Cross-Cultural Communication (tentative syllabus)
Spring 2017
Instructor: Mohammed Ahmed
Tel: x498; e-mail: mkahmed
Classes on Mondays, 2

Important Note

This course is open to IUJ students in all the programs (including exchange programs) in both GSIR and GSIM. It has been popular among the students mainly because of the students taking the course! The enrollments have been increasing in recent years.

Please note there will be a class size limit. Hence, to ensure your enrollment in the course, please be sure to do the pre-registration as soon as possible.

Introduction

Cross-cultural (or intercultural) understanding and sensitivity have become very important for us in today’s globalized world. Effective intercultural communication skills are important in a multicultural society, particularly for those individuals who would be in positions that require effective management of cultural conflicts. The unique features of multicultural education and society at IUJ provide very good opportunities to IUJ students to develop an appreciation for cultural differences and effective intercultural communication skills. We will find this course immediately helpful in developing a better understanding of our cross-cultural experiences at IUJ.

Goals and design

This course focuses on conceptual and practical dimensions of intercultural communication in in social interactions in multicultural environments. It aims at developing an individual’s intellectual appreciation for cultural differences and sensitivity regarding intercultural interactions.

We will:

1. Discuss basic concepts, conceptual frameworks, and some broader contexts of intercultural communication;
2. Analyze and discuss examples of cross-cultural conflicts in a variety of situations;
3. Develop an understanding of barriers to effective intercultural communication;
4. Develop intercultural sensitivity in terms of beliefs, values, and norms; and
5. Develop an understanding of intercultural competence.

The early part of the course will focus on the complex topic of identity in this globalized world. The course will also cover the notions of essentialism and otherization in multicultural contexts.
Course organization
The course will be offered in ten 90-minute sessions. Classes will be highly student-centered through interactive lectures and group discussion activities.

Based on reading materials, the instructor will cover specific topics by posing a series of questions. Students will be expected to have read the assigned materials in advance and come prepared to participate actively in the discussions. In addition, practical examples involving problematic cross-cultural interactions will be introduced. These examples, selected from published materials, will be introduced in the form of cross-cultural dialogs, critical incidents, and critical experiences. They will be given as homework assignments, and students will be expected to come prepared to discuss these short assignments. Finally, students will also be encouraged to draw on their own cross-cultural experiences, including those at IUJ.

Classroom activities are designed to generate discussions and exchanges of ideas and opinions among the students. The classes will be personally interesting to all the participants.

Course requirements and assessment scheme
1. A short (3-4 pages) mid-term paper: 30%
   This assignment will ask students to discuss their cultural self-identity.
2. A short (3-4 pages) end-of-term paper: 30%
   This assignment will be based on a topic selected by the student and agreed upon by the instructor: It will ask students to apply some basic concepts and/or conceptual framework that they will have learned in the course and discuss topics they are interested in. Specific guidelines for this assignment will be given in the class.
3. One in-class quiz: 20%
   This quiz will assess comprehension of key concepts covered in the assigned reading materials during the course.
4. Attendance and participation: 20%

Weekly Sessions: Topics, readings, and assignments
See the appendix at the end of this syllabus.

Reading materials

Main text:
(Students are required to have a copy of this text. The topics of weekly sessions, as listed in the attached appendix (pages 5-7), follow the sequence of chapters in the main text. Students are expected to read the designated chapters from the main text before the scheduled classes.)

Additional texts:
(Selected materials from some of these texts will be used to discussion some topics. They will be available as reserved materials in the library. Students will also find them useful for writing their papers during the course.)


Students will find the following online journal useful: Journal of Intercultural Communication. http://www.immi.se/intercultural/
Course policies/etiquette
- Read the assigned materials and come prepared to the classes. Be prepared to answer the instructor’s questions and participate actively in class discussions.
- Come to the class on time. A pattern of late arrival will adversely affect the attendance/participation score.
- Switch off your cell phone before the class begins.
- Do not be absent from the classes. (If your absence becomes unavoidable, inform the instructor immediately by e-mail.)

Attendance and participation
This includes attending the classes regularly, coming to classes on time, coming prepared and participating actively in classroom discussions, and contributing positively to classroom environment.

Timely submission of papers
This is extremely important. If any assignment is not submitted according to the deadline, it may affect the total score and grade.

Charges for copied materials
The instructor may bring photocopied materials packets and handouts for distribution in the class. Students will be charged a nominal fee for these materials at the end of the course.

Course materials folder
Copies of materials used in the course—ppt. slides, pdf.files, etc.—will be made available in the following folder during the course of the classes:

\Muj-home\IR materials\Ahmed\CCC_Spring2017
Appendix A: Schedule of sessions

The following schedule may be slightly modified when the course begins. A final version of the course description will be distributed to the students in the introductory session. In addition, during the course itself, some minor modifications in covering the topics may become necessary depending on the actual classroom pacing and dynamics.

SESSION 1 (Week 1. Only one 90-minute session: 10:30 AM-12:00 noon)
Course introduction:
✧ Getting started: Perception
✧ Course design, contents, components; course requirements; class organization
✧ Student profile & course registration
✧ Beginning key concepts (“communication,” “culture,” “inter-/cross-cultural communication”)—if there’s time!

(Note: Since this is a course introduction session, students are not expected to come to the class prepared for class discussion based on assigned readings. This session is designed to introduce the course design, materials, and activities. It will also help get started with some introductory concepts.)

SESSIONS 2-3 (Week 2)
Topics:
✧ Beginning key concepts (“communication,” “culture,” “inter-/cross-cultural communication”) (contd.)
✧ Perception (contd.)
✧ Cultural Patterns

Main readings:
Main text (Cooper at al.). Read Chapter 2 (“Cultural Patterns”) and Chapter 3 (“Perception”)

Additional readings:
○ An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identitites in a Global Community, by Fred E. Jandt. Read Chapter 4 (“Barriers to Intercultural Communication”) and Chapter Five (“Stereotypes and Prejudice as Barriers”)
○ In Klopf & McCroskey. Read Chapter Five (“Perceiving and Motivating”)
○ The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently, by Richard N. Nisbett.

For in-class discussion:
Cross-Cultural Dialogs 2-3 and Critical Incident I

Mid-Term Paper Assignment: Written instructions for the mid-term paper given.
SESSIONS 4-5 (Week 3)
Topics:
- Cultural Identity
- The notion of “Essentialism”

For in-class discussion
Cross-Cultural Dialogs 4-5 and Critical Incident 2

Main readings:
- Main text (Cooper at al.). Read Chapter 4 (“Cultural Identity”)

SESSIONS 6-7 (Week 4)
Topics:
- Oral Presentations on “cultural identity”
- Verbal communication
- Different cultural values in language expressions

For in-class discussion
Cross-cultural Dialog 6 and Critical Incident 3

Main readings:
Main text (Cooper at al.). Read Chapter 5 (“Verbal Intercultural Communication,” pages 103-119)

Additional readings
- *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction*, by Anna Wierzbicka. Read Chapter 3 (“Cross-cultural pragmatics and different cultural values,” pages 67-103.)

**Mid-term Paper: Around this time, but deadline TBA**
SECTIONS 8-9 (Week 5)
Topics:
- Nonverbal Communication
- The notion of “Otherization”

Main readings:
- Main text (Cooper at al.), Chapter 6 (“Nonverbal Intercultural Communication,” pages 132-141).

Additional readings:
- In Klopf & McCroskey. Read Chapter 12 (“Communicating Nonverbally Interculturally”)
- In Jandt. Read Chapter 6 (“Nonverbal communication”).
- In Condon & Yousef. Read Chapter 6 (“See what I mean? Observations on nonverbal communication across cultures”).

SESSION 10 (Week 9)
- In-class Quiz
- Course Wrap-up
- Course Evaluation

End-of-term paper: Due in week 10

NOTE: This schedule may be slightly revised, depending on pacing and classroom dynamics.