

**University of International Business and Economics**  
**Intercultural Communication: Theory and Practices**

*Class location: H102*  
Time: Friday, 1:30-4:00 p.m.

**Instructor:** *Xingsong Shi*

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**Office Hours:** Wednesday 1:30-2:30 pm or *by appointment*

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## **I. Course Description**

This course is an introduction to intercultural communication theory and its practical principles. Students will have the opportunity to:

- Understand the history and development of the field of intercultural communication;
- Examine the basic assumptions and issues of intercultural communication and intercultural human relations;
- Review basic intercultural topics including perception, cultural patterns of thinking and behavior, styles of communication, assumptions and values and cross-cultural adaptation;
- Explore the ways these concepts and issues can be applied to one's own cross-cultural communication;
- Increase cultural awareness and sensitivity for communicative effectiveness.

## **II. Course Goals and Outcomes**

### **1. Course Goals:**

This course explores the nature of communication within and between cultures. Students will become attuned to the values, beliefs, and assumptions they hold generally and about communication specifically as they interact with people unlike themselves. The course combines theory and practice, and will involve the application of communication concepts through case analyses, group discussions, self-reflections, comparative and contrastive analyses, team projects and presentations.

### **2. Learning Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Learn to honor and share their own culture while developing a capacity to be inclusive of other cultures
- Progress from an ethnocentric toward an ethno-relative state of understanding and acceptance of cultural differences

- View cultural differences objectively and understand that differences are not hierarchical
- Recognize and articulate differences and commonalities in dominant cultural patterns
- Demonstrate increasing ability to communicate with persons who exhibit a different worldview, value system and communicative style
- Increase ability to communicate with host-country communicators
- Articulate differences in cultural norms as well as belief and value systems

### **3. Ways to Meet the Goals**

- Seek out information from a variety of sources, including print, media, personal interviews, focus group discussions and site visitations such as the internet, museums, restaurants, companies and organizations
- Evaluate information gathered about a culture in light of its being valid or stereotypical in nature
- Analyze and synthesize large amounts of disparate information to produce relevant, insightful reflections and presentations
- Show respect and interest in the interactivities with class members and cross-cultural group members
- Equally share the responsibility for the team work

### **III. Format and Class Policies.**

The course basically takes the textbook as a clue, and will be carried out through lectures, interactivities, discussions, and team projects, etc. The first half of the semester will be more theoretical, while the second half will be more practice-oriented. The students are suggested to follow the schedule and instructions closely, and share the responsibility of team project, classroom interactions and other activities. And you are responsible for finishing your reading assignments and turning in your home assignments on time.

### **IV. Course Texts**

#### **1. Required Textbook**

Dou, W. (2012) Introduction to Interculture Communication. UIBE press.

#### **2. Recommended Reading**

Beamer, Linda & Varner, Iris (2008). *Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace (4th edition)*. International Edition, Boston: McGraw Hill.

### **V. Course Requirements and Grading Procedure.**

#### **Attendance and Participation: (10%)**

Attendance and participation is an essential and required part of this course. If you must miss a class session for circumstances beyond your control, please notify me by e-mail at least four hours prior to class and show me the excuse authorized by the clinic or administration office afterwards. In order for the class to be more productive and interesting, everybody is supposed to contribute to group discussions and involve in

impromptu in-class activities. To ensure full participation, you are supposed to keep up with the reading assignments as scheduled.

### **Cross-cultural Self-reflection Paper: (30 %)**

You are supposed to write a cross-cultural self-reflection paper (Ten-page or so, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 font, A4 paper). In the paper, you will make self-reflections on the following topics:

- 1) How your own socio-cultural beliefs, values, and norms affect your cross-cultural understandings and behaviors in China?
- 2) What are the major cross-cultural shocks you have experienced or are experiencing?
- 3) The process and current status of your cross-cultural adaptation in China.
- 4) What went well? What could have been improved? What could you, others, or the school, specifically do to facilitate your cross-cultural adaptation and improve your cross-cultural communicative competence?

You are supposed to tie your reflections to course concepts. Your paper will be evaluated based on your demonstrated understanding of cross-cultural theories, level of insights, and quality of your writing. The paper should be written in APA format.

### **Team/Final Project: (60%)**

In this course, you will work with 3-4 classmates, together with a group of Chinese students, on a cross-cultural team project. In this project, you are supposed to apply key cross-cultural communication concepts and theories to discussions, reflections and presentations. Your individual grade for this portion of the course will be based on the points earned by your entire team for each aspect of the project.

In the project, you will investigate into socio-cultural issues, either to test the theories on the textbook or to explore certain socio-cultural phenomena you are strongly interested in through cross-cultural perspectives. Procedure and tasks of the team project will be:

Phase I: Each team in this class, together with the instructor, discuss and determine a specific topic. A topic common to both western and eastern cultures is preferable.

Phase II: Each team in this class researches (books, journals, website, etc.) about the topic on Chinese culture.

Phase III: Each team contacts their counterparty and discusses face to face with them about their observations, comments, and ideas about the specific topic and asks for their comments on the preliminary findings. Do further qualitative or quantitative research together, if necessary.

Phase IV: Each team, based on their findings, comparative and contrastive analyses, and conclusions, will give a 15-minute presentation that includes a discussion of the cultural components, stories about the investigation of that cultural issue,

and conclusions that the group has drawn. Group members will then answer class questions for up to 10 minutes. Your group presentation will be evaluated based on the quality of the information you present to the class as well as the quality of the presentation itself . Further details will be discussed in class.

Those students who achieve the most success in this project are those who accept the nature of group responsibility and who prepare, communicate, and perform effectively in their group work. **As in other realms of the real world, groups in this class have the ability to fire non-productive/reliable members.**

### Grading Scale

The work of students is evaluated and reported in terms of the following scoring scale:

A=92-100    A<sup>-</sup>=89-91    B<sup>+</sup>= 85-88    B=81-84    B<sup>-</sup>=77-80;  
 C<sup>+</sup>= 73-76    C=70-72    C<sup>-</sup>= 60-69    F=failure (below 60)

### **VI. Academic Integrity**

*Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding academic honesty.*

The University expects students to be honest in their academic work. Academic dishonesty is viewed as a serious violation of university rules and such misconduct is not accepted by academic community. In particular, students must refrain from plagiarism, cheating and collusion in connection with examinations, submitting substantially the same piece of work to different classes and must fully acknowledge all the sources of ideas and all assistance received in work submitted to the instructor for evaluation. Violation of the rules of academic honesty may lead to suspension or disqualification of the student from further study at the University.

### **VII. Weekly Work Schedule**

This weekly work schedule also includes assignment due dates, exam dates, and date of final exam. The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule. Students will be advised in advance of any change.

<b>Wk</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Weekly topic ( Required readings)</b>	<b>Assignments &amp; Exams</b>
<b>1</b>	8/29, 9,1	Introduction (Chap 1)	
<b>2</b>	9/5,8	Cultural Value Orientation (Chap 3)	
<b>3</b>	9/12,15	Cultural Value Orientation (Chap 3)	<b>Phase I of the team project due</b>
<b>4</b>	9/19,22	Cultural Value Orientation (Chap 3)	
<b>5</b>	9/26,29	Cultural Value Orientation (Chap 3)	<b>Phase II of the team project due</b>

<b>6</b>	10/3,6	<b>National Day</b>	
<b>7</b>	10/10,13	Culture and Verbal Communication (Chap 4)	
<b>8</b>	10/17,20	Culture and Verbal Communication (Chap 4)	
<b>9</b>	10/24,27	Culture and Nonverbal Communication (Chap 5)	<b>Team 1, 2 presentation</b>
<b>10</b>	10/31 11/3	Thought Patterns and Language (Chap 6)	<b>Team 3, 4 presentation</b>
<b>11</b>	11/7,10	Thought Patterns and Language (Chap 6)	<b>Team 5, 6 presentation</b>
<b>12</b>	11/14, 17	Culture and Business Etiquette (Chap 8)	<b>Team 7, 8 presentation</b>
<b>13</b>	11/21, 24	Culture and Education (Chap 9)	<b>Team 9, 10 presentation</b>
<b>14</b>	11/28 12,1	Intercultural Communication Competence (Chap 13)	<b>Self-reflection paper due</b>