



SYLLABUS: COMM 350 – Intercultural Communication COMMUNICATION and CULTURE in PANAMA

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Phone:	6056-4260	Credits:	3 Gen Ed: CD2 & WR

COURSE CONTEXT AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this class is to understand how culture and communication intersect in the context of intercultural communication. Communication between cultural groups is complex and challenging and often leads to misunderstanding and conflict. Cross cultural communication is also informing and creative and can lead to personal, local and global change, growth and innovation. Although both difficult and rewarding, communicating with people from different cultures is central to all our lives in the global context. You will have the chance to gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will increase your intercultural communication competence. A variety of teaching methods including lecture, discussion, group work, exercises, and creative modalities will be used to address issues in this class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, a student should be able to.....

- ...explore cultural self-awareness and the dynamics that arise in interactions between people from different cultures
- ...recognize that social and cultural systems develop out of adaptation to environmental and historical circumstances (also a CD outcome)
- ...understand how communication processes differ among cultures (also a CD outcome)
- ...acquire knowledge and skills that increase intercultural competence by being able to evaluate pertinent information and assertions for relevance, bias, stereotyping, manipulation, and completeness (also a CD outcome)
- ...understand that socially constructed systems of exploitation and exclusion--racism, sexism, and classism, for example--are historically based (also a CD outcome)
- ...recognize how privilege, disadvantage and discrimination are perpetuated today
- ...develop alternative attitudes and actions to challenge and dismantle systems of exclusion and

oppression.

...make critical connections between local and global issues

REQUIRED READING

Miller, C. (2007). Panama: A Novel. Lexington, KY: BookSurge Publishing.

Parts of The Silent Language by Edward T. Hall are posted on Blackboard

COURSE POLICIES

Assignments are due as assigned in the syllabus. Late blogs/papers/etc. will be reduced one point when late.

All written assignments should be presented according to guidelines for each assignment.

PROOFREAD YOUR PAPERS and BLOGS

Do not cheat on any of the assignments.

Do not use mobile phones during class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Blog Entries

Each student will create a blog on WordPress.com and will post at least ten entries during the time in Panama. Blog entries cannot be posted after the group has returned from Panama. The topic for each blog will be posted on Blackboard. Students will receive 0, 1, or 2 points for each blog. If a student receives less than 2 points, then the blog entry can be rewritten. If the student receives a 0 on a blog entry, then the entry **MUST** be rewritten.

To receive two points a blog must meet the following criteria:

It must address one of the ten cultural indices from Hall

It must be at least three paragraphs.

An introduction of the topic

A discussion of the topic

A comment as to what insight into intercultural communication the entry makes.

Includes an image or photograph related to the topic.

Makes some reference to at least one concept from the book and it should do so in a flowing, sophisticated fashion.

It must be devoid of writing mistakes, including grammar, punctuation, etc., as well as more discursive mistakes such as lack of transitions, inappropriate topic, poor organization, and so on.

A blog will receive one point if:

It is missing one of the first four criteria above OR

It does not satisfy criterion 4 above.

A blog will receive 0 points if:

It is missing one or more of the first four criteria above AND

It does not satisfy criterion 4 above.

The student does not post it by the due date – no rewrite

Class Participation

Students are expected to engage actively in class discussion, learning exercises, and group activities.

There are many ways to participate including active listening, thoughtful inquiry, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication. Attendance is absolutely critical to meeting the overall requirements of the course. It is very difficult to participate if you are not here!!

We will begin our sessions (most, not all) by sharing intercultural “insights.” Insights refer to “ah-ha” experiences, observations, understandings, or acts where we make connections between something we have observed in Panama and our understanding of intercultural communication processes and practices.

Reading Quizzes

We will have short quizzes on a regular basis over the reading material – either the novel or other

readings. These will usually be at the beginning of class. The idea is that we cannot possibly discuss all the important concepts in the books during class time, so the quizzes give students an added incentive to read the material. They are meant to reward students who do the readings.

Final Essay

We are in Panama to study culture. This assignment requires you to interact with someone from Panama (for norteamericanos) or the USA (for Panamanians) so you can discover how her or his culture differs from yours. Attend a ritual, spend time where people hang out, or interview someone (but not another student)

For this assignment, students are required to write a seven-to-ten page (double-spaced) essay that includes:

- 1.) A description of the cultural experiences
- 2.) Analysis of the experience using theories and concepts from the course
- 3.) Support for field research through library resources
- 4.) A summary of reflections on what you have learned from the experience
- 5.) References or Works Cited (APA or MLA accepted)

Evaluation

The various activities will receive the following weights in determining your final grade:

Assignment	Norteamericanos	Panamanians
Participation	25%	20%
Reading Quizzes	25%	20%
Blogs	25%	20%
Final Essay	25%	25%
Reading Responses	0%	15%

Reading Responses for Panamanians Students

Response Papers: These are short (2 page) essay-style papers responding to a set of questions related to the reading for the particular class session. All papers should be typed. Papers will be evaluated on: 1.) demonstration that reading has been completed, 2.) application of concepts and ideas, 3.) clarity of writing. They will be graded just as the blog entries are graded, on a 0, 1, 2 basis.

Response #1 Reading Response Paper:

- a.) What role does power play in the “text” we call “history?”
- b.) How does history influence intercultural interactions?
- c.) How does the socially constructed category of “race” impact your everyday life?
- d.) Writing mechanics should be appropriate.

Response #2 Reading Response Paper:

- a.) Define white privilege. It may be a foreign concept to a Panamanian, so you may need to look things up or ask someone about it.
- b.) What constitutes white identity?
- c.) Discuss your relationship to white privilege and whiteness. How have you experienced it (either as an advantage/benefit and/or as a lack of advantage?)
- d.) Writing mechanics should be appropriate.

Response #3 Reading Response Paper:

- a.) Consider an intercultural conflict you have experienced. The conflict could be interpersonal, group or community-based. Write a 2 page paper addressing:

- b.) Write a brief description (1-2 paragraphs) of the conflict.

- c.) Read Chapter 9. Analyze the conflict based on the ideas and concepts in the chapter. Specifically, identify the micro, meso and macro-level dimensions of the conflict.

- d.) Based on your understanding of intercultural communication, what suggestions can you offer to resolve the conflict?

- e.) Writing mechanics should be appropriate.