

Cultural Awareness Requirement

The Communication Department is proposing that COMS345, Intercultural Communication, be accepted as a course that satisfies the criteria to meet the Cultural Awareness Competency. Below are the specific talking points as set forth by the original Core Committee.

1. ***Ability to reflect on own cultural rules and biases:*** the course examines specifically dominant U.S. cultural patterns. It uses this knowledge as a basis to then compare U.S. expectations with those of other dominant and sub-cultures.

This competency is measured by a Service Learning Project completed in groups. Measurement is through evaluation of a Field Notes Journal, a Reflection paper, and a presentation where students identify and acknowledge their own biases.

2. ***Ability to consider experiences and issues from the perspectives of others with differing world views:*** the course content explores a variety of different cultures and co-cultures, as well as learning ways to compare cultures utilizing dimensions of cultural variability. The foundational construct for this arises out of World View; its definition, significance, impact on thinking and behavior, and generation of cultural interactions.

This competency is measured through a paper that expects students to compare and contrast cultures based on differences researched and observed.

3. ***Ability to articulate understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication:*** the course content specifically examines both verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as potential errors in attributing meaning in intercultural interactions. Course content has been adapted to include specific verbal and nonverbal communication expectations from the cultures surrounding the teaching environment; United States, Oxford, England, Montevideo, Uruguay, Honduras, etc.

This competency is measured through a combination of research and direct observation resulting in reflection papers. It is heavily dependent on the physical environment in which the class is taught. When in the Study Abroad sites, greater emphasis is placed on the cultures that are present.

4. ***Ability to ask complex questions about beliefs, values, and practices of other cultures and articulate answers to those questions that reflect flexible cultural understanding:*** the course addresses immigration and

acculturation, becoming intercultural people, and the importance of learning to build community through diversity. All this is accomplished through an increased understanding of one's own culture and how it differs from a secondary target culture.

This competency is measured through a series of field interactions with members of various cultures present in the environment. These contacts result in information about the beliefs, values, and practices of others that students report to the class through presentations.

5. ***Ability to initiate and develop interactions with individuals from cultures that differ from that of the student:*** the course utilizes a service learning component with *Love and Care Ministries* and *Disability Resources* to provide an opportunity for students to interact with individuals from a different co-culture; in addition, in class simulations and video case studies are used to help develop an intercultural mind-frame. When offered in the ACU Study Abroad locations, students are required to engage in Service Learning with agencies and/or churches to insure interpersonal interactions.

This competency is measured through a Field Notes Journal resulting in a reflection paper requiring students to process their experiences in the Service Learning projects. This is enhanced in the Study Abroad experience through the requirement of daily Journaling of feelings, impressions, and experiences beginning two weeks before the term begins, extending through the foreign experience, and culminating two weeks after their return to the States.