**FOUNDATIONS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

**Southwest University, Chongqing, China—Linguistics and English Language**

**20**



I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.   
Mahatma Gandhi

If man is to survive, he will have learned to take a delight in the essential differences between men and between cultures. He will learn that differences in ideas and attitudes are a delight, part of life's exciting variety, not something to fear.   
Gene Roddenberry (creator, *Star Trek*)



**Instructor:** Dr. John R. Baldwin **Office:** 420 Fell Hall [**Writing and format tips**](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/WritingAcademese.htm)

**Office Phone:** 309/438-7110 **E-mail:** [**jrbaldw@ilstu.edu**](mailto:jrbaldw@ilstu.edu)

**ISU Course website:** [**http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/272/COM272Syllabus.htm**](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/272/COM272Syllabus.htm)

**Required Text:** Baldwin, J. R., Coleman, R. R. M., González, A., & Shenoy-Packer, S. (2014). *Intercultural communication for everyday life.* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN 978-1-4443-3236-0

As the world continues to shrink due to technology, media, and globalization, we will all interact with people from other nations or be exposed to messages (news, information, advertisements) from or about other cultures. As we now realize that even people within the borders of a nation can have different cultures, intercultural communication on a regular basis becomes even more of a possibility. As the quotes above suggest, however, encountering cultural difference is not something that we should be afraid of. Rather, it is something that can bring adventure to life, make us more flexible, and give us more choice over our own lives. The main goal of this course is to help you become a more competent intercultural communicator. We introduce fundamental concepts to the study of culture and communication, but the primary focus of writing assignments is knowing yourself, your culture, and your prejudices.

**Course Philosophy**

Any course “culture” is a combination of things, including course objectives and structure, the instructor’s philosophy of teaching, and the unique experiences and perspectives that the students bring to the class.

* ***Course structure:***As a 200-level “foundations” course in the SOC, this course has primary objectives of introducing you to basic concepts and ideas as these pertain to understanding and practicing intercultural communication. Thus, the focus of texts and tests will be on basic terminology and frameworks. At the same time, the coverage will be practical, and we will make use of discussion, in-course exercises and simulations, and video analyses. Finally, unlike our upper-level course (372), which is focused strongly on cognitive learning, this course seeks to provide an “affective” aspect of learning, a “sensing” of intercultural communication and competence.
* ***Instructor philosophy:*** My goal in the class is to be a facilitator of mutual learning, including learning new things from my students each year. I believe that the greatest things we learn are not things repeatable on an exam, but what we learn from each other, as we discuss the material. Also, I believe that college students are able to think critically and are not simply passive recipients. As such, we will not simply present the concepts, but will engage definitions, frameworks, and perspectives to see their strengths and limitations.
* ***Student experiences and effort:*** This sort of learning occurs best if we are prepared to discuss the material when we walk in the door, with knowledge of terms and definitions; thoughts about personal experiences, outside reading, and Internet and social media experiences, and any questions you might have about the material. You may challenge the text (or me!), as long as you do so respectfully! Your experiences and character are important in shaping class culture. In addition, you are responsible for your attendance and learning in the course. I am just here to help you make the most of what you put into the course.

## Course Description and Objectives

This course introduces you to communication among people from different cultures. The content focuses on the application of theory ***and*** practice in intercultural settings. Specifically, after this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the relationship between culture and communication
2. Outline and summarize aspects of individual, relationship, and context that make intercultural communication more competent
3. Summarize, compare, and evaluate standard frameworks for understanding culture
4. Explain aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication that may differ between people of different cultures
5. Summarize the role of cultural patterns and communication in the development of intercultural interpersonal relationships
6. Generate a list of obstacles to competent intercultural communication, with possible solutions
7. Make practical application of course concepts to civic and political engagement
8. Exhibit communication skills that demonstrate (improved) competence in intercultural communication contexts

Units of Instruction

The exact schedule is not set, yet, but the following list of topics is an estimate of what I will cover each day. We will often go beyond the class readings, as this is a masters-level class. When we do, I will make readings available to you, though we will rely mostly on class discussion, and you can read the outside materials later, if you have interest.

The estimated time of instruction is about 24 hours over 10 class days. For the sake of ease, I will break this into 10 days, two units each day; however, we might move slightly forward with the schedule or fall a little behind, based on class discussion and activities.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Topic**  *(Chapter titles in italics)* | **Reading** | **Class Activities** |
| Week 1  Day 1 | 1: **Introductions; rationale**  2: **Action:** Ethics, morality, and civic engagement**;** research approaches | 1: **Ch. 1**  2: **Ch. 2** | 1: Introductions; cell-phone research; time-capsule exercise; “culture quiz”  2: Class discussion: social action in context; |
| Week 1  Day 2 | 1: **Culture and intercultural comm**  2: “Paradigms” of research | 1: **Ch. 3**  2: --- | 1: Video analysis: Models  2: Case study on research methods (Martin, Nakayama, & Flores) |
| Week 1  Day 3 | 1: **Values and worldview**  2: Cultural simulation! D.I.E. exercise | 1: **Ch. 4**  2: --- | 1: Video analysis; +/- of survey research; An Asiacentric perspective (Miike)  2: Cultural game (bring a friend!) |
| Week 1  Day 4 | 1: **American culture**: Althen, Stewart  2: **Chinese vs. American cultures**: Gao & Ting-Toomey; Yum | 1: ---  2: --- | 1: Bring some Internet research on U.S. American culture; Cultural simulation: *Barnga*  2: Class discussion |
| Week 1  Day 5 | 1: **Cultural and ethnic identities**  2:  **Intolerance-Acceptance-Appreciation** | 1: **Ch. 5**  2: **Ch. 6** | 1: Discussion: identities in U.S. and China  2: Case study: solutions for prejudice |
| Week 2  Day 1 | 1: **Verbal communication**  2: **Ritual and Rhetoric** | 1: **Ch 7**  2. **Ch 9** | 1: Movie: *American tongues*  2: Discussion: *kwan-hsi,* the “house tour” and other cultural rituals; role plays |
| Week 2  Day 2 | 1: **Nonverbal communication**  2: **Media and Globalization** | 1: **Ch. 8**  2. **Ch. 10-11** | 1: Movie on nonverbal differences around the world  2: Discussion: media representation of other countries...and diversity in our own |
| Week 2  Day 3 | 1: **Cross-cultural adaptation**  2: **Cross-cultural competence:** Spitzberg or other reading | 1: **Ch. 12**  2: --- | 1: Share your adjustment experiences; case study for organizational training  2: Competence case study |
| Week 2  Day 4 | 1: **Relationships**  2. **Conflict negotiation** | 1: **Ch. 13**  2: --- | 1: Discussion: intercultural relationships; cultural aspects of relationships  2: Presentation: “face” theory and conflict: Ting-Toomey, Pan |
| Week 2  Day 5 | 1: **Organizations and Health context**  2: **Education context** | 1: **Ch. 15**  2: -- | 1: Discussion: (changing) organizational cultures: Germany, U.S. China? (outside reading: Rao; Geist-Martin)  2: Comparing classroom cultures (outside reading: Skow & Stephan) |