

# **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

## *Communication*

**Course contact hours:** 45

**Recommended credits:** 6 ECTS – 3 US credits

### OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to help you develop skills and knowledge that will increase your understanding and awareness of the impact of our differences on the way we communicate and become more effective handling these differences effectively in Barcelona as well as in other intercultural contexts. We will explore various topics in intercultural communication, and will practice intercultural learning processes in the context of your experience abroad that you can apply when working across difference in a wide variety of contexts.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, you will:

- Develop a deeper understanding of the field of intercultural communication and intercultural concepts and theories.
- Understand their relevance to your own experience in the host culture and when working across difference in a wide variety of contexts.
- Increase your own cultural self-awareness.
- Increase your ability to recognize and bridge cultural gaps when communicating across cultures.
- Develop an intercultural competence that turns culture-specific and culture-general knowledge into practical tools to effectively communicate across differences.
- Understand the impact of technology in intercultural communication and global relationships.

### REQUIREMENTS

Fluent in English.

### CONTENTS

What is culture?

What is intercultural communication?

Perception and culture.

Cultural Identity.

Introduction to Cultural Value Patterns.  
Cultural differences in verbal communication.  
Cultural differences in non-verbal communication.  
Cultural Stereotypes.  
Cultural Stereotypes and Communication.  
Local culture, values and communication patterns.  
Intercultural Competence.  
Conflict Resolution, Culture and Communication.  
Technology, social media and intercultural communication.  
Intercultural communication and competence once in home culture.

## TEACHING METHODOLOGY

### 1. Classes

Learning will involve lectures, in-class exercises, active reflection, discussions, readings and field reports.

### 2. Guest Lecturer

A professional from a pertinent field will speak and then have a discussion with the class.

### 3. Field Trips

Cultural engagement activities aimed to better understand local culture.

### 4. Journaling

You will be asked to complete three different reflective journal entries over the course of the semester. The goal of the journal entries is to give you a chance to reflect on your intercultural experience in a personally-relevant way.

### 5. Final Presentations

Each student will make a presentation on cultural differences between their own culture and local culture

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Grading will be based on the following:

Journal (3 entries):	20%
Mid-semester exam:	30%
Final Presentation on Cultural Comparisons:	30%
Class participation:	20%

### Journal Entries

You will be asked to complete three different reflective journal entries over the course of the semester. You are free to write about whatever is on your mind at the moment as long as it is relevant to the course; you will be provided with ideas and suggestions for possible topics to address throughout the course of the semester. The goal of the journal entries is

to give you a chance to reflect on your intercultural experience in a personally-relevant way.

Your journal entries should be typed and around 250 words. They will be graded on the depth of reflection and application of course concepts to your personal experience.

### Mid-Semester Exam

The mid-semester exam will consist of some multiple choice questions to check learning of intercultural concepts and theories, and two essay questions that will require students to reflect on the intercultural and culture-specific learning they have acquired over the course of the program. A review session will be held prior to the exam and a grading rubric will be provided.

### Final Presentation on Cultural Comparisons

The Final Presentation on Cultural Comparisons involves writing a paper and doing a short in-class presentation in groups of 3.

For this project, you are asked to examine a theme within the local host culture in comparison to your home culture(s) (as defined by you). Themes may be any topic that is of interest to you and relevant both in the local context and in your home culture, and should be relatively specific rather than sweepingly general. Examples of possible themes include: food and eating habits; attitudes and practices around alcohol consumption; displaying affection; parenting; inequality and difference (based on religion, sexuality, race, etc.); expectations in higher education; exercise or sport; news consumption; advertising; etc. The topic/theme you choose should be something you have experienced or had close contact with in both your host and home cultures.

Please discuss the similarities and differences between your home and host cultures with regards to your topic of choice, particularly with respect to two or three of the cultural value patterns discussed in class. You should aim to integrate personal experience with concepts learned in class.

The paper should be typed, double-spaced, 4 pages long. It may be written in the first person. You should cite at least three academic sources (from the course readings or other). It is also highly recommended you consult with at least two locals about this topic and incorporate any useful insight they offer into your paper (although be careful not to present anyone's opinions as fact).

You should address the following:

1. What similarities and differences have you noticed and/or experienced between (as well as within) your host culture and home culture(s) with regards to your chosen theme?
2. To what extent and how do cultural value patterns help you understand these similarities and differences?

In addition to the paper, you should be prepared to present to the class on your topic. Audiovisual material is required. The presentation may take any form you like and creativity is encouraged.

### Class Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in all components of the course (e.g. class sessions, guest lectures and cultural engagement activities). Participation takes multiple forms including 1) verbally offering one's insights in large and small group discussions; 2) asking insightful questions and demonstrating interest in class activities and lectures; 3) demonstrating openness and respect for instructors and peers at all times; 4) actively and respectfully listening when others are speaking; 5) being fully present and engaged during all course activities and refraining from using technology (e.g. cell phones).

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### Required reading:

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Bennett, M.J. (1998). *Intercultural communication: A current perspective*. In M.J. Bennett (Ed.), *Basic concepts of intercultural communication: Selected readings* (pp. 1-34). Boston, MA: Intercultural Press.

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Trompenaars, F. & Hampden-Turner, C. (1998). 'Relationships and rules' and 'Reconciling cultural dilemmas.' In F. Trompenaars & C. Hampden-Turner, *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding diversity in global business*, 2nd ed. (pp.29-50 & 200-217). New York: McGraw-Hill.

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Ogden, A. (2007-2008). The view from the veranda: Understanding today's colonial student. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, XV, pp. 35-55. Available online at [www.frontiersjournal.com/documents/OgdenFRONTIERSJOURNALXVWinter2007-08-3.pdf](http://www.frontiersjournal.com/documents/OgdenFRONTIERSJOURNALXVWinter2007-08-3.pdf).

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Matherly, C. (n.d.) Effective marketing of international experiences to employers. Available online at [http://www.aifsabroad.com/advisors/pdf/Impact\\_of\\_Education\\_AbroadI.pdf](http://www.aifsabroad.com/advisors/pdf/Impact_of_Education_AbroadI.pdf) (pages 9-10).