Welcome, students considering taking Intercultural Communication in the fall! This syllabus is very much a draft (you’ll notice the dates aren’t even for fall semester); I’ve posted it to give you an idea about what to expect from the course.

The Schedule of Classes website doesn’t yet show that the class will be held M/W, 8:30-9:50 am. I hope you can join us and I look forward to meeting you.

COMM 324
Intercultural Communication
Fall 2014

Instructor: Jillian Pierson, Ph.D.  jilliank@usc.edu
Office: ASC 333
Office Hours: Mon/Wed xx-xx
Tues/Thurs xx-xx
Office Phone: (323) 821-
[no voice mail]  If my office hours are not convenient for you, we can try to set a meeting for a different time or we can meet by phone.
Home Phone: (323)xxx-xxxx [9am-9pm]  Please use my home phone for messages. I cannot retrieve messages on the office line.

Course Goals
This class will introduce you to the field of intercultural communication, which draws from an array of academic disciplines. The primary goal is to prepare you to be the best global citizen you can be. Using readings, lectures, in-class exercises, discussions, film clips and your own assignments, we will:

- Enhance our understanding of the myriad of ways that cultures differ
- Develop a meaningful vocabulary for discussing these differences
- Learn about processes that affect intercultural communication interactions
- Investigate a variety of contexts in which intercultural communication takes place
- Take an introductory look at the current strands of research in the field
- Apply course concepts to analyze real-world intercultural interactions

Although this is a class in concepts and theories of intercultural communication, your skills will have grown by the end of the semester as your awareness of the fundamental issues grows.

Diversity Requirement
If you are taking this class to fulfil the university’s diversity requirement, you might note that when we talk about “culture” in this class, we will define the term broadly to include
international cultures, co-cultures within a geographic region or nation, class or financial status, education, gender, sexual orientation, and any of the other myriad of ways people can be considered “diverse.” Long before “diversity” became a university-required course of study, theorists in the field of communication have been concerned with understanding our interconnected world community and preparing students to become thoughtful “interculturalists.”

**Required Texts**


*Additional readings are required.* Please see the course bibliography at the end of the syllabus and use Blackboard to find links to online reading assignments.

Please note that class lectures rarely repeat material from the text, but that you will be required to read and thoroughly understand the readings assigned on the course calendar.

**Tentative Course Schedule, Subject to Change:**
Readings should be completed after class the day they are scheduled. *Italicized* readings are the ones not found in the Samovar, Porter & McDaniel or Fadiman books and will be posted on Blackboard (Bb). Please check Bb frequently for revisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 15 Course Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>McDaniel, Samovar &amp; Porter, 4-19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan 17 Defining Intercultural Communication</td>
<td><strong>Culture description</strong></td>
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<td>Small group discussions of students’ cultural backgrounds; do “white people” have a “culture?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[film clip: Joy Luck Club]</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 22 Foundations of Intercultural Communication</td>
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<td>Leeds-Hurwitz</td>
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<td>Handout: “Unpacking the invisible knapsack: Recognizing white privilege”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan 24 Research &amp; Writing</td>
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<td>General writing concerns; Using APA Format</td>
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<td>Concerns about researching the “other” and diverse approaches to research questions</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 29 Intercultural Simulation Exercise</td>
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<td>Ptak, Cooper &amp; Brislin</td>
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<td>In this exercise, you will play the role of a member of one of three fictitious cultures. After learning your new culture’s values and customs you will join the other two cultures in a negotiation where each group has conflicting goals. By participating in this exercise, students will take away an increased awareness of how layers of culture affect our interactions and contribute to conflict.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Exercise debriefing &amp; discussion of the effectiveness of intercultural training exercises; advice from trainers experienced in working with diverse groups</td>
<td>Earley &amp; Peterson</td>
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<td>4 Feb 5</td>
<td>Culture and perception How culture affects even our interpretation of raw sensory data.</td>
<td>Research paradigm</td>
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<td>Saint-Jacques, 45-56 Ishii, Klopf &amp; Cooke, 56-65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 7</td>
<td>Culture and values</td>
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<td>5 Feb 12</td>
<td>Cultural patterns</td>
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<td>Feb 14</td>
<td><strong>Discussion of papers / Group Relations</strong></td>
<td>Field Experience Report</td>
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<td>6 Feb 19</td>
<td>Group Relations models of stereotyping and prejudice</td>
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<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>Group Relations Communication strategies individuals can take toward ending racism</td>
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<td>7 Feb 26</td>
<td><strong>Midterm I</strong></td>
<td>Exam</td>
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<td></td>
<td>midterms returned Nonverbal Communication [Video: World of Gestures]</td>
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<td>8 Mar 5</td>
<td>Nonverbal Communication</td>
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<td>Crouch 320-327 Hall (excerpts tba)</td>
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<td>9 Mar 7</td>
<td>Culture and Identity models of identity development for majority and minority cultural members and bicultural individuals; Communication Theory of Ethnic Identity</td>
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<td>9 Mar 12</td>
<td>Culture, Identity &amp; Language ethnolinguistic identity &amp; vitality</td>
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<td>[Video clip: War of Words] (French language police in Quebec driving out English—does their situation parallel ours in L.A.?)</td>
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<td>Fong 271-280 Roy 288-292 Cargile 464-472</td>
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<td>Mar 14</td>
<td>Culture &amp; Language Discerning attitudes toward speech; linguistic accommodation [Video clip: Maka tribe survives the Tsunami]</td>
<td>three project topic ideas: please email me with your thoughts in the body of the email</td>
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<td>10 Mar 26</td>
<td>Cultural Adaptation modes of adaptation and separatism; tension between assimilation and ethnic pride; metaphors reflecting ideologies such as “melting pot” and “tossed salad”</td>
<td>Public Radio International Evanoff 447-459 Karim</td>
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<td>Mar 28</td>
<td>Discussion of Papers/Cultural Adaptation (cont.) effect of the host culture’s attitudes</td>
<td>Field Experience Report Onwumechili, Nwosu &amp; Jackson 116-127 Khawaja &amp; Milner</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Apr 2</td>
<td>Cultural Change and Development Programs [Video: Bhutan Can a culture effectively resist the forces of globalization?]</td>
<td>Sowell 490-498 Spitzberg 424-435</td>
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<td>Apr 4</td>
<td>Culture and Conflict</td>
<td>project topic finalized Quasha &amp; Tsukada 126-143 Jia, Tian &amp; Jia 161-170</td>
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<td>12 Apr 9</td>
<td>Midterm II Exam</td>
<td>Bang &amp; Reece; Georgiou; Dixon</td>
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<td>Apr 11</td>
<td>Culture and the Media Depiction of ethnicity in popular culture; consuming pop culture through different perspectives</td>
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<td>13 Apr 16</td>
<td>Culture Presentations</td>
<td>Frauenheim; Robinson &amp; Dechant; Galanti (pp. tba); Delpit (tba)</td>
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<td>Apr 18</td>
<td>Culture Presentations</td>
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<td>14 Apr 23</td>
<td>Culture Presentations</td>
<td>Begin Fadiman book</td>
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<td>Apr 25</td>
<td>Culture in the Workplace Power in the workplace; minority and majority networks; different ways of organizing</td>
<td>Gambrell &amp; Fritz; Varner &amp; Beamer</td>
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<td>15 Apr 30</td>
<td>Culture in Healthcare and the Classroom Case studies of cultural conflicts in American hospitals. Immigrant students and cultural conflicts in the classroom.</td>
<td>Begley &amp; Ockey 366-380 McDaniel &amp; Katsumata, 400-413 Braithwaite 413-421</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The assignments are explained in this syllabus. **Failure to complete any one of these assignments may result in a failing grade in the course.**

**ADA Compliance Statement**

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

**School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy**

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

**Course Policies**

**Late Papers:** Please do not ask me for an extension. If your paper is late, it will be marked down by one third of a letter grade for every day it is late, regardless of the reason. Also, please be aware that if you end up handing a paper in late (thus accepting the automatic deduction), it falls to the bottom of my stack of things to do and will most likely not be returned to you in a very timely manner.

**Missed exams:** You better have a serious medical emergency with a verifiable written excuse (such as a bill from the paramedics) if you miss an exam. Contact me immediately if such an emergency arises (i.e., have a friend call me while they’re wheeling you away on the stretcher).

**Classroom environment:** Please turn your cell phones OFF when you enter our classroom. If you have a phone in “silent” mode that vibrates when it rings, it is not silent! I completely understand the temptation to multi-task but I ask that you forgo texting, instant messaging, internet surfing, gaming and other distractions during our time together.

**Participation/Attendance:** Our class sessions combine lecture and discussion. Participation (including attendance, promptness, courtesy, attentiveness, involvement in classroom activities, and discussion that clearly demonstrates you have kept up with the course material) may affect your grade by up to one third of a grade.
Missing more than four class periods *regardless of the reason* may result in a failing grade in the course. Arriving late twice or leaving early twice is viewed as equivalent of one absence.

There is no need to discuss with me reasons for your absences since it is reasonable that in fifteen weeks, you would have cause to miss one, two or even three classes. If for some reason you suspect you may miss more than four class sessions, see me immediately to discuss whether or not you will need to withdraw from the course.

When you miss class, please do not ask *me* what you missed. It is your responsibility to seek out that information from other students. Once you have done that, feel free to come to me with questions.

**Grading:** To achieve a “C” or better on papers, you must write at a level appropriate for a university student, i.e., with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. If you have specific difficulties with either writing or oral communication, please let me know before you turn in your first assignment.

I believe a “B” represents really good work. An “A” represents excellent work. If you are disappointed by a grade, I would be happy to discuss your work with you and help you improve for the next assignment.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework/Quizzes</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Experience 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Experience 2</td>
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<td>Midterm 1</td>
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<td>Midterm 2</td>
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<td>Culture Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Assignments**

Please read all instructions carefully and ask questions if you are unsure about the requirements. I’ve written out this detailed information to help you succeed on the assignments; look for samples of most of these assignments on Blackboard.

It is important that you *keep copies of all the work you turn in* as a safety mechanism. Also, please *keep all the assignments I return to you with my comments on them* until the semester has ended.

**NB:** The assignments you undertake should all be about cultures other than your own. You will have many opportunities to share your own cultural background and experiences with us in class discussions. For the papers and culture presentation, however, I want you to investigate new territory.
Culture Homework
Write two or three paragraphs describing your own culture and what it means to you. (This is the one exception to the note above about not writing about your own culture!)

Research Paradigm Assignment (Homework)

1. Find and read a research article in intercultural communication.
2. Turn in the citation for the article along with the article’s abstract. (If no abstract is available, please write a short paragraph summarizing the article.)
3. Based on the information presented in class about research paradigms, write a brief paragraph or two explaining which perspective the author(s) took and what about their work made that perspective evident.

Be sure to choose a research article where the authors conducted some kind of study. Do not choose a meta-analysis (a study of other studies), a book review, an essay or an article that only discusses theory.

The International Journal of Intercultural Relations is the field’s major journal, but many intercultural articles appear in other journals such as Journal of Communication, Human Communication Research, Communication Quarterly and journals in other disciplines such as Administrative Science Quarterly. Many articles are available full-text online (for free, via our USC library system). You might browse journals or do a search on ProQuest Direct or PsycInfo or other academic search engines available through USC’s electronic resources page.

Field Experience Reports (Two papers: 5-6 pages each)
These assignments combine cultural explorations with knowledge gained from the textbook and your own research. Each of these parts should enhance the other. The field experience should give you first-hand cultural knowledge which will help you understand the text and the text gives you a theoretical perspective which will increase your understanding of what you see in the field. You will know you’ve done a good job if you’ve learned something both during the experience and in the application of the text.

• Each field experience should consist of an experience conducted this semester, and any research included should be research undertaken for this class.

• Write a five to six page typed paper about each of your two explorations (i.e., one paper on one exploration is due in the fifth week; another paper on a second exploration is due in the tenth week).

• Integrate at least one relevant idea from the Samovar, Porter & McDaniel textbook (from one of the assigned chapters). Be specific in referring to the idea and cite the pages where the information can be found in the text. You MUST do this to pass the assignment!
• Write as if your audience consists of readers who are well educated but have no special expertise in intercultural communication. You therefore must explain the text ideas clearly enough that your audience will understand them solely from reading your paper.

• Each report should be carefully proofread and demonstrate a high level of competence in written communication.

Each typed report should include these elements:

• the date you are turning in the report
• an intriguing title for each report, centered above the text of your paper
• the name of the type of report you have chosen to do
• type that is double spaced with 1 inch margins, 12 point standard serif font (such as Times; please do not use a sans serif font like Arial or Helvetica)

Please do not include a cover page, title page or a folder.

See Blackboard postings for further advice and examples of field experience reports.

**Field Experience Options** (choose two different types):

The questions listed in each option are given as guides to stimulate your thinking. You should expand on these or substitute for them. The quality of your analyses will depend on how interesting the questions are that you pose during your investigations.

I. **Cultural Interview**: Interview someone from another culture who is living in the U.S. What surprises did they encounter when they came here? What differences have they noticed? How have they adjusted? Focus on differences in human interaction and communication. Cite at least one outside source which gave you additional information about your interviewee’s original culture. The additional information should directly support and contribute to the field experience, not provide background or geographical information. Please do not interview a member of your immediate family. Choose someone who arrived here within the last few years.

II. **Expatriate Interview**: Interview someone from the U.S. who has lived for at least a year in another country sometime in the last five years. What surprises did they encounter in the new country? What differences did they notice? How did they adjust? Focus on differences in human interaction and communication. Cite at least one outside source which gave you additional information about the culture your interviewee visited. The additional information should directly support and contribute to the field experience, not provide background or geographical information. Please do not interview a member of your immediate family.
III. **World Culture Clash**: Analyze one of the world’s ethnic conflicts from an intercultural communication perspective. What cultural differences might help create or exacerbate the conflict? What concepts from the text might increase understanding of the situation? Cite at least three sources of your information about the clash. The conflict you select should be a situation that continues today and you should not spend more than a paragraph or two giving historical background. (Please do not choose the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the conflict in Northern Ireland.)

IV. **Cultural Phenomena**: Look through magazines and newspapers to find stories which highlight cultural (rather than political or economic) phenomena. (The *Los Angeles Times* often carries such articles, generally featured as their “Column One” on the front page.) Choose three stories that are somehow related (e.g., they’re all from the same culture or they all discuss very similar issues or they’re all related to one course concept/theme). Discuss the cultural issues presented and how they relate to course concepts. Include a reference page that lists the articles you read.

V. **Intercultural Theory and Research**: Choose three research articles from research journals on one specific topic of intercultural communication discussed in the text that you would like to explore in greater depth (or a topic not covered at all in the text, as long as you get my approval one week ahead of the due date). Write a miniature literature review by summarizing and evaluating the findings from the studies. Include a reference page giving the citations of the articles.

VI. **Intercultural Communication Improvement**: Provide an example of an intercultural communication situation that has been improved. For example, you might briefly describe what occurred at a high school with significant racial tensions before, during and after they underwent a program to help students get along better. Use at least two sources (even if you are only able to find one about the improved situation) and relate the story to course concepts. Include a reference page.

VII. **Your Own Idea**: Consult me first; then conduct your own exploration. Please be sure to discuss your idea with me at least one week in advance. You will have to incorporate at least one written resource, depending on your experience.

**Some additional hints:**

The best field experiences are novel. Your best friend may have just returned from a semester abroad but you’ve probably already heard a lot about the trip, so interview someone else who has really spent a significant period of time in another country.

Explain ideas *in your own words*; don’t just parrot what the text says. Choose the most relevant text concepts to apply so you can say something meaningful about your experience (and note which page numbers the concepts came from). When additional sources are required, make sure to use ideas that directly contribute to the understanding of your experience. Do not use outside sources merely to provide geographic, economic, or political information.
The quality of your outside sources (are they articles from academic journals or did you use a travel web site?) may affect your grade. Do not use an encyclopedia (either online, such as Wikipedia, or a printed book) as a source.

If you don’t see any differences in the culture or articles you’ve chosen, why not? Provide some analysis about the similarities or why the differences aren’t easily observed.

We will discuss the field experiences in class on two scheduled occasions. This will be a time for you to learn what others are doing and to describe what you are learning through your own explorations.

**Culture Project  (oral presentation plus a full sentence outline)**

The culture project is an opportunity to research one aspect of the intercultural communication field that interests you and relate it to course concepts in a meaningful way. You will present your findings in a brief, informative and extemporaneous oral presentation (5-7 minutes). Your topic should be something very specific because you only have five to seven minutes to share the information with the class. Use a new topic for this course.

On the day of your presentation, turn in a full sentence outline and reference page. The outline should be thorough enough that it will clearly remind me of all the points you covered in your talk, but does not need to be so detailed that it reads like a paper or a written-out speech. Your outline should clearly show how your topic was related to course concepts by citing the textbook, lecture notes or other assigned readings.

Your talk will be delivered extemporaneously. This means you will speak to the class without reading, although you may glance at an outline or note cards that you use as a guide. Do not write out and memorize your talk word for word.

Please use a minimum of six sources, at least four of which are written sources, such as academic journals, books, magazines or web sites. For the fifth source and beyond, you might use interviews, films, documentaries, or something else appropriate to your topic. Although you must cite our textbook, please do not include the text or other class readings as one of your six required sources.

**Relate your topic to culture.** In other words, instead of just telling us about a phenomenon, what about the specific culture involved creates the practice? What about Korean culture makes politeness rules particularly important? What about the Colombian culture makes the gangs of orphaned children so protective of one another?

Whatever topic you choose, make sure the subject is specific and detailed enough to be interesting, and narrow enough to be accomplished in no more than eight minutes. Broad generalizations (“Life in Zimbabwe is very different from the U.S.”) are boring. Detail is interesting! It’s very difficult to pay attention to long lists of information. Use examples and anecdotes to make your presentation come to life. Please time yourself before coming to class.
We will not have time for you to talk longer than seven minutes, so I will have to be merciless about asking people to stop once they’ve used up their time.

Choosing an interesting topic is one of the keys to succeeding in this assignment. Try to choose something that we will all remember hearing about three months later. Choose something dynamic that is related to people’s values and experiences. Static topics don’t work well unless you have a particular slant that brings them to life. For example, you could talk about kimonos and describe what the various kinds of materials and colors have meant to the Japanese over the years. Will we all remember your talk a few weeks from now? Instead, you might learn about a small community of expert kimono tailors whose lives are changing because of the waning use of these special garments in Japan. That way you get to touch on a topic that you liked—kimonos—and give it an interesting spin.

Your subject should be something that occurs in present day, not something historical.

Please ask me to approve your topic at least one week prior to your presentation date.

To review, here are some guidelines for choosing a good topic:

1. Choose something that is a source of conflict or controversy or
2. Choose something novel and surprising or
3. Choose something with an element of change.
4. Choose something that is clearly related to culture.
5. Keep your topic narrow and specific.
6. Do not describe a holiday (e.g., Day of the Dead).
7. Do not describe a religion (e.g., Voodoo).
8. Do not describe a ritual (unless it so novel and surprising that you feel we really should hear about it, so probably not applying henna to an Indian bride or quinceañeras).
9. Do not describe an art form (e.g., Tahitian dance).

Some topics that have worked in previous semesters have been racism in Brazil; the practice of skin lightening in Jamaica; soap operas for social change in India; and host bars in Japan.

To make an interesting presentation, follow these guidelines:

1. Grab our attention immediately with an interesting anecdote, question or illustration.
2. Tell us what your talk is about.
3. Break up your information into two or three main points.
4. Be specific and detailed, using examples, not generalizations.
5. Give a one-sentence summary.
6. End with a final thought that leaves a strong impression.

If you’re someone who gets nervous speaking in front of the class, think about these points as you prepare:

1. You have something interesting to tell us that we really want to hear. Focus on the content you have to share, not on how you think you’re coming across to the audience.
2. Breathe deeply, go slowly, and smile!
3. Before you come to class, practice, practice, practice. Feeling confident about what you have to say is the best way to calm nerves.

We won’t have time to do make-ups on this assignment, so please be on time and prepared. Your polite, attentive and active participation as an audience member is highly valued and may be reflected in your own grade.

I would like to encourage you to dress presentably, in “business casual” attire. In other words, you don’t need to wear a three-piece suit, but you’ll probably want to leave your flip-flops and baseball caps at home. We’d like to listen to you and not be distracted by your midriff or cleavage!

**Exams**
The midterm and final exams should determine if you have learned the material covered in the readings, lectures, and class discussions. They will also ask you to apply what you have learned and demonstrate your ability to analyze intercultural situations. The midterms will be in multiple choice format. The final will probably have a combination of multiple choice and open ended questions.

Please note that you are responsible for both the material presented in the readings and in class. The two do not always overlap. If you missed a class, it would be a good idea to get notes and discuss them with at least two other students.

**Course Bibliography**
A partial bibliography follows and a complete list of readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**Looking Ahead**
Every semester one of the great benefits of teaching this class is that I get to learn from the wealth of experiences and backgrounds students bring to the course. I’ll be your guide through the materials (and yes, your evaluator as well), but you will make many contributions. I look forward to your participation and to learning more together about culture and communication.

**Course Bibliography (subject to change)**


