

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
COMS 345 - Fall 2010
Dr. Cynthia Roper
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“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” --Aristotle

Office Hours: MWF 1-3pm & R 10-11am

Mission of Abilene Christian University

“To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.”

Mission of Department of Communication

“To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world by developing communication skills through analyzing, managing, changing, and advocating ideas, people, organizations, and cultures.”

Course Description & Goal

This course is designed to introduce students to intercultural communication theory, research, and selected applications. Topics include conceptualizing intercultural communication theoretically, trends in research, diffusion of innovation, nationality barriers, and training for foreign assignments. Class format will include lecture, discussion groups, case studies, and simulations. In order to communicate the gospel in a multi-cultural world, we must learn to understand, appreciate, and work with both our differences and our similarities. This is the primary goal of this course.

Course Objectives

1. To conceptualize the study of intercultural communication, i.e., formulate key definitions and identify major topic areas, including, but not limited to; World View, Culture Shock, Acculturation, etc. (Acquired by readings and lecture/discussion)
2. To survey selected areas of research in intercultural communication. (Acquired by readings and classroom examples; assessed by case study)
3. To increase awareness of your strengths and weaknesses when communicating in intercultural situations. (Intercultural simulation and service learning)
4. To develop effective communication strategies leading to better intercultural skills. (Group discussions and service learning)
5. To increase awareness of the importance of intercultural communication in business, education, and daily living. (Classroom examples, videos and discussion)

Text

Jandt, Fred E. (2010). *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community*, (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Grading

50% **Exams:** There will be three exams over reading and lecture materials. These exams will consist of both objective and short answer/discussion questions.

20% **Presentations:** Course objectives will be assessed through a series of presentations that will expect students to articulate how they are adapting to various intercultural experiences. These will be the result of both direct observation and research into specific Service Learning projects conducted.

30% **Service-Learning Project:** The class will be split into small groups. These small groups will be assigned to an agency in Abilene for their semester-long service-learning project. By the end of the semester, each individual must have spent 10 hours either working at the agency OR on the project the agency has asked the group to complete. Each individual is responsible for his/her own field notes journal (explained below) and this is due to me within a week of your visit. Therefore, Service-Learning hours are to be spread out over the course of the semester and **not** left for the end!

Time Sheets: Time sheets for the hours are due to the Service learning and Volunteer Resources by December 2nd. They need to be signed by your agency supervisor, not me.

15% **Field Notes Journal:** A total of 5 field notes need to be turned in over the course of the semester (electronically by e-mail to roperc@acu.edu). It is YOUR responsibility to clearly label what number (i.e., Field Notes 1, Field Notes 2) it is. *It is advisable to turn these in within a week of your agency visit.* This is meant to be an observational assignment: What did you do at the agency? What is the agency doing? Who is the agency serving? What needs is the agency fulfilling? What are some important realities or experiences about your field site? This is not meant to be an opinion journal, though it is expected some personal reflection will occur. It would be wonderful if some connections were made between the field notes and what is read for and discussed in class.

15% **Reflection Paper:** The paper needs to be between 5-7 pages. It needs 4-5 academic sources. It should have two parts: one part reflection (engaging/reflecting on the agency's mission, purpose, and service) and one part connection where you make recommendations to the agency based on what you have learned both in class and through independent academic research.

Reflection: What intercultural issues have you witnessed and, therefore, been forced to grapple with over the course of the semester? What conclusions have you come to?

Research: What research available to you through the library (books and articles) or on the Internet is already grappling with this issue? How does it inform your own thought process and thus your recommendation to the agency?

The research component can feed into any part of the paper, reflection or connection. I am looking for 4-5 sources per paper. Your textbook can be used to a limited degree. You can use no more than one block quote (40 words or more) and no more than 5 quotes **total** in the paper.

The paper should be 12 font, with one inch margins, and must be double-spaced. The 5-7 pages **do not** include the cover page and bibliography that all the papers must have! The paper must be stapled, have numbered pages, with proper citation of sources throughout.

Attendance

The assignments in this class are designed to achieve the above goals. Readings, class lectures/discussions, and in-class activities will not only provide you with information about major concepts but will also allow you the opportunity to experience these concepts. Therefore, regular attendance/timeliness is expected. You are responsible for any information you miss in class (e.g., missed notes or assignments, changes to the syllabus, returned assignments/tests, etc.). You are provided with **one** discretionary absence. A **second** unexcused absence will drop your grade by one letter. (NOTE: 3 Tardies = 1 Absence). If you are tardy, it is YOUR responsibility to notify me after class that you were tardy, not absent (a brief reminder note will suffice).

Assignment Due Dates

Assignments are due the day assigned. For an excused absence, exams should be made up within one week. If you must miss a class for a legitimate reason (school sponsored trip, serious illness, death in family), (1) please call me (674-2137) before class, and (2) provide a WRITTEN excuse/statement/document the **FIRST** class period when you return to class.

Writing Evaluation

All written assignments will be graded both on content and writing style. Because writing is so vitally important to most careers, grammatical and spelling errors, typos, incorrect punctuation, etc., will cause points to be deducted from the total grade (usually one point per error, two points with major errors). Therefore, proofread your writing/ typing before handing it in. Especially beware of major errors such as misspelled words, comma splices, incomplete sentences, etc.

Standards:

- 5 point penalty for length violation
- 1 - 1.5 inch margins
- Type page numbers on all your papers! (2 point penalty)
- Typed papers are to be stapled, double-spaced; minimum font size 12; **do not use plastic covers**, etc.

- A title page is acceptable but not necessary; your name and course number on the first page of your text is sufficient identification.

Cell Phones & Other Electronic Equipment

All communication that occurs inside the classroom should contribute to a good learning environment for you and your classmates. All portable electronic devices that are not being used for in-class activities (including laptops, cell phones, pagers, MP3 players, Ipods, or other listening devices, etc.) should be turned off and stored in a backpack, purse, or bag. Reading or sending text messages or engaging in other types of wireless chatting, surfing, or gaming or other kinds of wireless communication are distracting to you, your classmates, and your professor. You may request special permission to use a laptop (with the wireless connection turned off) or to have access to a cell phone (turned to vibrate) when class is in session. However, you must make this request in advance of using the electronic device.

Ethics/Honesty

Cheating is not permitted or tolerated. University guidelines will be followed. Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. The *American College Dictionary* defines plagiarism as “copying or imitating the language, ideas, and thoughts of another and passing off the same as one’s original work.” This includes the use of quotations without citation and extensive paraphrasing of others’ ideas without citation. The key here is failure to cite your sources. While extensive citing of other people’s ideas and wording is unoriginal, it is not dishonest. Students are encouraged to do original work, but more fundamentally, they are required to cite their sources. **DO NOT** allow your work to be copied in whole or in part by another student. If you are ever in doubt about the legitimate use of sources for assignments, check with your instructor.

Contact With Instructor

Please feel free to visit with me during office hours or other times can be arranged by appointment. I really would like to help you with this class, and it is helpful if you give me feedback regarding your concerns and challenges with the material. I am excited about this class and looking forward to our learning more about communicating interculturally.

Tentative Daily Class Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
Aug. 26 th	Introduction & Syllabus <i>Intercultural Simulation</i>	
Sept. 02 nd	Service learning introduction Culture as Context for Communication Model of Intercultural Communication	Chs. 1 & 2
Sept. 09 th	Service learning introduction Dimensions of Culture	Ch. 7
Sept. 16 th	Culture's Influence on Perception Barriers to Intercultural Communication Case Study: Gung Ho	Ch. 3 Ch. 4
Sept. 23 rd	Exam 1 (Class Notes & Chs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and class notes)	
Sept. 30 th	Dominant U.S. Cultural Patterns Comparative Cultural Patterns: Arab Culture Presentation on biases	Ch. 8 Ch. 9
Oct. 07 th	Environmental Influences Case Study: My Big, Fat Greek Wedding	
Oct. 14 th	Interpreting and Attributing Meaning <i>Intercultural Simulation</i>	
Oct. 21 st	Nonverbal Communication Language as a Barrier	Ch. 5 Ch. 6
Oct. 28 th	Exam 2 (Class Notes & Chs. 5, 6, 8, 9, and class notes)	
Nov. 04 th	Contact Between Cultures Immigration and Acculturation	Ch. 11 Ch. 12
Nov. 11 th	Cultures Within Cultures Case Study: End of the Spear	Ch. 13
Nov. 18 th	Identity and Subgroups Becoming Intercultural People Building Community through Diversity	Ch. 14

Presentations on Values, Beliefs, and Practices

Nov. 25th

THANKSGIVING

Dec. 02nd

Course Wrap-up

Dinner at Dr. Roper's house (841 E. N. 11th Street)

Dec. 09th

FINAL EXAM (chs. 11, 12, 13, 14, and class notes)