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**COMM 324** (4 units, 20520)  
**Intercultural Communication**  
**Fall 2023 T/Th 9:30-10:50** Room ASC 204

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Instructor:	Jillian Pierson, Ph.D. (213)821-1127 jilliank@usc.edu	Feel free to reach out to me by texting or calling my office phone number. Text for short messages only, please. Longer, content-related questions are best sent via email.
Office hours:	TBD Campus office ASC G21 by appt	I encourage you to connect with me outside of our regularly scheduled class meetings!  I will have regular office hours this semester on Zoom (you can find the link on Blackboard). I am usually in my campus office before and after class and would be glad to meet with you then. If none of these times work well, please email me with several suggested options to set up an alternate meeting time for in-person, Zoom, or phone.
TA graders:	TBD	

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## Course Description

This class will introduce you to the field of intercultural communication, which draws from an array of academic disciplines. The overall 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; and take an introductory look at the current strands of research in the field.

## Learning Objectives

Specifically, by the end of the course students will be able to:

- Explain and apply terms used in intercultural communication scholarship
- Describe processes and contextual factors that affect intercultural communication
- Interpret real-world interactions through the framework of cultural concepts
- Recognize the different perspectives researchers bring to the study of intercultural communication

## Required Course Materials

Course textbook: Martin, J., & Nakayama, T. (2022). *Intercultural communication in contexts* (8th Ed.). McGraw Hill.

Additional assigned readings will be posted to Blackboard and should be completed *after* class on the day they are listed on the course calendar.

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Please note that even when class lectures and discussions do not overlap with the readings, you will be required to read and understand the articles to succeed on the exams and assignments.

On the following schedule, M&N refers to the textbook. All other readings will be posted on Blackboard and are generally listed by the authors' last names.

## Tentative Course Schedule, *Subject to Change (Dates not yet updated for 2023):*

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment due <b>before</b> class	Readings for <b>after</b> class
1	Aug 22 Aug 24	Course welcome & introduction A model of intercultural comm	Culture description	M&N Ch 1
2	Aug 29 Aug 31	Approaches to the study of intercultural communication World view	Student info form	M&N Ch 2 Ishi, Klopf & Cooke
3	Sept 5 Sept 7	<i>Labor Day, no class meeting</i> Dimensions of culture		M&N Ch 3
4	Sept 12 Sept 14	Cultural patterns (cont.)	Research paradigm	Robinson Triandis; McSweeney; Hofstede
5	Sept 19 Sept 21	Cultural identity (cont.)		M&N Ch 5 Hecht et al. (2002)
6	Sept 26 Sept 28	Intergroup relations (cont.)	Cultural interview	Myers & Twenge (2019) Morber; Project Implicit; M&N pp. 143-149
7	Oct 3 Oct 5	(cont.) Intercultural conflict		AAA Statement on Race; Crenshaw TED talk M&N Ch 11
8	Oct 10 Oct 12	<b>Midterm (bring laptop)</b> Nonverbal communication	Exam	M&N Ch 7
9	Oct 17 Oct 19	(cont.) Cultural identity and language		Wenner, 2007 Ellis & Maoz
10	Oct 24 Oct 26	Verbal aspects of ic comm Language and meaning	Topic ideas due	M&N Ch 6 Shariatmadari, 2020
11	Oct 31 Nov 2	Cultural appropriation Cultural transitions		Bradford; Avins M&N Ch 8
12	Nov 7 Nov 9	and adaptation Cultural change and development	Cultural exploration due Friday 11/11 by 11:59 pm	Croucher Davis, 2020
13	Nov 14 Nov 16	Cultural exploration discussion Culture and the workplace		Case studies TBD
14	Nov 21 Nov 23	Culture and medicine <i>Enjoy Thanksgiving break!</i>		Dembosky, 2015; Geist- Martin & Bell 2009; Torres & Rao 2007
15	Nov 28 Nov 30	Cultural dilemmas Looking ahead		TBD; Runyowa, 2015
	Dec 7	<b>Final exam 11 - 1 pm</b>	Exam	(2023)

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Please note the date of the final exam is set by USC. The university requires we hold the final during that time period.

## **Course Policies**

**Respectful conversation:** We may touch on topics that some students feel sensitive about during class. If you find yourself having an emotional response, please reach out to me. Know that I want everyone to feel comfortable engaging in productive, open conversation, including at the times we don't agree with one another. If I get something wrong, I'd like to hear from you in a respectful way; I have an open mind and like most people, I am still learning and evolving.

I also hope you'll be mindful that we all come to the classroom from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences. We can't truly understand another person's perspective, but we can listen with acceptance and empathy.

## **Attendance and Participation**

1. To get the most out of this class, you must show up for our class meetings. While it is normal to miss a few times during the course of a semester, you cannot take this class without attending regularly.
2. Of course you may occasionally have to miss class for illness or other reasons. When you are absent, I do not need to hear an excuse. I do not take attendance after the first few weeks of class. However, if you have to miss several classes, I would appreciate your letting me know what is going on so that I don't worry about you.
3. If you miss class, you should ask two other students for their notes from class. After you've watched the recordings, reviewed the slides, and read students' notes, feel free to come to me with questions.
4. Participation credit will be given on occasion during lectures. If you miss the live session, it will be your responsibility to find the alternative participation opportunity on Blackboard to receive that credit. Your alternative participation assignment must be submitted no later than one week from the date of the missed class, or you will not receive credit for it.
5. If you added the class late, you are still responsible for the material and assignments you missed. Please submit any homework and participation assignments no later than Friday of the fourth week of class.

## **No laptops or electronics.**

When we meet in person, in order to create the best possible learning environment, I ask you to not use your laptops, tablets, or phones. I completely understand the temptation, but I think we all benefit from focusing without technology. Current research shows that taking notes by hand is more effective than typing them. Read the articles posted on Blackboard for a lengthier discussion of this policy. (Sometimes students have documented reasons for using laptops for note-taking; exceptions are made only for students with such documentation.)

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Please bring pen and paper to lectures for note-taking and activities. If you are using an iPad or other tablet instead of pen and paper, that is acceptable as long as you keep your device open to the note-taking app only.

The exams will require use of a laptop, so the exam dates will be an exception to the “no laptop” rule.

## **Communication**

Please be sure to read your USC emails and Blackboard announcements daily on weekdays.

I reply to my emails within 24 hours (although on the weekends I may take longer). If you don't hear back from me promptly, feel free to send me a follow-up after a day has gone by.

**Timely submission of work:** If your assignment is late, it will be marked down by one third of a letter grade for every day it is late. Also, please be aware that if you end up handing a paper in late, it falls to the bottom of our stack of things to do and will most likely not be returned to you in a very timely manner.

Sometimes a student has a true emergency. Please contact me as soon as possible if something prevents you from submitting your work on time. It is always better to discuss these things ahead of time instead of after the fact.

Accidentally uploading the wrong assignment or using a format not accepted by Blackboard is not an excuse for a late submission.

**Back up your work:** Computer failures are sadly not uncommon. Please cover yourself by regularly saving your work to cloud storage and to an external storage device.

## **Electronic submission of assignments**

Please upload your assignments to Blackboard only. If you have trouble with Blackboard, reach out to Blackboard support directly for help—service is available 24/7 at 213-740-5555.

Blackboard submissions that have uploaded successfully automatically generate an email to the student who submitted them. If you don't get the email, you haven't submitted your assignment.

If Blackboard has a problem, you may email your assignment as proof that you completed it by the deadline. However, we can only grade in the Blackboard environment so you will still need to upload there as soon as the system is functioning.

## **Accommodations for students with registered disabilities**

Please upload your letter from OSAS to the “assignment” I've created for it on Blackboard. If there's anything specific you'd like me to know, I would be very happy to talk with you and support you however I can.

## **Grading**

The grading scale for this class will be that an A is equivalent to 94 or above; A- is 90-93; B+ is 87-89; B is 84-86; B- is 80-83; C+ is 77-79; C is 74-76; C- is 70-73; D+ is 67-69; D is 64-66; D- is 60-63; and F is 59 and below.

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Grades will be calculated as follows:

In-class & homework	10%
Research paradigm	10%
Interview paper	20%
Cultural paper	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

I believe an “A” represents excellent, thoughtful, and enthusiastic work. A “B” represents really good work. A “C” merely meets all the requirements of the assignment. If you are disappointed by a grade, we would be happy to discuss our feedback with you and to help you improve for the next assignment.

Grades are earned according to the following standards:

- A Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
- B Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
- C Satisfactory; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
- D Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.
- F Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.
- P/ NP To earn a passing grade, you must have a C- or higher. You also may not omit any assignments. You cannot earn a “P” without completing the theory exploration, the application paper, and all three exams regardless of your average score in the class.

We will do our best to get you feedback on assignments within two weeks of the due date. If you have questions about a grade on an assignment, you have ten days after the grade was posted to inquire about it via email.

## **No “Extra Credit”**

This class gives you many opportunities to succeed. The ten percent homework/in-class work specifically gives you an opportunity to get full credit without any evaluation. Do homework on time, come to class to get credit for participation (or do the makeup participation assignments if you have to miss), and you’ll have an automatic 100% or “A” in ten percent of the class.

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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 additional information and samples of most of these assignments on Blackboard.

**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 your assignments, however, I want you to investigate new territory.

## In-class & homework (10%)

### 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!)

### Student Information Form

Please complete just so we can get a little info on you.

### Miscellaneous

There will be other brief assignments that come up throughout the semester, either for in-class work or homework. (When I ask for in-class participation assignments, I will work to create a suitable alternative for students who are unable to participate; if you miss class, check Blackboard.)

## Research Paradigm Assignment (10%)

1. Find and read a recent research article in intercultural communication.
2. Turn in the citation for the article along with the article's published abstract.
3. Based on the information presented in class and in the Martin and Nakayama chapter 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 in which 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. Accepted sources include the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *Human Communication Research*, and *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* and others which are listed in the assignment on Blackboard.

## Cultural Interview Paper (20%)

This assignment combines a cultural interview with knowledge gained from the textbook and your own research. Each of these parts should enhance the other. The interview should give you cultural knowledge that will help you understand the text and the text gives you a theoretical

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perspective that will increase your understanding of what you see in your interview. You have two options here.

1. 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. In addition to citing the textbook, cite at least one outside source that gave you additional information about your interviewee's original culture. The additional information should directly support and contribute to the cultural exploration, 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.

OR

2. 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. In addition to citing the textbook, cite at least one outside source that gave you additional information about the culture your interviewee visited. The additional information should directly support and contribute to the cultural exploration, not provide background or geographical information. Please do not interview a member of your immediate family.

## **Cultural Exploration Paper (20%)**

This assignment combines a cultural exploration with knowledge gained from the class readings and your own research. Each of these parts should enhance the other. The exploration should give you cultural knowledge that will help you understand our texts and our readings give you a theoretical perspective that will increase your understanding of what you see in your exploration.

This is your opportunity to do an independent investigation of a topic within the field of intercultural communication. Use a combination of research articles and reputable journalistic sources to learn about a cultural phenomenon that interests you.

In place of the cultural exploration, you may choose to do a second interview (as described above) as long as the second interview focuses on a completely different culture than the first one.

## **Exams (40%)**

The exams assess if you have learned the material covered in the readings, lectures, and class discussions. They will require you to apply what you have learned and demonstrate your ability to analyze intercultural situations. Prepare for a series of rigorous multiple choice questions on the exams. If you know yourself to be someone who finds these kinds of tests particularly challenging, check my posts on Blackboard and seek help early in the semester.

Please note that you are responsible for both the material presented in the readings and in class. The two do not always overlap.

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The final will not be “cumulative” in that you will not have to go back to the earlier readings and study them in depth. However, your knowledge will build, and the questions on the second exam may reflect that knowledge base.

## **Campus Resources**

Please take advantage of some of the resources your tuition supports. Early in the semester, visit The Writing Center for one-on-one assistance or small-group workshops. (Email [writing@usc.edu](mailto:writing@usc.edu) or call 213-740-3691). If you have difficulty with tests, reach out to the Center for Academic Support (call 213-740-0776 or email them at [study@usc.edu](mailto:study@usc.edu)).

## **Honoring Native Lands**

Our USC campus is located on the traditional land of the Tongva People. It is a complicated reality that we exist in a space which for many years belonged to the Tongva as well as the Chumash, Tataviam, Serrano, Cahuilla, Juaneno, and Luiseno People. I would like to acknowledge the unjust, violent history that unfolded over many years before the establishment of this university, and to show appreciation and humility toward indigenous communities and the sacrifices they were forced to make.

## **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, but you will make many contributions. I look forward to your participation and to learning more together about culture and communication.



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## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### a. Academic Conduct

#### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in [SCampus](#) in Part B, Section 11, “[Behavior Violating University Standards](#).” Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

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.

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and **has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course**, without approval of the instructor.

### b. Support Systems

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*  
[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*  
[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776*  
[osas.usc.edu](http://osas.usc.edu)

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Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[uscsa.usc.edu](https://uscsa.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

## **Add/Drop Dates for Session 001**

Sept. 8 Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Sept. 8 Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Sept. 8 Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or audit for Session 001

Sept. 8 Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall

Sept. 12 Last day to add or drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or to change to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

Oct. 6 Last day to change a Pass/No Pass to a letter grade for Session 001

Oct. 6 Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript only for Session 001

Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply.

Nov. 10 Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001