



## Course Syllabus

**COMM 316**

**Intercultural Communication (3  
credits)**

**Fall 2014**

**2-3:15pm MW**

**Noor Ghazal Aswad**

**Class# 16177**

### **Instructor and contact information**

Instructor: Noor Ghazal Aswad, Minard Hall (338-B20), North Dakota State University

Course Location and Hours: Minard Hall

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 11-12pm or by appointment

Telephone: 701-231-7632

Contact Email: [noor.ghazalaswad@my.ndsu.edu](mailto:noor.ghazalaswad@my.ndsu.edu)

### **Course description**

This course will provide a theoretical and practical background into intercultural communication. We will explore the definition, models, verbal, and non-verbal processes of communication between different cultural groups and in different contexts. We will also learn about barriers to successful intercultural communication. The course will take you on a journey

to learn more about your own communication style and how it can be developed to facilitate more successful interactions with other cultures.

### **Course objectives**

*After completing this course, you will be able to:*

- Know and comprehend the basic vocabulary of the intercultural communication field.
- Demonstrate a keen awareness of your own and other's cultural viewpoints.
- Reflect on the impact your own cultural background has had in shaping the person you are today.
- Develop practical competencies to be able to engage in communication with different cultural groups.

### **General Education Diversity Requirement**

This is a general education course which has been approved for meeting General Education requirements of the Humanities and Fine Arts or the Social and Behavioral Sciences. By successfully completing this course, students will be considered to have met the Cultural Diversity Requirement (Category 7).

### **Required Materials**

You will be required to purchase the following two books:

- Book 1: Martin, J. N & Nakayama, T.K. (2013). Intercultural communication in contexts (6th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- Book 2: Martin, J. N & Nakayama, T.K. (2014). Experiencing intercultural communication: an introduction (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

These two books are available through the NDSU bookstore or via various online merchants. We will also be discussing some select case studies which will be distributed to you the week before class via Blackboard. Any other required readings and materials will be made available via Blackboard or through e-mail.

We will also have two class activities where you will be required to watch the movies *Crash* and *Hotel Rwanda* prior to class. These can be borrowed from the NDSU library or watched online. Should any of you have difficulty accessing the movies, we can arrange a movie screening at a suitable time.

### Course Requirements

REQUIREMENT	POINTS	DUE DATE
<b>CLASS</b>	10 points	Throughout semester
<b>ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION</b>		
<b>INTERCULTURAL SERVICE LEARNING JOURNAL (TOTAL OF 6 ENTRIES)</b>	15 points, 2.5 points each	9/19, 10/13/ 10/17, 10/31, 11/14, & 11/28/2014
<b>CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION INTERVIEW PAPER</b>	20 points	10/10/2014
<b>TEST 1</b>	10 points	10/22/2014
<b>PERSONAL REFLECTIONS PAPER (MID-TERM ESSAY)</b>	20 points	11/7/2014
<b>INTERCULTURAL SERVICE LEARNING PRESENTATION</b>	15 points	12/8/2014 & 12/10/2014
<b>TEST 2</b>	10 points	12/15/2014

You must complete all the above requirements to pass the class. There will be no opportunities for extra credit.

### Grading Scale

The total number of points you receive will determine your final letter grade in this course:

LETTER GRADE	POINTS ACQUIRED	STANDARD
<b>A</b>	90 to 100 points	Excellent

<b>B</b>	80 to 89 points	Good
<b>C</b>	70 to 79 points	Average
<b>D</b>	60 to 69 points	Inferior
<b>F</b>	0 to 59 points	Fail

### **Standards for Evaluation of Graded Work**

Grades in this class are not competitive and will be based on the following criteria:

- “A” is earned when a student goes above and beyond the required criteria, as well as displays creativity, insight and mastery of the subject matter.
- “B” is earned through achieving the majority of the required criteria, as well as showing thoughtful analysis in work submitted.
- “C” is earned for demonstrating only a basic knowledge and understanding of material.
- “D” is earned when the student fails to adequately respond to tasks required and demonstrates a lack of familiarity with the course material.
- “F” is earned when a student exhibits almost no understanding of the material and does not meet the requirements of the assignments.

### **Advice for Succeeding in COMM 316**

#### **Class Attendance/Participation**

You will be expected to attend all classes and to complete the readings required ahead of time. If you miss class more than three times, you will be penalized and your grade will be adjusted accordingly.

Excused absences will only be awarded in cases of university-related cases (sports, conferences, etc.) or extreme cases such as hospitalization, death of a close relative or a natural disaster. Documentation will be required. In the case of an excused absence or absence because of an extreme situation, students will be allowed to make up work at a later date without penalty.

The nature of the course is mainly discussions, workshops and group activities, so class participation is extremely important. *Class Attendance/Participation is worth 10 points of your final grade.*

### **Respectful Class Behavior**

Students will be expected to adhere to the following rules of respect:

- No unrelated activities are allowed during class. For example, although you are allowed to bring your phone and computer into class, you are not allowed to play video games, engage in social networking or work on assignments for other classes. If you are caught doing so, you will be asked to refrain or leave class.
- The class will be mostly discussion based, so students are expected to listen carefully to others and not to interrupt anyone in a rude manner.

### **Timely Submission and Formatting of Assignments**

All assignments are expected to be submitted on the due date before 11:59pm via Blackboard. Late assignments will be penalized by a 25% deduction in the grade for every day you are late. Extensions will only be offered in unique cases. The tests are to be taken during the time allotted in the lecture hall.

Please submit all assignments on Blackboard as a word document, using font 12, double-spacing and 1 inch margins. Students are expected to use proper English and assignments should be free of typos and grammatical /spelling mistakes. Please use the APA style when citing sources used.

### **Feedback from Instructor**

Students are highly encouraged to seek the instructor outside of class if facing difficulty with the class material. If a student would like feedback on assignments before the time of submission, they can submit a copy of the assignment one week before it is due for comment from the instructor.

Students will be asked to fill out a formal course evaluation both in the middle and at the end of semester. Your feedback on the course and recommendations for improvement are highly valued.

### **Academic Accommodations**

Any students with disabilities or special needs who need special accommodations are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor. They are also encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office. Veterans and student soldiers with special circumstances or who are called to duty are also encouraged to notify the instructor in advance.

### **Academic Honesty**

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at [www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty](http://www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty).

## **COMM 316 Course Schedule**

*(Please note that all required readings are to be completed by the start of the week)<sup>1</sup>*

Week 1 (8/25 & 8/27)

### **Introduction to Intercultural Communication and Overview of Syllabus**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 1 & 2 in Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

**Work due:** Be sure to have picked out your intercultural service learning location by the end of this week. Please email me with your choice. If you are having difficulty making a selection, feel free to visit my office to discuss further.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that all footnotes are for the benefit of this assignment and will not be shown to students in the Course Design.

Week 2 (9/1 & 9/3)

### **Immigration**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 8 in Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

**Work due:** None.

Week 3 (9/8 & 9/10)

### **9/8: Verbal Issues in Intercultural Communication**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 6 in Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

**Work due:** None.

### **9/10: Cross-Cultural Interview Skills Workshop<sup>2</sup>**

**Required Readings:** Come prepared with a list of possible interviewees for your Cross-Cultural Communication Interview Paper. Brainstorm possible questions you might want to include in the interview. Coming prepared will allow you to gain the maximum benefit out of the workshop.

**Work due:** None.

Week 4 (9/15 & 9/17)

### **9/15: Non-verbal Issues in Intercultural Communication**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 7 in Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

**Work due:** None.

### **9/17: Group Activity on Non-Verbal Issues in Intercultural Communication.**

**Required Readings:** None.

**Work due:** *Journal Entry 1 due on 9/19/2014.*

Week 5 (9/22 & 9/24)

### **Cultural Perspectives Case Study Discussion**

**Required Readings:** Case studies will be sent one week prior via Blackboard.

**Work due:** None.

Week 6 (9/29 & 10/1)

### **9/29: Culture & Media Case Study Discussion**

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<sup>2</sup> We will be discussing how to successfully conduct an interview with a person from another culture and how to design an interview protocol for the Cross-cultural Communication Interview Paper. Students will be divided in groups to discuss their selections and ideas for the interview.

**Required Readings:** Case studies will be sent one week prior via Blackboard.

**Work due:** None.

**10/1: Group Activity “Intercultural Video Analysis & Role Play”<sup>3</sup>**

**Required Readings:** None.

**Work due:** *Journal Entry 2 due on 10/3/2014.*

Week 7 (10/6 & 10/8)

**Popular Culture**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 9 in Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

**Work due:** *Cross-cultural Communication Interview Paper due on 10/10/2014.*

Week 8 (10/13 & 10/15)

**10/13: Developing Intercultural Relationships**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 10 in Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

**Work due:** None.

**10/15: Group Activity on movie Crash<sup>4</sup>**

**Required Readings:** Watch movie Crash.

**Work due:** *Journal Entry 3 due on 10/17/2014.*

Week 9 (10/20 & 10/22)

**Intercultural Communication & Tourism**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 10 in Experiencing Intercultural Communication.

**Work due:** *Test 1 will be held at 10/22/2014 during class time.*

Week 10 (10/27 & 10/29)

**10/27: Cultural Identity**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 5 in Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

**Work due:** None.

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<sup>3</sup> Students will be shown 2-3 short YouTube clips during class time, depicting scenarios between individuals from different cultures. Students will be asked to work in groups and discuss what they observed and why it happened. They will then enact a role play activity where they will need to recognize how each person felt during the interaction, as well as discuss other aspects which will be brought up in class.

<sup>4</sup> Students will be get together in groups to analyze selected characters and discuss intercultural issues present in the movie.



### **10/29: Group Activity on Hotel Rwanda<sup>5</sup>**

**Required Readings:** Watch movie Hotel Rwanda.

**Work due:** *Journal Entry 4 due on 10/31/2014.*

Week 11 (11/3 & 11/5/2014)

### **Intercultural Communication & Business**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 11 in Experiencing Intercultural Communication.

**Work due:** *Personal Reflections Paper (Mid-term Essay) due on 11/7/2014.*

Week 12 (11/10 & 11/12)

### **11/10: Conflict & Negotiation**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 11 in Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

**Work due:** None.

### **11/12: Group Activity “Creating Imaginary Cultures”<sup>6</sup>**

**Required Readings:** None.

**Work due:** *Journal Entry 5 due on 11/14/2014.*

Week 13 (11/17 & 11/19)

### **Intercultural Communication & Health**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 13 in Experiencing Intercultural Communication.

**Work due:** None.

Week 14 (11/24 & 11/26)

### **11/24: Intercultural Communication & Education**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 12 in Experiencing Intercultural Communication.

**Work due:** None.

### **11/26: Group Activity “What does the Photo say?”<sup>7</sup>**

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<sup>5</sup> Students will get together in groups during class time to analyze selected characters and discuss intercultural issues present in the movie.

<sup>6</sup> The class will be divided into teams and each team will create its own culture, including an invented history, traditions, behavioral preferences, body language, rules of social interaction, etc. Teams will then present their cultures and interact with other teams. Finally, representatives from each culture will express their assumptions and thoughts about the other culture. We will then open up discussion about the experience.

<sup>7</sup> Photos depicting intercultural interactions will be presented to class. Working in groups, students will discuss who they think is being depicted in the photo, what is the context at hand, etc. Students will

**Required Readings:** None.

**Work due:** *Journal Entry 6 due on 11/28/2014.*

Week 15 (12/1 & 12/3)

### **Intercultural Communication Competence**

**Required Readings:** Chapter 12 in Intercultural Communication in Contexts.

**Work due:** None.

Week 16 (12/8 & 12/10)

**Intercultural Service Learning Final Presentations.** *Group 1 will present on 12/8/2014 and Group 2 will be on 12/10/2014.*

Week 17 (12/15)

**Test 2 will be held at 12/15/2014 during class time.**

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then be asked to create a short imaginary dialogue between the individuals in the picture and enact a role play. Finally, a representative from each group will present the group findings.

# COMM 316 Assignment Sheets and Assessment Rubrics

## Class Attendance/Participation

As mentioned prior, you will be expected to attend all classes and to complete the readings required ahead of time. If you miss class more than three times, you will be penalized and your grade will be adjusted accordingly.

Excused absences will only be awarded in cases of university-related cases (sports, conferences, etc.) or extreme cases such as hospitalization, death of a close relative or a natural disaster. Documentation will be required. In the case of an excused absence or absence because of an extreme situation, students will be allowed to make up work at a later date without penalty.

The nature of the course is mainly discussions, workshops and group activities, so class participation is extremely important. Class Attendance/Participation is worth 10 points of your final grade.

### Evaluation Rubric for Class Attendance/Participation

**Excellent (8-10 points)**      **Acceptable (5-7 points)**      **Poor (0-4 points)**

	<b>Excellent (8-10 points)</b>	<b>Acceptable (5-7 points)</b>	<b>Poor (0-4 points)</b>
<b>Regularity</b>	Regularly attends class.	Attends class fairly regularly.	Is frequently absent.
<b>and</b>	Always contributes to discussion with thoughtful comments and relevant analysis and/or questions.	Sometimes contributes to class discussion with thoughtful comments and questions.	Rarely or never contributes to class discussion.
<b>Quality</b>	Appropriately challenges concepts when need be.		

## **Intercultural Service Learning Journal**

In the first week of class, you will select a place to visit to experience and reflect on for the first half of the semester. This place must be a location that you would not usually visit, with people from a different cultural background than yourself. It could be a campus organization, a religious organization, or community organization. You will be expected to write a journal entry reflecting on your weekly experiences at this organization, including any cross-cultural interactions you may have, as well as your thoughts and reactions during your time there. You should also make sure to connect your writing to the key terminologies and concepts learned in class. Furthermore, please reflect on how experience is allowing for your own personal development or growth.

Make sure to email me your organization of choice within the first week after the start of the semester. You will not be allowed to pick the same organization as someone else in class (I will be using a “first come, first serve” rule).

Each journal entry should be around 1 -2 pages and will cover your experiences during the previous two weeks. Please submit the assignment on Blackboard as a word document, using font 12, double-spacing and 1 inch margins. Students are expected to use proper English and assignments should be free of typos and grammatical /spelling mistakes.

The Intercultural Service Learning Journal is worth 15 points of your final grade (2.5 points each). You will be expected to submit a journal entry on average every two weeks. The last three weeks you will not be required to submit a journal entry so as to leave time for you to prepare you Intercultural Service Learning Final Presentation and Test 2. In total, there will be 6 journal entries due on 9/19, 10/3, 10/17, 10/31 and 11/14, 11/28 due at the end of each day at 11:59 pm.

## **Evaluation Rubric for Intercultural Service Learning Journal**

### **Content (75%)**

- Detailed description of service learning session (reveals situation and dynamics in a vivid manner).
- Rich use of metaphors and examples.
- Reflection on experiences at the organization and interactions.
- Connects findings to material covered in lectures or class discussions.
- Provides insight into implications of events (provides some original thought not provided in class on how experience is encouraging any personal growth).

### **Organization (15%)**

- Logically organized (well-structured; has a clear beginning, body and conclusion).
- Connections among paragraphs are smooth and clearly expressed.
- Introduction outlines what reader introduces topics and outlines the concepts to be addressed.
- Effective closing (synthesizes paper, reframes key points, and brings closure).

### **Mechanics/Quality of Writing (10%)**

- Interesting and vivid word choice.
- No incomplete or run-on sentences.
- No spelling, punctuation or grammatical mistakes.
- Paper is properly formatted according to APA guidelines.
- Any references are properly cited and referenced.
- Adheres to mechanics of assignment (e.g. no of pages, spacing).

## **Cross-cultural Communication Interview Paper**

Conduct a face-to-face interview with a person who is from, or has lived for a substantial period of time—3 years or more—in a culture or environment other than your own. For this assignment, culture is typically defined as racial, place of origin, ethnic, but could also extend to other types of cultural groups we have discussed in class.

The interview will allow you to listen and hear perspectives from a person from a different culture and engage in a positive dialogue around the issues this person has faced living in this culture. You will have to frame questions within the context of being an outsider to their culture, but otherwise you are given flexibility in the type of topics you would like to address. Possible questions could revolve around the major beliefs or values of the culture, interesting cultural customs and practices, or what might be needed to build greater understanding between this culture and other groups.

It may also be helpful to observe this person (or another member of this chosen culture) in their natural setting, though this is not required. Try to get specific stories or examples from the interviewee from their own personal experiences, which will be useful when writing your paper. The interview is expected to last around 30 to 45 minutes. Please note that we will be conducting **a Cross-Cultural Interview Skills Workshop on 9/10** to guide you in the interview process. The following will be required:

- Develop a set of written interview questions to use in your interview (an interview protocol). Please note you do not need to use all of these questions or necessarily ask them in the order they are presented. Make sure to use the background research you have gathered to inform which questions you include. You will also be asked to submit this.
- It is advisable to audio-record and transcribe the interview. Please make sure to obtain permission from your interviewee first. If the interviewee does not accept to be recorded, it will be helpful to take extensive notes during the interview.

- Research various sources (the internet or the library) to gain some background knowledge about this person's culture. Present a summary of your key findings from these readings (around 1-2 pages long). Make sure to properly cite your sources and list them at the end of your paper. This should also help prepare you for the interviewee and inform what questions you might like to ask.
- Analyze the interview responses and present a summary of the findings. This is in the form of a written essay (around 3-4 pages long). This essay should not be a verbatim listing of the interviewee's answers to your questions, but instead a reflection on what you learnt and how this interview experience might influence your communication with other cultures in the future. Make sure to include an analysis of the findings in the context of what we have discussed in class. However, it is okay to quote the interviewee in specific instances, where a first-hand account might be valuable.

Please submit the assignment on Blackboard as a word document, using font 12 and double-spacing and 1 inch margins. Students are expected to use proper English and assignments should be free of typos and grammatical /spelling mistakes. Please use the APA style when citing sources used.

The Cross-cultural Communication Interview Paper is worth 20 points of your final grade and is due on 10/10/2014 at 11:59 pm.

## **Evaluation Rubric for Cross-cultural Communication Interview Paper**

### ***Content (60%)***

- Effectively conveys interview research and background on interviewee's culture.
- Paints a clear picture of what was learned from the interview, including preconceptions, whether they were confirmed, and any unexpected information garnered.
- Connects findings to material covered in lectures or class discussions.
- Reflective and insightful (provides some original thought not provided in lectures or class discussion). Provides an analysis of interviewee's responses and lessons learnt from interview.

### ***Organization (20%)***

- Logically organized (well-structured; has a clear beginning, body and conclusion)
- Connections among paragraphs are smooth and clearly expressed.
- Introduction outlines what reader is to expect in the essay and draws reader in.
- Effective closing (synthesizes paper, reframes key points, and brings closure)

### ***Interview Protocol (10%)***

- Questions relate to cultural background of the interviewee and demonstrate solid research on interviewee's culture.
- Questions are clear, creative and appropriate.
- Questions follow each other in logical order.

### ***Mechanics/Quality of Writing (10%)***

- Interesting and vivid word choice.
- No incomplete or run-on sentences.
- No spelling, punctuation or grammatical mistakes.
- Paper is properly formatted according to APA guidelines.
- Any references are properly cited and referenced.
- Adheres to mechanics of assignment (e.g. no of pages, spacing).



## Personal Reflections Paper (Mid-term Essay)

*Each student is to write a 5-7 page paper describing their experiences and observations with intercultural communication. The paper should:*

1. Provide a history of the major cultural influences on your life and how you were first exposed to cultures outside of your own. This should include some context on how your own personal and professional development has shaped your identity as a cultural being (i.e. how you communicate with friends and family; how you communicate in formal settings; your use of non-verbal communication;; channels of communication you rely on, etc.)
2. Describe in detail a specific circumstance in which you experienced or witnessed a cultural misunderstanding or miscommunication because of intercultural differences.
3. Identify the factors which you hypothesize contributed to this conflict (e.g. values you may have, biases, etc.). You are expected to specifically refer to concepts or theories which we have discussed in class (i.e. intellectually contextualize your experience in light of what have learnt in the course and in light of broader literature). Please cite any sources you provide in a bibliography.
4. Describe lessons or insights you gained from this experience and how you might prevent a similar occurrence in the future. For example, you might reflect on how a specific of theory or model you learnt in class will help you change your behavior or practice in the future.

This is an assignment that is meant to be comprehensive in nature and will require considerable time spent in self-reflection, as well as in researching and planning materials we have covered in class or from outside sources.

Please submit the assignment on Blackboard as a word document, using font 12 and double-spacing and 1 inch margins. Students are expected to use proper English and assignments should be free of typos and grammatical /spelling mistakes. Please use the APA style when citing sources used. The Personal Reflections Paper is worth 20 points of your final grade and is due on 11/7/2014 at 11:59 pm.

## Evaluation Rubric for Personal Reflections Paper

### ***Content (70%)***

- Includes a personal history of the major cultural influences on your life.
- Demonstrates an ability to self-assess, by openly discussing values, biases or other factors which may have led to cultural misunderstanding experienced.
- Contextualizes personal experience in light of both course concepts and broader literature on the topic.
- Reflects on lessons learned and provides original insight not provided in lectures or class discussion.
- Overall: Well-developed paper, interesting narrative and creatively written.

### ***Organization (20%)***

- Logically organized (well-structured; has a clear beginning, well-developed body and conclusion).
- Connections among paragraphs are smooth and clearly expressed.
- Introduction outlines what reader is to expect in the essay and draws reader in.
- Effective closing (synthesizes paper, reframes key points, and brings closure).

### ***Mechanics/Quality of Writing (10%)***

- Interesting and vivid word choice.
- No incomplete or run-on sentences.
- No spelling, punctuation or grammatical mistakes.
- Paper is properly formatted according to APA guidelines.
- Any references are properly cited and referenced.
- Adheres to mechanics of assignment (e.g. no of pages, spacing).

## **Intercultural Service Learning Presentation**

At the end of the semester, you will be asked to present an organized and thought-provoking oral presentation on your service learning intercultural experience over the course of the semester (primarily based on your journal writings). Aside from introducing your culture of choice (i.e. the organization you selected), you should also present pertinent issues surrounding the culture and what you have learnt from the experience. The purpose is not only to share what you have learnt, but to also “teach” the class about the culture you were studying – so you have to engage the class to the best of your ability.

The presentations will be distributed into two groups: Group 1 will be on 12/8/2014 and Group 2 will be on 12/10/2014. Please make a copy of your presentation available to me on Blackboard by the end of 12/10/2014. The presentation should take 5-8 minutes, with 5 minutes left for Q&A with the class.

The Intercultural Service Learning Presentation is worth 15 points of your final grade.

## **Evaluation Rubric for Intercultural Service Learning Presentation**

### ***Content (50%)***

- Appropriate amount of content for time allotted.
- The presentation should:
  - Present the culture of choice, as well as pertinent issues about the culture.
  - Focus on the student's own experience and lessons learnt during service learning (including sharing of examples /stories).
- Response to questions (demonstrates good knowledge of the topic; explains and answers all questions adequately and with ease).
- Quality of Conclusion (not abrupt; wraps up presentation; and ties to previous material).

### ***Delivery (30%)***

- Effective use of non-verbal communication (e.g. eye-contact)
- Appropriate pacing through presentation
- Clean enunciation and use of vocal variety (tone, inflection, emphasis)
- No heavy reliance on notes
- Engages classroom space through energy and excitement for the topic
- Deliberately engages the classroom (e.g. asking questions, gauging their knowledge on certain points, etc.)

### ***Organization (20%)***

- Logically organized in a manner which audience can easily follow (well-structured; presentation has a clear beginning, body and conclusion)
- Outline is included (give students' a 'roadmap' of what you will be presenting)
- Appropriate and smooth transitions
- Presentation completed within time allotted.

## **Test 1 and Test 2**

These tests will consist of both multiple choice and true/false questions. Test 1 will cover the material covered until the day of the exam. Test 2 will be a comprehensive test of all material covered during the semester. Each test is worth 10 points of your final grade and will be held during class time.

# Essay on Evidence for Course Design

## Introduction

As can be seen from my course design, I have attempted to incorporate active learning to the fullest extent possible. There is a mounting body of evidence on the importance of active learning, generally defined as any teaching method which involves students in the learning process rather than having them merely as spectators (Bain, 2004; Barkley, 2010; Bonwell & Eison, 1991). In essence, it necessitates that students take part in meaningful activities while thinking about what they are doing. Although primarily considered a fundamental departure from the customary mode of instruction, it has now become widely accepted in the world of teaching. In fact, the National Research Council suggests that course designs should make every effort to incorporate active learning environments not only in smaller classes, but “even in large section, lecture-dominated courses” (National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council, 1999). Bransford et al. (2000), in their book *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experiences, and School* confirmed that active learning can help students “*learn by doing, receive feedback, and continually refine their understanding and build new knowledge*” (p.1).

Active learning also has the ability to go beyond a one-way imparting of information to the more advanced goal of shaping students’ long-term behavioral dispositions and cognitive development (Ritchhart, 2002). As Ritchhart explains, “*what stays with us from our education are patterns: patterns of behavior, patterns of thinking, patterns of interaction. These patterns make up our character, specifically our intellectual character*” (Ritchhart, 2002, p. 9). Active learning can support students in acquiring not only declarative knowledge (i.e. factual knowledge), but perhaps more significantly, procedural knowledge (i.e. how to do something)

(Michael, 2006). Active learning has also been shown to have a multitude of other benefits, including improving students' attitudes, enhancing critical thinking skills, and boosting retention of class material (Braxton et al., 2008). In fact, students who underwent active learning processes tested twice as high on their conceptual understanding when compared to those who had learnt in traditional learning environments (Prince, 2004). It is also considered to be an overall predictor of student achievement at the undergraduate level, as well as a contributor to a student's likelihood of persisting to program completion (Braxton et al., 2008; Hake, 1998; Laws et al., 1999; Redish et al., 1997). Another added benefit is that active learning allows for the instructor to receive immediate feedback on students' understanding of the course material, allowing the instructor to adjust or alter course material if need be (Mazur, 1997).

### **Reasoning behind Activities including in the Course Design**

The activities included in my course have all been carefully designed around learning outcomes. In particular, I focus on the following engagement scales: (1) active learning (actively construing knowledge); (2) enriching educational experiences; and (3) creating a supportive learning environment (three of the six engagement scales outlined by Coates (2009)). In line with the above, I specifically incorporated a significant number of active learning activities. Aside from allowing for multiple methods of assessment of students with different learning abilities and learning styles, the variety of activities included should students help make multiple links between the information being acquired and existing knowledge (Mintzes et al., 1998). In what follows, I will detail in greater length evidence in support of the most important

aspects of my course design, namely the interactive class discussions, service learning, writing activities, and group activities:

- **Classroom Discussions**

Classroom discussions are one of the most important methods of active learning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). As such, I have heavily integrated this into my course design. In fact, discussions, whether taking place in small groups or in the larger classroom, are consistently favored over lectures on a number of criteria, such as problem solving, depth of understanding, and motivation for further learning (Bligh, 2000; Hiebert et al., 1996). They also can add great value often not existent in the “dry” textbook materials. Discussions also serve the purpose of increasing students’ awareness of their own opinions and of others (Gall & Gillet, 2001). Research experiments have also shown that discussions can help students change their opinions after evaluation, as well as have a more open mind towards the views of others (Fisher, 1968). Interestingly, discussions also inspire students to be more effective when solving a problem they have been presented, requiring them to “draw on the diverse talents of their peers, which have multiple solutions, and which commit students to a course of action” (Gall & Gall, 1976, p. 6).

- **Service Learning**

As can be seen, service learning forms an important portion of my course design. Service learning is considered to be a form of experiential education, which draws on multiple knowledge sources (i.e. academic, experience and community practice) (Furco, 1996). Aside from allowing students to make connections with the course content, it also is an opportunity for students to engage in a relevant and meaningful service to a community outside of their



own. One reason that I specifically included it in my course design it to provide students with the opportunity to apply knowledge learned in class to new situations (Singham, 2005). It is often advised that service learning be coupled with critical reflection activities, either written or oral, to help ensure the service learnings' connection to academic course content (Cress, 2005). To achieve this, I have incorporated an intensive journal writing requirement, as well as a presentation requirement, to encourage students to reflect and document their experiences. Other favorable outcomes of service learning with regards to intercultural communication courses include an enhanced sense of identity, reduced stereotyping and enhanced appreciation of diversity (Eyler et al., 2003). It also is said to engender in students a consideration of the complexity of intercultural issues, as well as a deeper awareness of self (Eyler et al., 1996).

- **Writing Activities**

Writing activities, such as journal writing, the interview paper and the personal reflections paper, also feature strongly in my course design. I have included these in consideration of the solid evidence which indicates that writing fosters students' analytical abilities and assists them in deliberating on the issues at stake. Writing is also invaluable in aiding students to successfully articulate knowledge they have acquired by synthesizing and placing the material in context (Chi, 1994; Rivard & Straw, 2000). The writing topics in my course design were also selected so that students could personalize the topic area, which is said to lead to better, more permanent learning (Angelo & Cross, 1993). Finally, writing is also quite useful as an assessment method in terms of providing feedback for the instructor on the extent to which students are comprehending the material (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

- **Group Activities**

Group activities are generally considered to be highly effective as an active learning strategy (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Johnson et al. (2000), who performed a meta-analysis of more than 150 studies, presents considerable evidence on how group activities assist students in learning assigned materials. Interestingly, they can also help students learn significantly more than they would if they were working in isolation (Bossert, 1989; Blumenfeld et al., 1996).

In particular, group activities which encourage participants to converse and articulate their understanding of the subject matter have been greatly lauded in the literature (Michael, 2006). As such, I have integrated a numerous amount of role play activities during class time, which aim to achieve just that. These include activities such as *“What does the Photo Say?”*, *“Intercultural Video Analysis & Role Play”* and the *“Role Play for Non-Verbal Issues in Intercultural Communication”*. These activities will allow students to portray an intercultural role in a fictitious, but judgment free environment (Bartle, 2004).

In courses such as intercultural communication, role play activities are said to be exceptionally useful in enhancing students’ appreciation of cultural differences and in teaching cultural awareness (e.g. Etkin & Snyder, 1972; Huyack, 1975; Teahan, 1975). This is mainly because they emphasize the social nature of learning and stimulate students not only intellectually, but emotionally (Joyce & Weil, 2000). Curiously, they also encourage students to become more empathetic towards others. In a study on the topic, Poorman (2002) found a noteworthy increase among students in feeling another’s suffering as their own. Students who enacted role plays of enslaved African Americans in a history class also reported feeling greater compassion towards people of the time than they would have otherwise (Steindorf, 2001).

Overall, group activities such as this are tremendously valuable in improving interpersonal and communication skills with others (Huyack, 1975), one of the main objectives of the course.

One additional benefit of role play activities is the sense of fun they bring to the classroom (Mackay, 2001; Bowen, 2012). As explained by Dr. Ellen Langer, a well-known social psychologist and teacher (Public Broadcasting Service, 1998), *“what's interesting to me is that when people are at play, they are mindfully engaged... Play isn't play unless the mind is there. It's not something that you want to run away from and let your muscles just do it while you're sleeping; you want to be there because it's fun to be there [...] so truths are context dependent. When you realize that, that things look different from different perspectives, then you stay tuned in”*. In the context of intercultural communication, role playing exercises such as the ones I have incorporated can hopefully entertain students, as well as train them to become competent in communicating with other cultures (Bartle, 2004).

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