

Please note: This is a sample from an earlier semester. Substantial updates may be made, but this will give you a good idea of what to expect from the course. Feel free to email me if you have questions.

COMM 324 Intercultural Communication

Instructor:	Jillian Pierson, Ph.D.	jilliank@usc.edu
Office:	ASC 323	
Office Hours:	Tues/Thurs 9-9:25 Thursdays 12:30 – 1:30	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.
Office Phone:	() - [Tues/Thurs til 2 only]	Please use my home phone for messages. I cannot retrieve messages on the office line.

Course Goals

The overall goal of this course is to develop an understanding of the process of communicating across cultural boundaries. We will operate from the premise that culture is both a producer and product of communication and therefore an appreciation of communication processes is an essential factor in promoting positive intercultural relations. Specifically we will aim to:

- Develop an understanding of the relationship between culture and communication
- Establish a meaningful vocabulary for discussing how cultures vary
- Enhance appreciation of the diverse ways of communicating in different cultures
- Identify factors affecting intercultural communication
- Understand the current strands of research in intercultural communication
- Improve analytical skills in examining intercultural interactions

We will draw on the texts, lectures, in-class exercises, discussions, film clips and your own field experiences and presentations to achieve these goals.

Required Texts

Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., & McDaniel, E. R. (2009). *Intercultural communication: A reader* (12th Ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage.

Fadiman, A. (1997). *The spirit catches you and you fall down*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Additional readings are required. Please see the course bibliography at the end of the syllabus and use BlackBoard to find links to online 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 prior to class the day they are scheduled. *Italicized* readings are the ones *not* found in the Samovar, Porter & McDaniel or Fadiman books.

	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1	Aug 25 Aug 27	Course Introduction Defining Intercultural Communication [film clip: Joy Luck Club]	Culture description	McDaniel, Samovar & Porter, 6-17
2	Sept 1	Foundations of Intercultural Communication		Hooker, 59-64 <i>Leeds-Hurwitz</i>
	Sept 3	Research & Writing		<i>General writing concerns; Using APA Format</i>
3	Sept 8 Sept 10	Intercultural Simulation Exercise Exercise debriefing		Chen 393-400 <i>Ptak, Cooper & Brislin</i>
4	Sept 15	Culture and perception	Research paradigm	Ishii, Klopff & Cooke, 28-36 Schelbert 48-58
	Sept 17	Culture and values [Film clip: Iron and Silk]		Triandis, 18-28 Nisbett 134-144 Miller 171-180 Kumar & Sethi 155-161 <i>Robinson</i>
5	Sept 22	Cultural patterns		Kim 435-446 McDaniel & Katsumata 365-376
	Sept 24	Discussion of papers / Group Relations	Field Experience Report	Begley 162-171
6	Sept 29	Group Relations		Nwosu 199-207 <i>Lindsley</i> <i>LeRoux</i>
	Oct 1	Midterm I		
7	Oct 6	Nonverbal Communication [Video: World of Gestures]		Andersen & Wang 264-280 Crouch 281-286
	Oct 8	Culture and Identity		Parker & Mease 313-324 Kinefuchi 104-115 Chai & Zhong 93-104 <i>Hecht, Jackson & Ribeau (pp tba)</i> <i>Gaines et al</i>

8	Oct 13	Culture & Language [Video clip: War of Words]	Roy 259-263 <i>Language Laws in Quebec</i>
	Oct 15	Culture & Language (cont.) [Video clip: Maka tribe survives the Tsunami]	Ellis & Maoz 244-250 Gay 347-364 Wynne Zaharna
9	Oct 20	Cultural Adaptation [Film clip: Lost in Translation]	<i>Public Radio International</i>
	Oct 22	(cont.)	Onwumechili, Nwosu & Jackson 116-127
10	Oct 27	Cultural Adaptation (cont.)	Evanoff 447-459
	Oct 29	Discussion of Papers / Cultural Change [Video: Bhutan]	Field Experience Report <i>Rubin</i>
11	Nov 3	Ethical Considerations & Development Programs	Sowell 424-430 Spitzberg 381-393
	Nov 5	Midterm II	
12	Nov 10	Culture and Conflict	Ka'imikaua 197-199 Miller 171-180
	Nov 12	Culture Presentations	<i>Barrera & Bielby</i>
13	Nov 17	Culture Presentations	<i>Fursich</i>
	Nov 19	Culture Presentations	<i>Bang & Reece</i>
14	Nov 24	Culture Presentations	Begin Fadiman book
	Nov 26	* * * <i>Enjoy Thanksgiving!</i> * * *	
15	Dec 1	Culture in the Workplace, Healthcare and the Classroom	Begley & Ockey 324-336 Nishiyama 295-301 <i>Frauenheim</i> <i>Robinson & Dechant;</i> <i>Galanti (pp. tba)</i> <i>Delpit (pp.tba)</i> Complete Fadiman
	Dec 3	Course Conclusion [Film clip: Lost Boys of Sudan]	
	Dec 10	FINAL EXAM 11 – 1	

The assignments are explained in this syllabus. **Failure to complete any one of these assignments may result in a failing grade in the course.**

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).

Participation/Attendance: Our class sessions combine lecture and discussion. Participation (including attendance, promptness, 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.

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:

Homework/Quizzes	3%
Field Experience 1	12%
Field Experience 2	20%
Culture Project	10%
Midterm Exam I	20%
Midterm Exam II	20%
Final Exam	15%

As noted above, there is no "participation" grade. At the end of the semester when I have to assign the course grades, I will use my assessment of your participation in cases where students' grade point averages rest near a border. If you have an 89.3% gpa but consistently attended and participated actively in class, I might then assign you an A-. Of course the reverse is true as well. A student who achieved an 83% but was frequently late, absent or distracted during class might receive a B- instead of a B.

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 is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the SCampus policies and procedures detailed in the section titled: "University Student Conduct Code." See especially Appendix A: "Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines." The policies, procedures, and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty.

It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but yourself. If you have doubts about any of these practices, confer with a faculty member or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

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.

It is important that you *keep copies of all the work you turn in both electronically and on paper*. Also, please *keep all the assignments I return to you with my notes 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 one or two paragraphs describing your own culture and what it means to you. (This is the one exception to the note above!)

Please *email* me this assignment in addition to bringing a hard copy to class.

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. 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: http://www.usc.edu/e_resources/isd/.

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.

(assignment continues)

- 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
- follow this with 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)

You do not need a cover page, title page or a folder. Please do *not* include them!

See postings to Blackboard for further advice on your 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.

(assignment continues)

- 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 gender 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 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 (online, such as Wikipedia, or a printed book) as a source.

(assignment continues)

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.

Please bring a hard copy to class in addition to submitting one electronically.

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 (6-8 minutes). Your topic should be something **very specific** because you only have **six to eight 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. Please also hand in the note cards or outline you refer to during your presentation if those are different than your outline.

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. Anyone who reads aloud instead of speaking extemporaneously may fail this assignment.

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?

(assignment continues)

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 eight 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 quinceaneras).
9. Do not describe an art form (e.g., Tahitian dance).

A few examples of good presentation topics: the controversy within Africa about female genital mutilation; Chinese business negotiation style; advertising campaigns in Asia; soap operas for social change in India; and the Myanmar tribe members who practice neck elongation turning themselves into a tourist attraction in Thailand in order to survive.

(assignment continues)

To make an interesting presentation, follow these guidelines:

1. **Grab our attention** immediately with an interesting quote, anecdote 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.

Be prepared to answer questions after your presentation.

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.

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.

Partial Course Bibliography

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