



COMM-PSYC 290 - Intercultural Communication

Course Syllabus

Spring Semester 2024

Instructor: Gabriella Brigitte Klein, Ph.D.

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: none

Class Meeting Days & Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:15pm-3:45pm

Office Hours: by appointment before or after a class or via Zoom (see Moodle site)

Course Type: Standard Course

Course Fee: \$ 25

Course Description

In today's world in which people are increasingly on the move for many reasons (tourism, forced and deliberate transnational migration, displacement, study and work abroad programs, missionary and humanitarian work, etc.), an intercultural competence is of paramount importance and no longer limited to highly specialized professions. And an intercultural competence necessarily includes specific interpersonal communication competencies (in terms of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and emotional attitudes) relevant for an intercultural encounter as nothing happens in social life without communication. According to Ingrid Piller (*Intercultural Communication. A critical Introduction*, 2nd edition, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017; course book), "The main challenges of intercultural communication are the linguistic challenges of language learning, the discursive challenges of stereotyping, and the social challenges of inclusion and justice" (Piller, IX).



In this course, students will tackle these challenges by acquiring not only theoretical knowledge and contemporary concepts of intercultural communication. Through practical communication exercises and workshop activities they also will be able to develop specific interpersonal communication skills in order to better cope with the intercultural dimension in multicultural encounters. The theoretical knowledge together with concrete communication skills will ultimately change their attitude in the relationship with others, laying the basis for becoming Intercultural Mediators through “a dedicated interpersonal engagement to reinvent a new common culture that is mutually beneficial” (Piller, 204).

Culture and intercultural communication are considered dynamic and transformative concepts: no intercultural communication advice or recipes are proposed, but analytical tools are presented to refine one’s own communication skills and attitude. Such analytical tools, among others, originate from research results obtained in the framework of European Union funded projects revolving around intercultural communication challenges for people on the move, written and coordinated by the professor over the past 20 years.

The course content and activities are not necessarily tailored to students of linguistics, sociolinguistics, or communication; no prerequisites are necessary. They rather provide students with tools and skills applicable both in everyday situations and professional contexts.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

Below are the course’s learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students’ achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *distinguish* between different levels and different planes of communication (Quiz)
- *distinguish* between spoken texts and written texts (Quiz)
- *distinguish* between interpersonal communication generally and interpersonal communication in an intercultural encounter (Quiz, two Reflection Papers, Poster)
- *observe, transcribe and analyze* a talk-in-interaction (two Reflection Papers)
- *identify* different communication practices, techniques, procedures, and strategies in an intercultural encounter (two Reflection Papers)
- *analyze* different kinds of communicative products for overt and hidden discriminatory messages on the grounds of real or perceived national belonging, ethnic-cultural belonging, social belonging, gender & sexual orientation, disability, and age (Quiz, two Reflection Papers, Poster)
- *activate* productive interpersonal communication techniques, procedures and strategies in an intercultural dimension
- *use* a correct academic vocabulary regarding the field of intercultural communication studies, anthropology, and sociolinguistics (Quiz, two Reflection Papers, Poster)
- *design* a poster connecting their personal experience in Italy with contemporary theories in intercultural communication, anthropology, and sociolinguistics (Poster)
- *face* some of the different challenges of intercultural communication (Poster)

Course Materials

Book

Piller, Ingrid., *Intercultural Communication, A Critical Introduction*, Edinburgh University Press (2nd Edition), 2017.

Readings

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course’s Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

Assessment

| | |
|--|-----|
| Attendance | 10% |
| One-on-One Professor Meet-up | 5% |
| 5 Moodle Quizzes | 20% |
| Reflection paper 1 (Culture Shock experiences) | 15% |
| Reflection paper 2 (Intercultural Communication experiences) | 30% |
| Poster | 10% |
| Final Exam | 10% |

Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered, and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

| Letter Grade Range | Numerical Score Equivalent | Student Performance |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A A- | 93% - 100% 90% - 92% | Exceptional Excellent |
| B+ B B- | 87% - 89% 83% - 86% 80% - 82% | Superior |
| C+ C C- | 77% - 79% 73% - 76% 70% - 72% | Satisfactory |
| D+ D D- | 67% - 69% 63% - 66% 60% - 62% | Low Pass |
| F | 59% or less | Fail (no credit) |

Please note: Decimal and centesimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is an essential part of this course. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences per course without penalty, per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

One-on-One Professor Meet-up (5%)

Getting to know your professor makes you more comfortable with that person and therefore more likely to ask for help. It also might help for you to ask questions about the various assignments or discuss a paper idea. In this course, you get 5% of your grade for coming one time before Week 4 to a *One-on-One Professor Meet-up*. See the full prompt on Moodle.

Quizzes (20%)

Students will be assigned 5 short quizzes (each of which will be due before class time of the following week and will not be reopened). The quiz will be on Moodle and students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade being the highest grade they receive. There will be a combination of *technical*, *methodological*, and *content questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The technical questions will help students learn the class's policies and administrative procedures. The methodological questions will test skills that will pop up every week, like how to communicate productively.

Reflection Paper 1: My Culture Shock experiences (15%)

Students will write a Reflection Paper discussing their personal culture shock experiences in Italy or elsewhere in the world, including the in-class workshop experience related to culture shock with particular focus on Intercultural Communication issues. See the full prompt and rubric on Moodle.

Reflection Paper 2: Intercultural Communication: my knowledge, skills and attitudes (30%)

Drawing on the readings and several guided communication exercises, students will reflect on how these changed their knowledge, skills and attitudes in intercultural communication over the course and their stay in Italy. See the full prompt and rubric on Moodle.

Poster (10%)

Students will design a poster summarizing what they have learned in terms of Intercultural Communication from the beginning of the course and their stay in Italy. See the full prompt and rubric on Moodle.

Final Exam (10%)

For the Final Exam students will prepare and carry out a 10-minute Presentation of their poster summarizing their learning experience and connect it to the most important statements from intercultural communication theories contained in the course readings. The Presentation should also include how they intend to exploit their intercultural communication experience back home. See the full prompt and rubric on Moodle.

This is the only time the exam will be given. No alternative exam dates will be offered.

Extension & Submitting Late Work

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment but the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero.

As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. All students are allowed 2 unexcused absences, which do not need to be justified. It is the student's responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity. i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class.

More than 2 absences will affect your final grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences (8 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness includes: death in immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled. Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than

15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence.

Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the generation of content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism. Should the Institute become aware of a student's use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set on silent mode before the beginning of each class.

Laptop/Smartphone Policy

An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and smartphones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result, you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. However, I ask students to bring their computers! but leave them in their bags and phones in their pockets and use a regular notebook. There are five exceptions: 1) if one has a vision or other accommodation; 2) if one is using a tablet/electronic pencil to take notes, one which is not connected to the internet; 3) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools; 4) if we have an in-class activity that requires them to use their computer or 5) if they make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Week 1

Culture Shock Experience and Theory

Meeting 1: *Short presentation of the course. Experiencing a mini culture shock (workshop)*

Meeting 2: *Elaborating on the workshop experience: its relevance to intercultural communication and to your experience in Italy (or elsewhere in the world).*

Readings for the week:

- Ting-Toomey, Stella, & Chung, Leeva C. "What is Culture Shock?" In *Understanding intercultural communication* (2nd ed.), Chap.5 pp. 91-109. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Piller, Ingrid. *Intercultural Communication. A critical Introduction*, 2nd ed., "Preface", ix-xi. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017.

Week 2

What Is Interpersonal Communication?

Meeting 1: *Introduction to a communication model: getting familiar with the different communication levels, planes, and related means: verbal communication, paraverbal communication, non-verbal communication, visual communication (theory & workshop activities)*

Meeting 2: *Brief introduction to the history of intercultural communication studies; your personal experience in intercultural encounters (workshop activity)*

Readings for the week:

- Dossou, Koffi M., Gabriella B. Klein, and Andrea F. Ravenda. "Our RADAR Communication Concept." In *RADAR Guidelines. Understanding hate-oriented communication and tools for anti-hate communication strategies in an intercultural dimension*, edited by Koffi M. Dossou and Gabriella B. Klein, 5-18. Deruta/Perugia: Key & Key Communications, 2016.

Quiz 1

Week 3

Interpersonal Communication in an Intercultural Perspective

Meeting 1: *Introduction to some key concepts followed by exercises: intercultural implications of words and of voice (communication games); your personal experience in intercultural encounters (workshop activity)*

Meeting 2: *Intercultural implications of body language and of visual elements (communication games); your personal experience in intercultural encounters (workshop activity)*

Readings for the week:

- Piller: "Approaching Intercultural Communication", chap.1, 1-12.
- Piller: "The Genealogy of Intercultural Communication", chap.2, 13-30.

Assignment

Turn in your Reflection Paper 1: "My Culture Shock experiences" through Moodle by the latest Friday of week 3. See the full prompt and rubric on Moodle

Week 4

The Linguistic Challenges of Intercultural Communication

Meeting 1: *What is a 'Language'? a linguistic approach; A case study (communication workshop)*

Meeting 2: *'Misunderstanding' and 'Miscommunication': linguistic barriers and social barriers; your personal experience in intercultural encounters (workshop activity)*

Readings for the week:

- Piller: "Language and Culture", chap. 3, 31-53.
- Piller: "Nation and Culture", chap. 4, 54-70.

Quiz 2

Week 5

Using Language to Interact with People: 'Talk-in-Interaction'

Meeting 1: *From conveying messages to observing messages; observing an interaction between two individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and emerging questions (in-class activity using an Observation Template linked on Moodle)*

Meeting 2: *From observing an interaction to transcribing an interaction: Introduction on how to transcribe a verbal interaction*

Readings for the week:

- Klein, Gabriella B. *Verbal interactions and their transcription*, 1-6. University of Perugia: RADAR: Regulating AntiDiscrimination and AntiRacism. 2015, accessed July 16, 2022.
<https://www.keyandkey.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/KLEIN-Guidelines-for-transcription-RADAR.pdf>.

Assignment

Turn in your compiled Observation Template, as part of the Reflection Paper 2, by the latest Friday of week 5. See the full prompt and rubric on Moodle and use the Observation Template linked there.

Week 6

Structural and Organizational Aspects of a 'Talk-in-Interaction'

Meeting 1: *From transcribing an interaction to analyzing an interaction: Introduction on how to analyze a verbal interaction (the activity will be started in class and finalized as home-work)*

Meeting 2: *Students will meet the two individuals of the video-recorded interaction and ask them questions related to the importance of an intercultural communication competence in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude*

Readings for the week:

- Gumperz, John J. and Jenny Cook-Gumperz. "Introduction: language and the communication of social identity." In *Language and social identity*, edited by John J. Gumperz, chap.1, 1-21. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Assignment

You will transcribe and analyze a video-recorded interaction between two individuals from different

linguistic and cultural backgrounds (with the explicit permission from the individuals involved). See the full prompt and rubric on Moodle and use the Transcription Template linked there. Turn in the work, as part of the Reflection Paper 2, by the latest Tuesday of week 7.

Semester Break

Week 7

Intercultural Communication in Institutional Work Contexts

Meeting 1: *Service encounter at the 'Public Relations Office' (URP) of the Municipality of Perugia: an example of analysis. Students will present their transcription work, started in week 6, of an intercultural interaction*

Meeting 2: *Presentation of students' analysis of an intercultural interaction*

Readings for the week:

- Piller: "Intercultural Communication at Work", chap. 7, 120-141.

Quiz 3

Week 8

The Discursive Challenges of Stereotyping in Intercultural Communication

Meeting 1: *The Components of A 'Communicative Event' and the concept of 'Community'; analyzing Spike Lee's film Jungle Fever (in-class working in pairs using the Jungle Fever Analysis Templates linked there)*

Meeting 2: *Students will present and discuss their analysis of Spike Lee's film Jungle Fever*

Film for the week

- Spike Lee: *Jungle Fever* (1991)

Week 9

The Social Challenges of Inclusion and Justice in Intercultural Communication

Meeting 1: *Brief introduction to the phenomena of Hate Speech and Hate Communication; presentation of analysis templates and analyzing examples from public media: newspaper articles, advertising pictures, social media posts, propaganda pictures (workshop activities); context-specific Analysis Templates will be used (see link in Moodle).*

Meeting 2: *Analyzing examples from public media: advertising videos, propaganda videos, (workshop activities); context-specific Analysis Templates will be used (see link on Moodle).*

Readings for the week:

- Dossou, Koffi M. and Gabriella B. Klein, eds. *RADAR Guidelines. Understanding hate-oriented communication and tools for anti-hate communication strategies in an intercultural dimension*, 23-31. Deruta/Perugia: Key & Key Communications, 2016. Accessed July 16, 2022.
<http://win.radar.communicationproject.eu/web/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/RADAR-Guidelines-EN.pdf>
- Klein, Gabriella, Koffi M. Dossou, Maria Fountana, and Stavroula Sokoli. "Discursive and Visual Construction of Internal Borders. Analysis of advertisement samples from Italy, Greece

and the UK in the framework of the EU Project RADAR.” In *Europe in Discourse: Identity, Diversity, Borders*, 470-488, edited by Juliane House and Themis Kaniklidou, Nashua: Hellenic American University, 2017.

Quiz 4

Week 10

Words Matter: Racial or Racist? Critical Language Use and the Importance of Becoming an Intercultural Mediator

Meeting 1: *Students will identify text examples from public media and analyze critically the language used in those written or spoken examples*

Meeting 2: *Students will present and discuss their examples in class*

Quiz 5

Assignment

Turn in your final Reflection Paper 2: “*Intercultural Communication: my knowledge, skills and attitudes*” through Moodle by the latest Friday of week 10. See the full prompt and the rubric on Moodle

Week 11

Intercultural Communication for a Cultural Change

Meeting 1: *How to prepare for the Poster Exhibition: students will prepare their posters in class*

Meeting 2: *How to prepare for the Poster Exhibition: students will give feedback to their classmates’ poster projects on possible improvements*

Please note that you must deliver your final Poster project - without any delay - latest by Friday of this week (week 11) in order to be printed on time for the Poster Exhibition to be featured during the Specific Academic Events session. See the full prompt and rubric on Moodle.

Readings for the week:

Piller: “Becoming an Intercultural Mediator”, chap. 11, 194-206

Week 12

Intercultural Communication for a Cultural Change

Meeting 1: *Students will present their posters to the class*

Meeting 2: *Students will discuss their Intercultural Communication Experience in and outside the class, how their Intercultural Communication competence has changed in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude, and how to apply it in the future*

Week 13 (Special Academic Events Week)

Final Exam: Poster Presentation in class. See the full prompt and the rubric on Moodle

Poster Exhibition: Exhibition of students’ posters