

Fr 2891 Cross Cultural Communication

Instructor - Maité Monchal, PhD, Director of Vanderbilt-in-France

Course Description

With the rise of global mobility and ever-increasing migration flow, becoming a competent intercultural communicator and increasing one's knowledge about other and different cultures is a necessity in today's globalized world. This course will introduce students to the theory, knowledge, and skills necessary to skillfully negotiate a variety of situations in which cultural contact occurs, so that misunderstandings and communication breakdown can be avoided, and greater understanding of other cultures can result in more successful and productive relationships.

Students will be encouraged to develop a critical awareness of their own culture and how it can influence communication with others, as well as become conscious of how ethnocentrism can be an obstacle in intercultural learning and communication. Cultural theory discussed in class will at all times be related to practical case studies and real-life situations, many of which will involve interactive group exercises in class. A varied teaching format of lectures, class discussion, simulations, case studies, media presentations, cultural encounters and mini internships will be employed to engage students with both the host and world culture.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the role that culture and different contexts play in effective communication and how this translates across cultures.
- Study the different levels of intercultural sensitivity: Denial-defense-minimization-acceptance -adaptation-integration explained in Milton Bennett's texts.
- Deepen knowledge about verbal and non-verbal intercultural communication.
- Immerse students in Aix/Marseille communities and French culture through activities and engagements.
- Develop the capacity to see, appreciate and draw novel insight from cultural differences and the ability to work, negotiate and socialize with people of different cultural background
- Encourage curiosity for further learning and experiences in the intercultural field.
- Lay foundational groundwork for doing work or services across cultures.

Texts (extracts)

Bennett, Milton J. "Becoming Interculturally Competent." *Toward multiculturalism: A reader in multicultural education 2* (2004): 62-77. Print.

---. "Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective." *Basic concepts of intercultural communication: Selected readings* (1998): 1-34. Print.

Carroll, Raymonde. *Cultural Misunderstandings: The French-American Experience*. Trans. Carol Volk. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1990. Print.

D' Iribarne, Philippe. *Managing Corporate Values in Diverse National Cultures: The Challenge of Differences*. Routledge, 2012. Print.

Hammer, Mitchell R., Milton J. Bennett, and Richard Wiseman. "Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: The Intercultural Development Inventory." *International journal of intercultural relations* 27.4 (2003): 421–443. Print.

Martin, Judith, and Thomas Nakayama, eds. *Intercultural Communication in Contexts, 6th Edition*. 6th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2012. Print.

Assignments

Course engagement and participation: Given the nature of this course, discussion of texts and ideas is imperative.

Facebook posts and engagements: A Facebook group will be used as means of digital conversation and sharing. Each student will share one subject relevant to the course material and respond to two classmates' postings. Facebook discussion will be treated as an extension of class discussion.

Cultural self-analysis essay: This essay will provide an opportunity to apply cultural concepts to the student's personal life by articulating his/her self-identity. (6 pages)

Cross-cultural interviews: The student will select two persons of a different cultural background and interview them to learn about these differences. The student will then write a report that complements the self-analysis. (6 pages)

Mid-term examination: The mid-term will cover the theoretical material presented in class.

Engagement project: This project will be a collaborative study of a specific neighborhood in Aix or Marseille with a focus on its cultural history and intercultural challenges. The project consists of three assignments: a first visit on site, the creation of a group project on the neighborhood profile including interviews, observations and activities. A PowerPoint presentation will be included in a digital magazine.

Final portfolio: The final project will be a critical reflection and analysis of all the different assignments and their impact on the student's new vision of what cross cultural communication is.

Evaluation

20% Class participation and Facebook posts

20% Cultural self-analysis and cross-cultural interviews.

20% Midterm

20% Neighborhood engagement project

20% Final portfolio project

Program

Week 1, January 11th-15th

- *Introduction to intercultural Communication. Imperatives for Developing Cross-Cultural Communication . **Why study Intercultural Communication?***
- *Literacy: Situating ourselves in Aix en Provence, France and internationally. Intercultural sensitivity, preparing for cross-cultural encounters*

Week 2, January 18th-22nd

- Culture/Communication/Context/Power. What is Culture? What is communication?
- Culture and identity. Identity and Intercultural Communication
- What is a multicultural person?

Week 3, January 25th-29th

- The process of intercultural learning: Theory and Practice.
- What are the potential pitfalls and obstacles to intercultural learning and communication? Survivor's guide to Cross Cultural Communication
- Models for cultural analysis **Cultural self-analysis project.**

Week 4, February 1st-5th

Week 5, February 8th-12th

- Verbal Intercultural Communication: Language and Cross Cultural Communication
- Non verbal communication

February 15th-19th winter break

Week 7, February 22nd-26th

- From Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism: Basics of culture and communication
- **Cross cultural interviews.**

Week 8, February 22nd-26th

- Intercultural Relationships: Challenges and Rewards. **film**
- **Mid-term.**

Week 9, March 7th-11th

- Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

Week 10, March 14th-18th

- Cultural behaviors. Understanding intercultural Transitions
- Intercultural dynamics of social integration.
- Culture Communication and conflict

Week 11, March 21st-25th

- Immigration, models of integration, exclusion, multiculturalism.
- Intercultural conflicts.
- **Neighborhood engagement project.**

Week 12, March 28th-April 1st

- Religion, laicity, communitarism

Week 13, April 4th-8th

- The city: Marseille

April 8th-17th spring break

Week 14, April 18th-22nd

- The family, intercultural marriages, intercultural mixity

Week 15, April 26th-28th

- General Conclusion.
- **Final portfolio project.**

Week 16, May 3rd