



## **SOCI 3332 Leadership & Communication across Cultures**

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**Instructor:** Patrick Dua, M.A., Dr. phil.

**Office Hours:** by appointment

### **Course Description**

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This course is concerned with the general issues of cultural sensitivity and diversity awareness. From an academic point of view, the following brief introduction to the subject can be offered: Individuals, groups and associations in society interact with one another from an ever widening variety of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds. There is therefore a permanent and growing need for cultural competency awareness and training. Some traditional development models that address diversity emphasize the importance of learning culturally specific information, such as behavioral and communication patterns, traditions, values and value-systems, as well as religious practices, symbols, and rituals. Meanwhile, *Culturology* - or the scientific approach to the study of culture, has spawned a variety of new fields of research in the social sciences.

In fact, while all the above attributes may be seen as relevant, being knowledgeable about specific cultures and groups may not make it necessarily easier to respect and appreciate differences and to interact effectively with persons from other cultures. Developing cultural sensitivity and diversity awareness is extremely complex and an ongoing process. This is because culture can include how human beings live, how they relate in a standard way to their *own worlds*, their expectations, assumptions, particular preferences, child-rearing practices, attitudes about time or money, definitions of achievement, concepts of beauty, art, music and food, to name only a few. Nonetheless, culture – at the same time, is only one element which defines individual personalities.

The course will emphasize the processes required to understand how specific factors may influence the perceptions and attitudes of different cultures toward one another. In the broader context, there are some standard propositions bearing on notions of *international political culturology* as a subfield of international relations. These are concerned with efforts aimed at understanding the global cultural system, as well as its numerous subsystems. The aim of this course is to explain how cultural variables interact with politics, economics, business and workplace dynamics as influential factors in world affairs.

The importance of cultural studies flows from the realization that every society is composed of several community areas. People in one area may have common ties of culture, race, language, religion or traditions which make them essentially different from those in other areas. It is the basic function of the institutional structures of all societies to retain the loyalty of all communities and citizens. A key prerequisite to the retention of loyalty is associated with the presence of norms of equality and fairness which are also major determinants of individual prosperity, peace and stability.

The propositions underlying the course will enable students to identify the specific modes of inter-cultural communication which may ultimately function as catalysts to the promotion - or obstruction - of understanding between culturally diverse individuals or social groups.

#### **Method:**

The course is associated with studies in the humanities or the social sciences. It explores the relationship of the individual to others in a pluralistic human society and identifies the various modes of communication that commonly prevail among them. The central focus will highlight the origins of diversity and the ways in which various cultures address questions concerning their perceptions of incompatibility and deviations from their own norms, expected behavioral patterns or thought processes.

Due emphasis will be placed on the influences of early-life enculturation, environmental factors, acquired values, personal experiences and their combined effect on individual perceptions and predilections. The responsibility of communities, individuals and social institutions to place a high value on the merits of cultural sensitivity and cultural awareness as a way of promoting social harmony and stability will be shown to be an indispensable obligation. Students will be encouraged to utilize their analytical faculties, and to perceive the need to acquire some of the pertinent linguistic skills necessary for the precise explanation of the course related propositions.

## Course Objectives

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After regular participation in this course and the successful completion of assignments and self-assessment questions constructed in conformity with the syllabus specifications, students should be able to gain increased knowledge within the following areas:

- the similarities and differences among cultures
- the evolution of diversity in cultural norms
- the foundations of diverse cultures, their ways of thinking and communicating
- the aims, nature and preferred methods of intercultural communication
- the ability to compare and contrast verbal and nonverbal behavioral patterns across cultures
- understanding cultures without regard to personal experience
- workplace integration and cultural sensitivity
- competency for listening, empathy, making and retaining friendships, surmounting difficulties in intercultural relationships, giving and receiving feedback, collaboration.

## Class Schedule and Sequence of Instruction

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The course consists of four major themes (or Units) as follows:

- **Unit 1:** Definition, Elements, and Dimensions of Culture
- **Unit 2:** Influences of Culture on Socialization
- **Unit 3:** Origins of Intercultural Disharmony
- **Unit 4:** Resolving Issues of Crosscultural Communication

Lecture	Date	Content
1	<b>Unit 1</b> Week 1 -4	<b>Definition, Elements, and Dimensions of Culture</b>
2		Why study Culture?
3		Socio-Political Dimensions of Culture
4		Subcultures & Intercultural Communication
5	<b>Unit 2</b> Week 5-8	<b>Influences of Culture on Socialization</b>
6		Political Socialization & Intercultural Communication
7		Tradition v Modernity
8		Determinants of Culture – Civilization and Cultures
9	Week 9	<i>Midterm Progress Examination</i>
10	<b>Unit 3</b> Week 10-12	<b>Origins of Intercultural Disharmony</b>
11		Direct and Structural Disharmony
12		Conflict Dynamics in Intercultural Communication
13	<b>Unit 4</b> Week 13-15	<b>Resolving Issues of Crosscultural Communication</b>
14		Symmetric Communication Paths
15		Asymmetric Communication Paths
16	Finals Week 16	Final Examination ( <i>Research Papers due!</i> )

## Required Textbooks and Materials

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### Textbook(s):

- *Intercultural Communication in Context*, Judith Martin & Thomas Nakayama, McGraw-Hill;
- *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication*, Fred Jandt, Sage

## Grading

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The computation and distribution of actual individual grades in terms of A, B, C, D etc. will depend on the overall criteria of individual performance and the discretion of lecturer as follows:

- Midterm Progress Examination: **35%**
- Degree of in-class participation: **10%**
- Ability to apply textbook principles: **5%**
- Research Project: **15%** (*not applicable to 4-week courses*)
- Final Examination: **35%**

Categories of Passing Grades: \* A, B+ = First Class Pass      \* B, B-, C+ = Second Class Pass      \* C, C- = Third Class Pass

### Grading Scale (Based on points)

Grade	Descriptive Grade	Numeric Grade	Grade Points
A	Excellent Scholarship	93-100	4.00
A-	Excellent Scholarship	90-92	3.70
B+	Good Scholarship	87-89	3.30
B	Good Scholarship	83-86	3.00
B-	Good Scholarship	80-82	2.70
C+	Satisfactory Scholarship	77-79	2.30
C	Satisfactory Scholarship	70-76	2.00
D+	Poor Scholarship	67-69	1.30
D	Poor Scholarship	63-66	1.00
D-	Poor Scholarship	60-62	0.07
F	Failure	Less than 60	0.00

## Exams

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A two-hour mid-term progress examination and a final examination will be administered. The final examination – also lasting two hours - will be administered on the last day of the class meetings. Both examinations will entail **a set-pattern of essays** and other short responses to certain relevant questions. The exams will be based primarily on the lectures and contents of the accompanying course literature.



## Assignments

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By the end of the course, successful students will be expected to have participated fully and consistently in all class sessions. Students may face challenges in accomplishing any course-related assignments if they fail to follow this rule. The lecture topics (*listed under "Class Schedule and Sequence of Instruction"*) are not intended to reflect the organizational structure(s) of any accompanying textbook(s) for this course; neither will they coincide necessarily with any preparatory readings done in advance by students.

The ability to take and digest class notes is, in principle, the student's own responsibility. The interaction between the lectures and the course literature will be aimed primarily to provide students with instruction in the skills to be developed, namely: private reading for supplementary information, thinking, research, and academic analysis. Students are encouraged to seek to generate class discussions by articulating themselves freely on any questions of relevance to the subject.

### **Research Project** (*Reflection Paper – not applicable to 4-Week Courses*):

Students are expected to be prepared – to do web and library research and to submit a **10-page final reflection paper** in which they support their preferred area of interest; the particular area can be drawn from the confines of the textbook topics, from any of the areas of the course units, or through consultation with the professor.

## Paper and Presentation (if applicable)

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Specifically, a reflection paper must argue for (or against) a **thesis** using a clearly presented line of reasoning and examples where appropriate.

The thesis might relate to one or the other of the following broad course themes:

- \* Cultural Factors influencing Perceptions
- \* Communication across Races
- \* Communication across Gender
- \* Diversity and Subgroup Relationships in Communities or at the Workplace
- \* Forms of Behavior carrying the Risk of Disharmony
- \* Potential Determinants and Effects of Superiority Complex
- \* Potential Determinants and Effects of Inferiority Complex

*The submission of the research project will be due in the last week of the semester.*

## Other Regulations and Policies

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### **Attendance and Participation**

Attendance and active classroom participation are required of each student. Tests will cover for all course material provided through lectures and presentations, readings, discussions, cases, and videos during class. **Absences and/or a lack of participation in discussions will impact negatively on the final grade.** Each student is responsible for all material covered and/or assigned and any announcements made in any class session, whether student is present or not. Group activities require all students to participate and contribute to group discussions and projects.

**Students are expected to come to class on time and to have read assigned material before class.** There may be an occasional pop quiz to verify whether students have read the assignments before class.



**All work must be turned in on time.** Late work may be accepted but points will be taken off if work is not turned in to instructor when it is due. At all times, in class and group discussions, students are expected to respect contributions, questions, and opinions of other people. Demeaning others in any way is not acceptable.

### **Scholastic Dishonesty**

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a university academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "NP" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the Study Center.