important to your own livelihood and to society at large. More specific course goals will include (but are not limited to),

- To learn the fundamental principles and theories of intercultural communication
- To better understand how culture influences your own life, and to gain an appreciation of culture in general
- To identify and understand various challenges inherent in intercultural communication and explore ways to productively meet these challenges
- To explore characteristics of communication among specific cultural communities
- To strengthen students' communication skills in the context of writing, in class discussion, and formal presentations
- To enable students to think critically and maturely about points of view that differ—perhaps greatly—from their own

Students will apply core concepts in various assignments that will contribute to the course grade.

Required Text

Hall, Bradford. 'J'. (2005) *Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communication* (Second Edition). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth Publishers.

Points Distribution

Writing Assignments	65% (first two 20%, final 25%)
Concept Presentation	20%
Reading Responses	15%
TOTAL =	100%

Grading Scale and Policies

Grading Scale

92.95-100%	A	72.95-76.94%	C
89.95-92.94%	A-	69.95-72.94%	C-
86.95-89.94%	B+	59.95-69.94%	D
82.95-86.94%	B	59.94% and below	F
79.95-82.94%	B-		
76.95-79.94%	C+		

*Grades are rounded to the nearest tenth. That means that an 89.95 is an A- and an 89.94 is a B+. This policy is non-negotiable and there will be absolutely no exceptions.

In order to uphold a fair and ethical course for all students, I do not change or reconsider a grade unless there has been a mathematical error. If you are ever unhappy or confused about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me about it in person.

Although I evaluate assignments based on the criteria discussed in class and on written instructions, many factors that contribute to excellent work—insight, creativity, originality—cannot be reduced to technique. That is why there is no “recipe” for getting an A on an assignment, and it is why A work is the exception rather than the rule. At the same time, evaluating assignments is not a purely subjective process. Instructors do use objective criteria to make basic distinctions during grading. I grade written assignments according to the following general guidelines in addition to the specific individual requirements of each assignment.

To earn a C: The assignment must be complete, thoughtful, and meet the basic requirements of the assignment. It should conform to the page limit, be free of basic grammatical errors and typos, and should exhibit clear organization.

To earn a B: The assignment must be executed well. It must meet the criteria of C work, but must also be well written, insightful, and supported by credible outside sources.

To earn an A: The assignment must be outstanding in its execution. It will exhibit exceptional effort, polished writing, and must go beyond the basic substantive requirements of the assignment in some way, perhaps by demonstrating a new, thoughtful or creative way of understanding the course material, or by illustrating an especially meaningful application of the course material. Importantly, A work is not earned by going “beyond” in terms of page length. Aim for concise, polished writing.

Grades of D and F are earned by failing to meet the basic criteria of the assignment. Work that lacks clear focus, is very poorly written or lacking in organization, or is obviously unfinished, unedited, or inappropriate for the assignment or course will earn a D or F.

*The starting assumption for grading is that with moderate effort, everyone is capable of earning a C in the course. The movement of your grade from that midpoint is largely in your hands.

Specific Course Assignments

Writing Assignments

One week in advance of the writing assignment due date, I will provide you with 2-3 questions related to readings and class discussion. You must respond to **one** of the questions provided. The questions will guide you to formulate an argument about the issues at hand. You will earn a grade based on the quality of your writing and the substance of your argument. Writing assignments will be 5-6 pages each (double-spaced, one inch margins, 12 pt TNR font).

Concept Presentation

During the semester, each student will give an ~10 minute presentation and will bring at least two thoughtful discussion questions for the class to consider. Presentations will be based on the week's topic (e.g., identity, prejudice, worldviews), but will examine the topic as it occurs in a *specific context* and will take us *beyond* the readings. For example, if you are scheduled to present the week we discuss prejudice, you may choose to give your presentation on communication and prejudice in the context of Black-White relations in the United States, or in the context of the classroom when an instructor and student have differing cultural backgrounds. My advice is to read the chapter assigned and take note of what you find most interesting about it. From there, begin thinking about how you might use the presentation to expand upon this interesting facet of the reading that deserves more attention. You must get your topic approved by me at least one week in advance.

Aim to choose something that is interesting to *you*, will likely be interesting to the *audience*, and will feasibly fit within the *time constraints* of the assignment. You must use three scholarly sources (other than our text) to give your presentation sufficient conceptual depth. These must be cited orally and in writing (on the accompanying outline). You will also be asked to point out an example of the intercultural communication phenomena you are examining, either in the media (think news story, TV, social media) or in your own personal life. All presenters will submit a full-sentence outline of their presentation and discussion questions to me via email or hard copy by the start of class on the day of the presentation. Grades will be earned based on your efforts to engage the class, your oral presentation skills, the presentation's substance, your organization, and the typed outline. Detailed guidelines will be provided, and I will offer a general template for you during the second week of class.

Reading Responses

On weeks in which you have been assigned readings from the text, you are required to upload a one page, double-spaced response to a "reading question" to Canvas by the start of class. I will post reading questions to Canvas by no later than Friday at 12pm, giving you ~four days to respond to the prompt. I expect responses to clearly illustrate that you have *completed* and *engaged* the reading. Responses should be thoughtful and polished. We will often discuss your responses in class. Though you have 10 reading responses due, I will only grade 5-8 of these. I will not announce whether or not I will be grading the weekly responses.

Course Policies

Attendance

I will take attendance only 3-4 days during the semester. If you are absent on one of these days, your final grade will be subject to a 1% deduction (if you are absent two of these days, you will

be subject to a 2% deduction and so forth). These days will be random—I will not announce in advance whether or not I will be taking attendance. Exceptions to this policy will *only* be made in the case of absences related to participation in a University-sanctioned event as an official representative of USU, for classes missed in observance of a religious holiday, or for a **documented** emergency or other extenuating circumstance. All exceptions for religious holidays and participation in University events must be approved **one week in advance**. If you are sick or have some other sort of emergency, you must get in touch with me as soon as possible and provide documentation upon returning to class (it must say that you were unable to attend class). If you are frequently tardy or leave class early, your final grade will also be subject to a deduction.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students must complete their own work and given credit (written and oral) to any outside sourced used to complete an assignment. Lack of knowledge of the academic policy is not a reasonable explanation for any form of academic misconduct. Plagiarism includes—but is not limited to—copying and pasting another person’s work, failing to give credit to information derived from another person’s work, paraphrasing another persons’ work in a way that misrepresents the original, having another student complete your work, and completing another student’s work. Questions related to the course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor. Follow the APA 6th edition for citing sources. I will report any case of academic misconduct to the University after which I will determine the appropriate outcome.

Exams

The final meeting time is official; it will not change unless changed by the University. Mark your calendars and make your travel plans accordingly.

Learning Accommodations

Any student who needs special accommodations for learning or who has particular needs is invited to share these concerns or requests with me as soon as possible. Disabilities must be documented through the Disability Resource Center; it is your responsibility to contact the DRC and fill out the necessary paperwork. Formal requests for accommodations must be completed before the scheduled assignment.

Respect and Etiquette

In-class: In this class we will cover topics that may make you or your peers uncomfortable; this is an expected part of the learning process. I expect all students to show respect for one another and for the instructor; comments that are disrespectful will not be tolerated. College courses are a place to learn and grow. A comfortable, supportive environment is critical to everyone’s success in the course.

Email: You may address me as Mollie, or as Ms. Murphy if you are more comfortable with a formal tone. Adopting a formal tone when constructing emails is a good practice for academic and other professional environments. Write an email similar to how you would write a letter (include salutation: “Hello Ms. Murphy/Dear Mollie” sign your name “Regards, Nadia/Best, Miguel”). This model is useful to learn for other classes (and your professional careers) as well.

If you are providing information that does not necessitate a reply, I may not reply. I will reply if a question is asked. I'll also reply if there is a request for me to confirm receipt of your email. I will typically respond to an email within 24 hours. If you email me in the evening, expect that I will reply the following day. There is no set turn-around time on weekends. I would ask that you, too, check and respond to email in a similar time frame.

Cellphone/Computer Use: Computers and cellphones are not allowed in class. Although technology has its place, research shows that students who do not use laptops in class consistently outperform their peers. I am willing to make special exceptions if necessary – see me if you have a valid reason for needing a computer/technology.

Late Work

All papers are due to Canvas at the beginning of the class for which they are assigned. Work submitted after a ten-minute grace period will receive a 10% point deduction. An additional 10% will be deducted for every 24 hours it is not turned in.

Course Schedule

Note: This is a *general plan* for the course. Deviations may be necessary, and will be announced either in class or via email.

An asterisk (*) indicates that you have a reading question response due to Canvas by the start of class

Week 1, August 29

Introduction

Defining culture, communication, and intercultural communication

Email me top 3 presentation preference dates by Friday at midnight! Presentations will not take place on November 21 or December 5.

Week 2, September 5*

Worldviews, values, and norms

Discuss presentations

Readings: Ch. 1 & 2

Week 3, September 12*

Learning about other cultures

Reading: Ch. 3

Week 4, September 19*

Identities and Culture

Reading: Ch. 4

Week 5, September 26*

Verbal Misunderstandings

Reading: Ch. 5

Writing Assignment One Due!

Week 6, October 3*

Nonverbal Misunderstandings

Reading: Ch. 6

Week 7, October 10*

Culture and Conflict

Reading: Ch. 8

Week 8, October 17*

Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Ethnocentrism

Reading: Ch. 7

Week 9, October 24

Prejudice continued, interracial communication (how is it different from culture?)

Reading: None

Writing Assignment Two Due!

Week 10, October 31*

Acculturation, intercultural transitions

Reading: Ch. 9

Week 11, November 7

Acculturation and transitions, continued

Reading: None

Week 12, November 14*

Pop Culture

Reading: Ch. 10

Week 13, November 21***

Pop Culture and Media, continued

Reading: Watch one of the following movies by class time

My Big Fat Greek Wedding

Eat, Pray, Love

Elf

****If you write a reading response (and come to class), I will drop your lowest reading response score. Simply write a one-page (double-spaced) response discussing what the film illuminated about culture. Was the film illuminating? Problematic? Both?*

Week 14, November 28*

Ethics and building intercultural communities

Reading: Ch. 11

Week 15, December 5

What now? Applying your knowledge of culture and communication to your personal and professional lives; being a critical consumer of rhetoric about culture.

Final Exam, December 12 (Tuesday), 3:30-5:20

Writing Assignment Three Due!