Intercultural Communication

CMST 340

T/TR 1:00 p.m. - 3:20 p.m.
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Office hours: T/TR 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. W 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. and by appointment

Course Objectives:

1. To help students develop a holistic view of intercultural communication based on general principles.

2. To help students become familiar with the main concepts and theories existing in the field of intercultural communication.

3. To help students build their Intercultural Communication Competence.

4. To help students increase their tolerance of different cultural behaviors.

5. To help students develop basic intercultural communication skills.

Textbook:


Assignments and Evaluation:

Reading Response: 8 @ 10 apiece 80 points

Ethnographic Project: 8 @ 15 apiece 120 points

Quizzes: 3 @ 50 apiece 150 points

Final project 100 points

Class participation 50 points

Total: 500 points
GECC Assessment Report

Name: Dr. Galina Sinekopova
Department: Communication Studies
College: CSBS
Quarter: Winter 2010

Course enrollment:
Number of students: 72
Students’ profile: Undergraduates

Student learning outcome to be assessed:
The objective: Students will analyze multiple perspectives on a given issue related to the course content from goal #5: For students to recognize and understanding a diversity of opinions and perspective, in written and spoken discourse, concerning the course content.

Assessment mechanism:
Most of the assignments in this class can be used as an instrument of assessing the targeted objective since the study of intercultural communication is about the study of cultural differences and acquiring the conceptual tools and skills both to understand the diversity of opinions and perspectives and manage such differences creatively. For example, students are supposed to choose a specific culture and research different aspects of this culture. Every week they turn in interpretative essays of the cultural facts/phenomena using the theoretical framework from the assigned readings. Students are working on these ethnographic projects in groups. Usually there are about 7-8 groups formed each quarter which means that by the end of the quarter they gained perspectives of at least 7 to 8 different cultures. The main instrument of assessing ethnographic projects is a multi-media project: students create an educational video presenting different universal concepts through the eyes of the culture of their research. They are creating their own scripts and acting them out.

Very often the topics and issues discussed in the class are prompted by the current issues discussed in the media and society at that point, e.g. health care, freedom of speech, torture, euthanasia, gay marriage, etc. To ensure that students understand the issue and are familiar with multiple perspectives on this issue several items testing this knowledge are included in regular quizzes. Thus every quarter the quizzes in CMST 340 are reflecting the main current issues of societal discourse. In winter 2010 the concept of “marriage” was selected for the purposes of analyzing multiple cultural perspectives.
First assessment:

Type of assessment: students were asked to write a short essay (10-15 sentences) using the following questions as guidelines: Define marriage? What types of marriage are you aware of? What types of families are you aware of? What type of marriage is typical for the culture of your research?

64 students turned in their essays. As the result of content analysis the following main themes were identified:

Most students (48-75%) defined marriage as a union between a man and a women, 11(17%) mentioned the possibility of legitimization of gay marriages in this country, and 5 students (0.07%) mentioned the age as the main criteria for marriage. 23 (35%) students mentioned “arranged” marriage as a different type of marriage. 17(26%) wrote about the difference between nuclear and extended families. Only 37 (57%) knew the main type of marriage in the culture of their ethnographic projects.

Second assessment:

After the lecture and class discussion on the institution of marriage in different cultures students had to write an ethnographic paper on the topic of marriage in the culture of their research. The essay question on marriage was included on the next quiz. 69 students took the quiz. This time the content analysis of their answers produced the following results:

The majority (52-81%) defined marriage as a union between opposite sexes. Most of the students ( 66-95%) were able to define “arranged’ marriage and name the culture where it is practiced. 52(81%) students were able to identify such types of families as authoritarian, egalitarian, exogamous and endogamous in the addition to the nuclear and extended ones. 64 (92%) students knew the main family type in the culture of their research.

Interpretations of results:

The results show overall increase in understanding of different cultural types of marriage that is pretty impressive (compare 92% on the test with 57% on the pretest).This suggests that the goal of analyzing multiple perspectives on a given issue (institution of marriage in our case) was successfully achieved.

Suggestion for future improvement:

Working on this particular assessment showed that pre-test mechanism is very effective for understanding the change in the level of student knowledge acquisition. I am planning to include more pretests in my courses. Though essays are always interesting to read and interpret multiple choice test would be a better instrument for this purpose.
Explanation of Assignments:

1. **Reading Response (RR).**

   Your Reading Response will consist of (1) your personal evaluation of the readings (1-2 paragraphs) that should reflect your understanding of the concepts from the chapter and ability to apply them in everyday life situations; (2) 5 questions based on the material from the chapter that can be used for the class discussions; and (3) at least 5 key terms illustrated by your personal examples (half a page to a page). Do not copy from the book. Use your own words. Late papers are not accepted. This assignment will help you to prepare for the quizzes.

2. **Ethnographic project (EP).**

   You will look for materials that deal with the culture your group has chosen for the final project. You will write a short interpretation essay of that cultural fact, e.g. certain foods, architectures, dress, gestures, using the theoretical framework from the assigned chapters. Glossary terms in the end of each chapter can be used as key words for your research. Your ethnographic project should be at least 1-2 pages long. Do not forget to cite at least two outside sources (APA style format). Late papers are not accepted. This assignment will also help you to prepare for the final project presentation.

3. **Quizzes.**

   The quizzes will be based on the textbook and classroom discussions. They will include true/false, short and essay questions, and terms for definition. Make-up tests are allowed only in case of emergencies.

4. **Final project.**

   Your group will choose a culture and prepare a multimedia presentation on the following topic: “Communicating With … (Germans, Chinese, etc.).” In your presentation you will use the main concepts from each chapter of the book. The details of this assignment will be discussed later in class.
## Tentative Class Schedule

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