



COMM-PSYC 290 - Intercultural Communication

Course Syllabus

Fall Semester 2022

Instructor: Gabriella Brigitte Klein, Ph.D.

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: none

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

Course Type: Standard Course

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 interpersonal communication competencies and skills relevant for an intercultural dimension because nothing happens without communication. According to Ingrid Piller (*Intercultural Communication. A critical Introduction*, 2nd edition, p. IX. 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".

In this course, students will tackle these challenges by acquiring not only theoretical knowledge and contemporary concepts of intercultural communication; they also will be able to develop specific interpersonal communication skills in general and in an intercultural dimension in particular. 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).

To reach this aim, each course session will be divided into two parts:

1. short presentations by the professor of theoretical knowledge following the course book (Piller)
2. practical communication exercises and workshop activities supported by additional reading as well as analytical tools.

The 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.



Culture and intercultural communication are considered dynamic and transformative concepts: no intercultural communication advice or recipes are proposed, but tools are presented to refine one's observation skills and communicative attitude. For this purpose, observation sessions inside and outside the classroom will be organized and students will learn to analyze communicative products (film extracts, advertisement pictures and videos, propaganda pictures and videos, newspapers, social media posts) according to the four communication resources: words, voice, body, and visual elements. Through observation and analyses they will learn to discover underlying meanings of verbal, paraverbal, non-verbal and visual messages. Furthermore, students will actively be involved in discovering and improving their communication skills, such as active listening, arguing, conflict resolving; they will discover hidden stereotypes and prejudices and many more communication practices.

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 perspective (Quiz, Intercultural Portfolio, Poster & Poster Presentation)
- *activate* productive interpersonal communication techniques, procedures and strategies in an intercultural dimension (Attendance: active participation during workshop activities)
- *observe* an interaction (Intercultural Portfolio)
- *transcribe* a talk-in-interaction (Intercultural Portfolio)
- *analyze* a talk-in-interaction (Intercultural Portfolio)
- *identify* different communication practices, techniques, procedures, and strategies in an intercultural encounter (Intercultural Portfolio)
- *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 (Attendance: active participation during workshop activities, Quiz, Intercultural Portfolio, Poster & Poster Presentation)

- *use* a correct academic vocabulary regarding the field of intercultural communication studies, anthropology, and sociolinguistics (Quiz, Portfolio, Poster & Poster Presentation)
- *design* a poster connecting their personal experience in Italy with contemporary theories in intercultural communication, anthropology, and sociolinguistics (Poster & Poster Presentation)
- *face* some of the different challenges of intercultural communication (Poster & Poster Presentation)

Course Materials

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

Participation	10%
5 Biweekly Moodle Quizzes	25%
Intercultural portfolio	40%
Office hours	5%
Poster Presentation (Final Exam)	20%

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

Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

Participation (10%)

Not only attendance is an important part of this course but also Participation. You have two “sick days,” per Institute policy. As long as you are at all the other meetings and have participated in the workshop activities, you will receive the full 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Quizzes (25%)

Students will be assigned 5 short quizzes (1 every 2 weeks, 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 it is not timed. 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’ policies and administrative procedures. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like how to communicate productively.

Intercultural Portfolio (40%)

Students will be provided with tools to build their personal Intercultural Portfolio throughout the course.

This will consist of:

- a reflection paper discussing their personal intercultural experience in Italy
- an observation of an interaction using the observation template provided
- an audio or video recorded interaction with intercultural implications
- a transcript of a short extract from the recorded interaction
- an analysis of the transcript and the recorded interaction as a whole
- a poster summarizing the Portfolio
- a presentation outline as basis for a 10-minute presentation of the student’s poster

The entries for the portfolio should be relevant to the theories and phenomena discussed in class.

Students will review the content of their portfolio with the professor at least once during the course before the delivery of the final work. See the full prompt on Moodle.

Office Hours (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 9 to office hours. See the full prompt on Moodle

Poster presentation (20%)

The Final Exam consists in a 10-minute Presentation of the student’s Portfolio summarized in a Poster. The Presentation should focus on how they intend to exploit their intercultural experience back home. See the full prompt 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 & Lateness Policy

Class attendance (in person) is mandatory. Students are allowed two “sick days,” which do not need to be justified. However, it is considered common courtesy to inform the instructor of your absence when possible. It is the students’ responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity (sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class). Each additional absence—even for another illness—will lower the students’ grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). Missing a co-curricular field trip also lowers a student’s final grade by half a letter grade. It is the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class.

If a student misses a class, it is ultimately their responsibility to find out what has been missed. Ideally, they should find out what they missed from a classmate. 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.

Except in the case of medical emergencies with a doctor’s certificate and approved by the Director, 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.

Consistent lateness (or leaving class early) is a sign of disorganization and lack of respect both for your instructor and for your fellow students. Umbra instructors are empowered to count three late arrivals as the equivalent of an absence.

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.

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. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions for anything other than note-taking, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Week 1

Culture Shock Experience and Theory

Meeting 1: *Experiencing a mini culture shock (workshop)*

Meeting 2: *Elaborating on the workshop experience: its relevance to intercultural communication and to your experience in Italy: who, where, and when are we? situating yourselves in Perugia, Italy, 2022.*

Readings for the week:

Ting-Toomey, Stella. “What is Culture Shock?” In. *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*. 5th ed.,

edited by Robert Lavenda and Emily Schultz, 114-137. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013.
Piller, Ingrid. *Intercultural Communication. A critical Introduction*, 2nd ed., Preface, ix-xi. Edinburgh:
Edinburgh University Press, 2017.
Piller, chap.1, 1-12.

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 contacts (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.
Piller, chap.2, 13-30.

Quiz 1

Week 3

The Intercultural Dimension of Interpersonal Communication

Meeting 1: *Introduction to some key concepts followed by exercises: intercultural implications of words and of voice (exercises)*

Meeting 2: *Intercultural implications of body language and of visual elements (exercises)*

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.

Assignments:

Turn in the first component (self-reflection paper) of your Intercultural Communication Portfolio through Moodle (due Friday of week 3). See the full prompt in Moodle

Week 4

Communication Challenges and Barriers from a Language Point of View

Meeting 1: *What is a 'Language'? a linguistic approach; communication workshop: how to overcome barriers*

Meeting 2: *'Misunderstanding' and 'Miscommunication'; communication workshop: how to overcome barriers*

Readings for the week:

Piller, chap. 3, 31-53.

Piller, chap. 4, 54-70.

Quiz 2

Week 5

Communication Challenges and Barriers from a Social Point of View

Meeting 1: *From a monolingual mindset to a transnational world; simulation exercise*

Meeting 2: *From conveying messages to observing messages; workshop: results from the simulation exercise*

Readings for the week:

Piller, chap.5, 71-99.

Piller, chap.6, 100-119.

Assignment

Observe a real-life interaction outside the classroom (tbd)

You will observe communicative events in their context, at various levels of “interculturality”, keeping in mind that all types of interpersonal communication are ultimately intercultural.

Turn in the second component (observation of an interaction) of your Intercultural Communication Portfolio through Moodle (due Friday of week 5). See the full prompt in Moodle and use the Observation Template linked there.

Week 6

What Is a ‘Communicative Event’? What Is a ‘Community’?

Meeting 1: *The Components of A ‘Communicative Event’ and the concept of ‘Community’; workshop: watching and analyzing the film Jungle Fever (Spike Lee)*

Meeting 2: *Analyzing communicative events; workshop: watching and analyzing the film Jungle Fever (Spike Lee)*

Use the Jungle Fever Analysis Templates linked there.

Readings for the week:

Hymes, Dell. “Toward Ethnographies of Communication.” In *Foundation in Sociolinguistics. An Ethnographic Approach*, 3-16. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974.

Quiz 3

Semester Break

Week 7

What Is a ‘Conversation’, a ‘Talk-in-Interaction’?

Meeting 1: *Brief Introduction to how to collect and transcribe a verbal interaction followed by workshop activities*

Meeting 2: *Brief Introduction to how to transcribe a verbal interaction followed by workshop activities*

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

You will audio/video record an interaction relevant to intercultural communication issues and transcribe some short extract(s) (context tbd)

Turn in the third component (audio/video recorded interaction) and fourth component (transcript) of your Intercultural Communication Portfolio through Moodle (due Friday of week 7).

See the full prompt in Moodle and use the Transcription Template linked there.

Week 8

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 recording of an intercultural interaction they have collected in work contexts*

Meeting 2: *Presentation of students' transcripts*

Readings for the week:

Klein, Gabriella B., Koffi M. Dossou, and Sergio Pasquandrea. "Embodying Epistemicity. Negotiating (un)certainty through semiotic objects." In *Communicating Certainty and Uncertainty in Medical, Supportive and Scientific Contexts*, edited by Andrzej Zuczkowski, Ramona Bongelli, Ilaria Riccioni, and Carla Canestrari, 223-246. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2011.
Piller, chap. 7, 120-141.

Quiz 4

Week 9

Structural and Organizational Aspects of a Conversation

Meeting 1: *How to analyze a conversation; students will present their analysis of an intercultural interaction they have recorded*

Meeting 2: *Cultural implications of transcribing and analyzing interactions: discussing students' work*

Assignment

Turn in the fifth component (analysis paper) of your Intercultural Communication Portfolio through Moodle (due Friday of week 9). See the full prompt in Moodle. If you have not yet done so, you are expected to schedule an office hour with the professor to discuss your Intercultural Communication Portfolio Project.

Week 10

How Are Stereotypes, Prejudices, Discrimination, Racism, Sexism, Xenophobia, Homophobia and Other Discriminatory Phenomena Constructed through Communication?

Meeting 1: Brief introduction to the phenomenon 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, tv talk shows (workshop activities); context-specific analysis templates will be used (see link in 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>

Piller, chap. 10, 173-192

Assignment

Deliver a draft version of your Intercultural Communication Portfolio with an outline of your PPT and your Poster Project (due Friday week 10)

Week 11

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

Meeting 1: Students will identify examples from public media and analyze critically the language used in these examples (1)

Meeting 2: Students will identify examples from public media and analyze critically the language used in these examples (2)

Readings for the week:

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.

Piller, chap. 11, 194-206

Quiz 5

Assignment

Deliver an amended, final version of your Intercultural Communication Portfolio (due Friday week 11)

Week 12

Intercultural Communication for a Cultural Change

Meeting 1: How to prepare for your Poster & Poster presentation: you will have a trial session to present your PPT (1)

Meeting 2: How to prepare for your Poster & Poster presentation: you will have a trial session to present your PPT (2)

Week 13 (Special Academic Events Week)

Poster & Poster Presentation and Special Academic Events Week

Exhibition of students' posters: Furthermore, a poster exhibition will be held during which you have the opportunity to present your work to a wider audience during the Community EngageGAMES.