

SPEC 1619: Intercultural Communication

Brooklyn College, *The City University of New York*
Study Abroad in China Program

Instructor: Shuming Lu, Ph.D.

Required Texts

1. Judith Martin & Thomas Nakayama. (2010). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication: An Introduction* (4th Edition). New York: McGraw Hill.
2. Agar, M. (1994). *Language Shock: Understanding the culture of conversation*. New York: William Murrow.

Course Objectives

The study of intercultural communication seeks to understand how cultural similarities and differences can account for what occurs when members of different cultural groups interact with one another. It is also concerned with increasing our understanding of, tolerance for, and success in, these kinds of interactions. This course will (1) provide a theoretical and conceptual framework for understanding intercultural interactions; (2) increase sensitivity to cultural variations in communication; and (3) develop skills and strategies for effective intercultural interactions.

Course Outcomes

This course, by surveying various multicultural issues in communication, seeks to help students achieve the following outcomes:

1. Students will be able to understand major theoretical frameworks of cultural variability which are related to many issues in intercultural interactions with individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds;
2. Students will be able to address the intricate relationships between culture and communication;
3. Students will have a knowledge base and proficiency to improve the quality of interactions in culturally sensitive environment and various contexts such as interpersonal relationships, business, tourism, health care, and education; and
4. Students will be able to conduct research on culture and communication with individuals from diverse cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds.

Course Approach and Schedule

Fifteen class sessions will be scheduled, with each session for 3 hours. This will be taught as a hybrid course, with Internet-based activities mixed with class discussions and field trips to relevant historical and cultural sites in the Chinese cities. Students will be (randomly) placed into small groups to facilitate discussions in class and online.

The course will be conducted in two parts. The first part will combine readings of the textbooks with online discussion assignments. *This portion of the course can be regarded as a structured learning experience that can (and should) be completed, as much as possible, before departure for China.* The second portion of the course will close observations of relevant sites in China, journal writing, and classroom discussions.

A lot of this course will be based on your observations while touring China. It will be a good idea to have a notebook and pencil or voice recorder with you all the time. Your notes will be useful when you are writing

your journal, participating in class discussions, or completing the assignments.

The course will consist of:

1. Pre-departure readings and online discussions
2. On-site visits in the five Chinese cities and other cities of the side trips
3. Journal entries and essays
4. Class discussions and presentations in Nanjing
5. Group project
6. A final paper (as final exam)

It is in the nature of the study abroad program that it will be a little hard to anticipate the schedule of the class meetings in Nanjing. The specific schedule of visits and discussions probably won't be known until we arrive in Nanjing and may be subject to change, sometimes at short notice. The class may meet on weekend and evenings if necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make necessary adjustments in the class schedule and evaluation in response to the changing circumstances during the course of the program in China.

If we occasionally choose to meet in a café, you should note: (1) when the class is in session, all must turn off the internet access (unless otherwise instructed); and (2) each is expected to purchase a meal/snack (for only \$5-6).

Written Submissions

All written submissions must be typed and documented in accordance with the APA style requirements. Written submissions will be evaluated by the instructor for responsiveness to the assignment, theoretical sophistication, rigor, coherence, and ingenuity of the position developed, organization, and correctness as well as clarity of expression. As regards evaluation of the mechanics of expressive correctness, students are advised that for every ten errors in spelling, grammar (including capitalization and punctuation), and documentation, the overall evaluation of a submission will be lowered by one grade. All submissions are due as specified in the syllabus and late submissions will be penalized with one grade lowered for each day late.

Non-Brooklyn College students are required to keep a course portfolio of all work and assignment submissions for this course, to be evaluated by the appropriate office and committee for equivalent credits at the home institution.

Evaluation

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| 1. Participation | 30% (online, trip, and in-class) |
| 2. Journal reports | 20% |
| 3. Group Project | 20% |
| 4. Final exam paper | 30% |

Participation includes meaningful contribution to the class discussions in class and online. Students will be asked to present on certain readings from the course packet. A one-page outline is required from each speaker the day before presentation. *As this course is part of the study abroad program, students are advised that their behavior during the program may affect their final grade for the course.*

Journal Reports Assignment

1. You will keep journals daily throughout the trip, starting with Day One, in which to record and reflect on all cultural differences or communication difficulties encountered during the trip. These daily journals are at least one page in length. You should keep the daily journals for the professor to check randomly if needed. If the journals are hand-written, please make sure they are legible.
2. Each journal report should first describe the interaction or observation in detail, and then use

concepts from the book chapters to analyze. Each of the journal reports should focus on different phenomena.

3. You will submit **two** journal reports which you think are the best for a grade; each of the two journal reports must be at least 3 pages in length. One of the journal reports is due the 4th day after our arrival in Nanjing, and the other due the 9th day after our arrival in Nanjing.
4. The two journal reports are due both in hard copies (submitted to the front desk of the hotel in Nanjing) and in electronic copies (via email sent to CUNYinChina@yahoo.com).

Group Research Project

1. A group of about 4 students will do research (with observations, journals, site visits and interviews in China) on the assigned topic, write a group research paper (about 8 pages), and give a 20-minute group presentation on issues of intercultural interactions between **Americans and Chinese** in one of the following areas: interpersonal relationships, education, business, and health care (each group chooses a different area).
2. Due 2 days before the program concludes in Nanjing.
3. The group should submit a detailed one-page outline for the presentation the day before the class presentation.
4. The group research paper and the outline are due both in hard copies (submitted to the front desk of the hotel in Nanjing) and in electronic copies (via email sent to CUNYinChina@yahoo.com).
5. The class presentation must be informative, organized and entertaining and demonstrate research credibility. All must participate in the project equally.

Final Exam Paper

1. For the final exam, you will submit a paper, at least five pages in length, in which to discuss the relationship between culture and communication as experienced in this course through the study abroad in China program. You can choose to focus on any aspects you judge to be relevant and appropriate, as long as they fall within the purview of this course and address the relationship between culture and communication.
2. Relevant concepts from the textbooks and the lectures should be used to explain. Examples from your journals and observations should be cited to support your discussion and analysis. However, most of the content in the journal reports you have submitted should not be repeated in this final paper.
3. The paper is due 10:00 pm, in electronic copy only, the day prior to conclusion of the program in Nanjing (via email sent to CUNYinChina@yahoo.com).

Schedules and Topics of Class Activities

Schedule of the class meetings and the location may not be announced until the group's arrival in Nanjing. The chapter discussion questions are posted on the course blackboard website under "***Assignments.***"

Major Topics of the Course:

1. Introduction to Course: Culture and Communication
2. Cultural Values and Communication Patterns
3. Communication Rituals and Ethnography
4. Imperatives of Intercultural Communication
5. Intercultural Communication-Building Blocks and Barriers
6. History and Intercultural Communication
7. Identity and Intercultural Communication
8. Verbal Communication and Intercultural Communication
9. Nonverbal Communication & Intercultural Communication
10. Intercultural Communication and Popular Culture
11. Intercultural Communication & Conflict Management

12. Intercultural Communication & Relationships
13. Intercultural Communication & Tourism
14. Intercultural Communication & Business
15. Intercultural Communication & Education
16. Intercultural Communication & Health Care
17. Co-cultures and Intercultural Communication
18. Religions and communication: Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity
19. Ethics and Intercultural Communication
20. Intercultural communication competence