

CMST280: Intercultural Communication

Winter 2014 - Online

Instructor: Dr. Whitney Anspach

Office Hours: By appointment via Skype or In-Person

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Required Reading

Samovar, L.A., Porter, R.E., & McDaniel, E.R. (2013). *Communication between cultures* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Note: The assigned reading is critical to your understanding and appreciation of course concepts. I have selected a textbook and readings that will introduce you to important theoretical concepts and provide concrete examples of issues related to intercultural communication.

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

This course aims to increase student intercultural competence by examining the effects of culture on both the communication process and individual. Students taking this course will explore: communication and culture, intercultural messages, the role of context in intercultural communication, how culture affects one's identity, how culture influences communication style, language, and non-verbal communication, and how to improve one's own intercultural competence.

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Explain how environmental factors affect and make cultures different.
- Explain how cultural variables influence intercultural competency in communication
- Explain why appropriateness and effectiveness are critical in constructing messages in intercultural contexts.
- Explain how individualism and collectivism affect the communication in intercultural communication contexts
- Apply various models of cultural values to intercultural interactions.
- Define ethnocentrism and demonstrate your competence in applying the concepts across cultures.
- Identify and analyze one's own cultural identity.

Course Format and Expectations

Format:

You will be engaged in activities and discussions designed to aid your understanding of the concepts explored in this class. Computer use is required to access the courses materials on BB Canvas. Please note that this area of study contains complex theories and difficult jargon. I will do my best to assist you, **but a college reading level and college writing level in English is needed to succeed in this course.**

Expectations:

Your active participation in the learning process is expected and valued. We will address a variety of topics, many involving controversies that touch upon our personal values and beliefs. I encourage you to share your thoughts, concerns, and opinions in class—we will have a stimulating learning environment and a richer learning experience if we can discuss a wide range of perspectives. At the same time, the issues we will address can be highly emotional ones and we won't always agree with one another. It is vital that everyone feels safe to air her or his ideas and opinions. *Please be sensitive and respectful to other viewpoints when making comments and contributing to discussion.*

Communicating online:

Be careful about your tone of voice. In a written discussion a slightly critical comment can seem like a crushing condemnation because readers can't see the facial expressions and body language that tell them how serious you are. On the other hand, it's not a good idea to write "smiley-face" comments all the time. Those kinds of comments don't add anything substantial to the discussion. During online discussions you may certainly disagree and debate, but you are required to demonstrate tolerance and respect at all times in your postings. If you question or disagree with something someone has said, you need to say so tactfully. One way to express a disagreement tactfully is to couch your comment as a question: "Do you think we should consider...?" Another way is to use tentative language: "But I wonder if we couldn't look at it from another angle..."

These kinds of comments invite others to join the discussion and give their ideas. Remember—our purpose is to generate ideas, not to win verbal battles. Part of your success in this class is dependent upon your development of competent skills in dealing with people who are different than you. The difference may be in worldview, beliefs, and/or values. We will respect one another in all of these ways.

Learning Assessment

In order to earn a passing grade in this course you will need to submit **all** of the assignments listed below and take all exams. Submission of all assignments and exams constitutes a necessary, but insufficient condition for passing the course. I do not offer incompletes for this course. **Note: if you earn a zero for plagiarizing an assignment, you will earn a zero for that portion of the course, and this will be reported to the Dean.**

Discussion Board Posts (14 x 40 points)	560
Cultural Identity Analysis Journal	140
Quizzes (3 x 100 points)	300
Total:	1000

Grading Scale:

94-100 = A	73-75 = C
90-93 = A-	70-72 = C-
86-89 = B+	66-69 = D+
83-85 = B	60-65 = D
80-82 = B-	0-59 = F
76-79 = C+	

(More detail will be provided for each of these assignments on Canvas.)

Discussion Posts and Responses:

Students will be evaluated on the quality and substance of their contributions to 14 online discussions. Students are expected to complete all required reading assignments by the designated due date and share in a relevant, constructive and meaningful manner with their colleagues via online discussions. (Please see 'What Constitutes a Good Online Response' on the course website). Please **do not attach a file** to the discussion board containing your post.

Each **online discussion response will be evaluated based on the following requirements:**

1. **Completeness:** Each online discussion response has two parts; a.) your *initial response* and, b.) your *comments* to two of your colleagues' responses. First, your *initial response* should be *fully developed* addressing the question with adequate examples from your life experience and thoughtful explanation of why or how. (A complete initial response is typically a *minimum* of **200** words in length). Next, after you complete your initial response to an online question, you should read through several of your colleagues' responses and choose at least two to provide a comment to. Often a

student will choose to comment on a response that was most helpful to him/her in understanding the course material better or one that he/she found interesting or intriguing. Any comment to a colleague should adequately explain *why* you found your colleague's response helpful, interesting or intriguing. (A complete comment to a colleague is typically **100** words in length.)

2. *Appropriate Integration of Course Terms:* your *initial response* should appropriately integrate *course terminology* and concepts from the assigned reading.
3. *Format:* course terms (key terms from the chapter reading) used in your initial response should be typed in bold, or in all CAPITAL letters so that they stand out on the screen. In addition, course terms should have *page references* to the course textbook.
4. *College Level Writing:* organization, grammar and spelling count for both your initial response and comments to colleagues.

Here are examples of both a student's response to an online discussion question and a comment to a colleague:

Example Chapter Discussion Question:

Identify some of the specific ways your family has influenced your cultural identity.

A Good Example of a Student's Response:

"Through word and example, the family shapes a child's personality and instills modes of thought and ways of acting that become habitual." (p. 54). To begin considering what defines my culture, I first look to the influence of my FAMILY, as family is "one of the most enduring and influential social organizations that deal with deep structure," (p. 49) and it is "the basic unit of society and it is at the heart of its survival" (p. 53). My family demonstrated to me a contrasting view regarding INDIVIDUALISM (p. 67). At a STATE (p. 49) level, my family is more COLLECTIVIST than is the general culture. I think this collectivist orientation was influenced by four family circumstances. My grandfather brought over a more collectivist view when he IMMIGRATED (p.9) from England. His life's work was to work to change labor laws to better protect the rights of workers. (2) My grandmother grew up on a farm. Though farm life requires a tough, hard-working spirit, it also requires that many hands work together. She and my grandfather met while working on a political campaign and were active in politics their entire lives. (3) My mother grew up in a religious household in which service to others was expected. Her life's work has been as a social worker and she has regularly been involved with volunteer work in her free time. (4) My father has worked as an environmentalist my entire life, trying to influence policy changes that better protect the planet. Growing up in a family with this history, I have a worldview that change is possible, that we each have a voice and the freedom to use it, and that we have not only a right but a responsibility to support our community and our world. This worldview is supported by events in my culture's history. The founders of this country sought to change their circumstances and to establish a country in which freedom and government by the people were core principles. Throughout our country's history, people have worked for

CHANGE AND PROGRESS (p.80), and the people who have bravely pushed for change—people like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Susan B. Anthony—have become national heroes. On a personal level, my family is very INDIVIDUALISTIC , “emphasiz[ing] independence and individual autonomy” (p. 68). Self-reliance, self-determination, and following one’s own pursuits is what is practiced and advocated. Family is not for support—you pick yourself up by your bootstraps and forge your way. Though my mother grew up as a church-goer, she is no longer and the rest of my family have never been. Reliance on a religion or a faith group contradicts their notion of personal strength. Living in a country in which freedom of religion—and freedom from religion—is part of our country’s history and character (p.79), this is possible. Cultural values that I have always treasured are the ideas of justice, fairness, and welcome. Though I know in practice this hasn’t been the case for many people in our country, I like the ideal that we are innocent until proven guilty, that our Declaration of Independence says that all men are created equal, and that we want “[the] tired, [the] poor, [the] huddled masses yearning to breathe free” (p.13) to come join us. History has shown time and time again that we don’t live up to that ideal—we aren’t living up to it even today—but I am thankful that I live in a country that at least considers those ideas and makes attempts to meet them.

A Good Example of a Student’s Comment to a Colleague:

There definitely were several historical events that shaped our country and I too believe that our desire for **individualism** was the cause. You picked a great quote from West and Turner, “Individualism involves self-motivation, autonomy, and independent thinking”. Our nation’s definition of freedom seems to follow this way of thinking. The key words from that quote can be applied to the historical events that you listed. The settlers demonstrated self-motivation in their desire to practice the religion of their choosing. The abolition of slavery demonstrated the importance of autonomy. You also mentioned some of the groups that spawned from these monumental events. Despite the fact that I do not agree with what these groups stand for, I do understand that they are also practicing **individualism**.

Notice that in the first example, the student fulfills the 10 requirements listed above. Similarly, in the second example, the same student fulfills the requirements for what makes a substantive comment.

Here are two examples of what not to do in your comments:

“thnx 4 sharing. u r awesome.”

And/Or:

“I totally agree.”

Quizzes (3 x 100 Points each): There will be three (3) quizzes given. Each quiz is worth 100 points and will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions. Quiz material will pertain to information covered in the text, as well as, information discussed and presented in class discussions and assignments. Review sheets will be provided for each quiz. Review sheets can be accessed through the learning modules on the website. The Syllabus Quiz is designed to help you become acquainted with the website and worth 10 points.

Cultural Identity Analysis Journal (140 Points): Students will write a Cultural Identity paper analyzing and exploring elements of their cultural identity. The paper must be typed, double-spaced in size 12 Times New Roman font (or similar) with 1" (one inch) margins. Detailed instructions for the paper are available on the course website under 'Assignments'. This paper will be submitted online using the Assignments Tool.

General Policies

Late Assignments:

For purposes of equity and fairness for all students, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete all written assignments. Deadlines for all assignments will be announced on the course website calendar and are listed in the syllabus.

Please note:

You are responsible for ensuring that any assignment submitted as an attachment is capable of being opened (i.e., not a corrupted file). **I will evaluate any corrupted files as being an incomplete assignment – in other words, you will earn a zero for that assignment.**

In the event that you do not turn in your assignment on the day/time it is due, you will be assessed the following academic penalty: **late assignments will receive a one point grade reduction for every day – including weekends - they are late (e.g., B+ to C+)*.**

Statement on Academic Integrity:

You should know that plagiarism is a serious violation of your contract as a student and will be treated severely. It is important for you to understand that plagiarism is *any* representation of another person's words or ideas in a manner that makes it seem as if they were your own, in either oral or written form. Obviously, this means that you may not copy another person's papers. Students caught cheating on an exam or assignment will not receive any credit for that portion of the class and will be reported to the Dean of Student Programs.

If you do not know what constitutes plagiarism, please check out this handy [game](#)/guide.

Special Needs:

If you need course modifications /adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, I can refer you to our Disability Resource Center (DRC). The Disability Resource Center is located in L100 and can be reached at 425-564-2498. Please meet with me if you have any questions.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC: All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to MyBC. To create your account, go to: <https://bellevuecollege.edu/sam>

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the Computing Services site -<http://ac.bcc.ctc.edu/LabsInfo/ComputerLabs.aspx>

Public Safety: The Bellevue College (BC) Public Safety Department's well trained and courteous non-commissioned staff provides personal safety, security, crime prevention, preliminary investigations, and other services to the campus community, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Their phone number is [425.564.2400](tel:425.564.2400). The Public Safety website is your one-stop resource for campus emergency preparedness information, campus closure announcements and critical information in the event of an emergency. Public Safety is located in K100 and on the web at: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/>

Academic Calendar: The Bellevue College Academic Calendar is separated into two calendars. They provide information about holidays, closures and important enrollment dates such as the finals schedule.

- Enrollment Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/deadlines/>. On this calendar you will find admissions and registration dates and important dates for withdrawing and receiving tuition refunds.
- College Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/holidays/1011.asp>. This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, quarter end and start dates, and final exam dates.

Computer Access: Students who need access to a computer can utilize computers in the BC Computer Lab located in N250.

One Final Note...

Communication is key! Please e-mail me to discuss any concerns or issues. Or, email me to set up an appointment.