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USC Annenberg

**COMM 324**  
**Intercultural Communication**  
**Spring 2016 T/T 9:30-10:50 ASC 231**

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Instructor:	Jillian Pierson, Ph.D.	jilliank@usc.edu
Office:	ASC 333 & ANN 306	
Office Hours:	M/W 9:15-9:45 am T/Th before class and from 12:30 to 1	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.
Cell Phone:	(323)xxx-xxxx [9am-9pm]	Sometimes talking is much more useful than emailing. As long as you're respectful, I welcome your phone calls.

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### 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 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 likely have grown by the end of the semester as your awareness of the fundamental issues grows.

### Required Texts

Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., McDaniel, E. R., & Roy, C. S. (2015). *Intercultural communication: A reader* (14th Ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage.

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

*Additional required readings will be posted to Blackboard.* Please check Blackboard frequently to find links to readings and other information.

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:

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The authors and pages identify readings in the Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy textbook. The *italicized* authors refer to articles that you will find on Blackboard. Where I've noted "Bb" there will be readings posted to Blackboard that are still to be determined.

	Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings
1	Jan 13	Course Introduction		
	Jan 15	Defining Intercultural Communication	Culture description (submit to Bb only)	McDaniel & Samovar 5-16
2	Jan 20	Foundations of Intercultural Communication		Saint-Jacques 16-26 <i>Using APA format</i>
	Jan 22	Researching & writing		Korzenny 42-46 Bb
3	Jan 27	Intercultural Simulation Exercise		<i>training reading tba</i>
	Jan 29	Exercise debriefing		Bb
4	Feb 3	World view	Research paradigm (submit to Bb only)	Kim 405-417 <i>Ishii, Klopff &amp; Cooke</i>
	Feb 5	Cultural patterns		Jain 121-126 Begley 126-132 Skow & Stephan 288-302
5	Feb 10	Cultural patterns (cont.)		<i>Hofstede</i> <i>Triandis</i> <i>Robinson</i>
	Feb 12	Cultural patterns (cont.)		Ting-Toomey 355-366 Yum 110-120
6	Feb 17	Discussion of papers / Intergroup Relations	Field Experience Report (Bb and hard copy to class)	Ribeau, Baldwin & Hecht 182-189 add'l readings tba
	Feb 19	Intergroup Relations (cont.)		Pratt, Pratt & Dixon 70-75 Martin 76-84
7	Feb 24	Cultural Identity		Collier 53-60 Gay 302-319
	Feb 26	<b>Midterm</b>	Exam	
8	Mar 3	Post midterm discussion/ nonverbal communication		Andersen 229-242
	Mar 5	Nonverbal communication		McDaniel 242-251
9	Mar 10	Cultural Identity & Language		Ellis & Maoz 217-223 Cargile 251-259
	Mar 12	(continued)		Gay 302-319

*Enjoy Spring Break March 16-20*

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10	Mar 24	Cultural Adaptation	three project topic ideas: please email me with your thoughts in the body of the email	Onwumechili, Nwosu, & Jackson 92-104
	Mar 26	Cultural Adaptation (cont.)		Kim 430-437
11	Mar 31	Discussion of <b>Papers</b> / Culture in the Workplace	Field Experience Report	Nishiyama 266-272 Hinner 273-286
	Apr 2	Cultural Change and Development		<i>Rogers</i>
12	Apr 7	Cultural Change (cont.)	project topic finalized	Bb
	Apr 9	Culture and the Media		begin Fadiman book
13	Apr 14	<b>Culture Presentations</b>	Culture Projects	continue Fadiman
	Apr 16	<b>Culture Presentations</b>		
14	Apr 21	<b>Culture Presentations</b>		
	Apr 23	<b>Culture Presentations</b>		complete Fadiman
15	Apr 28	Culture and Healthcare		Geist-Martin 320-328 Rao 329-339
	Apr 30	Course Conclusion		
	May 12	<b>Final Exam, 8 am – 10 am</b>	Exam	

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

**Info for Students with Disabilities**

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. Contact information for DSP is 213-740-0776 and [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

**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 a 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.

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### **A Note from USC on Stress Management**

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

### **Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency that makes travel to campus not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

### **Course Policies**

#### **No laptops or electronics.**

In order to create the best possible learning environment, I ask you to please turn your cell phones off when you enter our classroom and to not open your laptops or tablets. 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.

**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:** Missing an exam is terrible all around. You would never do that unless you were really, seriously ill. Contact me immediately so we can try to remedy the situation and make sure you do not end up with a zero score.

**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, I welcome the opportunity to talk with you and to go over any 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

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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	5%
Field Experience 1	20%
Field Experience 2	20%
Midterm	20%
Culture Project	15%
Final Exam	20%

### 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 recent 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.

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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.

We will discuss in class how to look for articles in our USC Library system. Good sources include the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (which I refer to as IJIR), *Human Communication Research*, *Communication Quarterly* and journals in other disciplines such as the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and the *Administrative Science Quarterly*. Avoid journals that are very specific to a certain field, such as nursing or geriatrics.

### **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).
- **You MUST do this to pass the assignment:** Integrate at least one relevant idea from the Samovar, Porter, McDaniel and Roy textbook (from one of the *assigned* chapters) or one of the other required readings that are already listed on the course calendar. Be specific in referring to the idea and cite the pages where the information can be found in the text. (I may post magazine articles or blog posts to Blackboard as assigned readings, but these should not be used to fulfil this part of 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, and show how the ideas specifically apply to the experience.
- 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)

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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 any one option for the first paper and then choose a different option for the second paper.

The questions listed in each option are given as mere starting points 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.

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- 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 (including Wikipedia), factbook or almanac to meet the minimum number of sources requirement.

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 the days you submit them. This will be a time for you to learn what others are doing and to describe what you are learning through your own explorations.



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### **Culture Project (oral presentation plus an outline with references)**

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 an 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 on your topic.

**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.

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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, cleavage, or funny t-shirt!

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### **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 final will not be “cumulative” in that you won’t have to go back to the earlier chapters and study them in depth. But your knowledge will build and the final exam questions may reflect that knowledge base.

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.

### **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.