



Intercultural Competence Course Syllabus

Summer Term 2008

Course Description

This course focuses on introductory Intercultural Competence (ICC) vocabulary, theory and concepts designed to build personal, academic and professional skills for those seeking to become more effective intercultural leaders in our increasingly interconnected society. The course is intended to link students' real-time cultural interactions and experiences with formal academic theory of intercultural competence. Coursework, experiential activities and reflection will support students' exploration of ICC applications and implications as they move towards shaping their own cultural identity and world views.

Course Methods

This course consists of five broadly defined learning schemas: in-class intensive, student-centered, teacher-guided exploration of fundamental cultural learning and core competencies; culture-general and culture-specific learning modules; readings, discussion and lectures; hands-on participation in community-based service projects; independent culture and language study through observation, reflection, research and directed debriefing sessions.

Course Definition of Intercultural Competence

Intercultural Competence can be measured by desired external and internal outcomes. Desired external outcomes are behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some degree. Desired internal outcomes include informed frame of reference shifts through adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative view and empathy.

-Deardorff, D.K. (2006) Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Fall, 240-266.

Intrax Study Abroad's Intercultural Competence course is supported by additional programmatic design including language study, community-based learning, travel, independent research and reflection. This course is intended to be interwoven and deliberately linked through experiential learning to ALL Intrax's study abroad activities.

Course Goals

- Define culture and its relationship to intercultural competence
- Apply frameworks that help assess and monitor the development of one's own intercultural competence
- Provide a safe, engaging and experiential learning environment for intercultural competence skill acquisition
- Explicitly extract the cultural learning of the study abroad experience inside and outside of the classroom
- Connect intercultural competence theory to intercultural competence practice through classroom work and hands-on experience, observation and reflection
- Examine diversity and commonalities among people of various backgrounds
- Become familiar with relevant concepts of culture and intercultural interaction, such as individualism/collectivism, high and low context cultures, activity orientations, monochronic and polychronic time, verbal and nonverbal communication
- Explore effective intercultural competence skills as they apply to future work settings in regards to cross-cultural communication, conflict resolution and team/relationship building

- Identify the global skills acquired through intercultural competence training, demonstrate their fundamental application in cross-cultural career contexts and offer strategies towards lifelong skill acquisition and expansion
- Instill lifelong learning principles and self-directed study skills through independent study, reflective analysis and directed debriefs
- Explicitly link students' language learning and/or 'special topic' studies (specific to the host country's social realities, e.g., business, microfinance, sustainable development, etc.) to theoretical and practical intercultural competence applications
- Connect course content and program experience with students' personal, academic and professional goals

Course Purpose and Learning Objectives

The purpose of the course is to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness positively contributing to students' intercultural identity, study, work and leadership in diverse environments.

Through language coursework, curricular modules, community-based projects, cultural case studies, critical incidents and independent study students will:

- Be able to identify and articulate their own cultural "self"
- Identify a personal working definition of culture and intercultural competence
- Be able to identify and articulate the process of acculturation during an experience abroad, including culture shock, adaptation and re-entry orientation
- Increase knowledge of theories influencing intercultural relations across and within cultures
- Heighten skills of observation, reflection, critical analysis, conflict resolution and problem solving as they relate to intercultural situations
- Acquire and articulate internal monitoring skills and attributes such as adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelativity, humor and empathy when navigating cross-culturally
- Learn and be able to demonstrate the following skills for working effectively in a diverse working and/or learning environment:
 - Intercultural communication
 - Intercultural conflict resolution
 - Building relationships/team building
- Be able to identify and articulate specific transferable skills acquired during the study abroad experience and intercultural competence coursework for future career planning – resume incorporation, interviewing strategies, job searching resources
- Be able to identify explicit links and articulate interchangeable skills between intercultural competence theory and language and/or 'special topic' coursework
- Increase self-directed study and independent research skills
- Gain global skills necessary for successful navigation in diverse work teams both academically and professionally

Requirements

- Enrolled in accredited U.S. college or university
- 2.5 GPA
- An unofficial transcript and a pre-approved credit transfer form from home institution (*only necessary for those students seeking academic credit*)

Evaluation

Attendance and participation in discussions	25%
Learning Agreement	10%
Journals	20%
Writing Assignments	10%
Independent study project & presentation	35%

Assignments Defined

Learning Agreement: Students will be responsible for completing and following a Learning Agreement. Students will:

- **Increase academic competencies.** Students will expand their knowledge and skills in intercultural competence, language, community-based service work and independent study along with their ability to apply academic theory to practical experiences.
- **Expand professional skills.** Students will acquire necessary global skills in today's diverse and global work environment including oral and written communication, problem solving and decision-making, teamwork, and interpersonal and cultural competencies.
- **Encourage personal development.** Students will gain clarity in their academic and career directions, clarify personal values, assess developmental needs, and attain a greater sense of global responsibility.

Independent Study Project (ISP): Students will be responsible for choosing one specific concept or issue related to the field of intercultural competence, language learning and/or 'special topic' studies and conduct an independent study project. The project should be a synthesis of the intercultural competence training, language learning and/or 'special topic' studies acquired on program in addition to some original research and conclusions presented by the student. The project can include but is not limited to interviews, field research, a critical incident, a case study, web-based research, current event research, etc. Students will be required to identify the independent study project topic, set learning objectives, integrate aspects of their Learning Agreement, conduct approximately 5 hours of independent research, participate in Process Modules and 1-on-1 meetings with their ICC facilitator, write a 4-6 page paper on their topic and do a short presentation for the group during their final days of the course.

Project Goals:

- Instill the importance of and expose students to independent study and research skills
- Impart life-long learning principles, academic responsibility and ownership towards intercultural competence, language and 'special topic' coursework
- Maintain experiential learning methods during field studies component of curricular design
- Synthesize students' intercultural competence training, language learning and/or 'special topic' studies
- Encourage students to contribute to the field of intercultural competence through innovative and self-identified research topics

Process Modules:

In addition to independent research and study, students will attend 5 two-hour Process Modules throughout the final two weeks on program. The Process Modules will be led by the ICC facilitator in order to advise and direct students on their ISP and facilitate reflection and analysis during field-based activities: excursions, hands-on projects, observations, critical incidents, etc. Process Modules will be held in the evenings so students will be able to apply the days' activities, research and experiences towards discussion, critical thinking and directed reflection. An example of Process Module themes are:

- PM1-** A comparative analysis and reflection of personal learning-styles: classroom verse field-based studies
- PM2-** Utilizing Intercultural Competence applications and skills during students' ISP
 - What has been successful? What have the challenges been?
- PM3-** Linking ICC with program's Special Topic or language acquisition
 - How did today's activities (service project work? excursion? field-based studies) deepen your comprehension of ICC or "Special Topic" concepts?
- PM4-** ISP seminar
 - Peer advising on ISP and process
- PM5-** Designing an ISP presentation for multi-cultural audience

1-on-1 ISP advisor meetings:

In addition to attending Process Modules, students will be responsible for scheduling individual meetings with their ICC facilitator in order to ensure maximum learning, appropriate research methods, effective data collection and articulate synthesis of their conclusions.

Course Workbook: Students are responsible for maintaining an ongoing narrative of experiences, reflections, questions and observations in the form of a learning journal. This task is intended to provide students with a space for working through issues raised during class discussion, assigned readings, service project work, host-culture interactions and in-country experiences of daily life. Much of the work done in students' journals will be applicable to the Learning Agreement, Independent Study Project and Final Portfolio.

Recommended Course Reading List

1. Chapter: "What is Culture Anyway?"
In Paige, M (2006) *Maximizing Study Abroad*. Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN.
2. Article: Out of House and Home
Condon, J. & Yousef, F. (1975). "Out of House and Home." *Toward Internationalism: Readings in Cross-Cultural Communication*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.
3. Chapter: "Strategies for Developing Intercultural Competence"
In Paige, M (2006) *Maximizing Study Abroad*. Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN.
4. Chapter 5: "Important Values Orientation for the Sojourner"
Cornes, A. (2004). *Culture from the Inside Out*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Academic Honesty

Intrax Study Abroad expects that every student will submit his or her own original work on all written assignments. Plagiarism in any form at any time is not tolerated on study abroad programs and will result in *at least* a failing grade and revocation of the students' right to a transcript for this course. All materials from both printed and electronic sources must be appropriately cited. Any questions about these terms may be directed to Intrax Study Abroad's Academic Relations Manager.

Course Content

Topic 1: In-Country Orientation, Course introduction

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and articulate various models and concepts and stages of culture shock, cultural transition and adaptation
- Access resources on coping strategies and mental well-being for cultural transitions and productive learning on program
- Articulate realistic expectations about their coursework and new learning and living environment
- Identify and describe their academic responsibilities, both those set by their coursework and those set by their personal Learning Agreement

Topic 2: Understanding Culture and Intercultural Competence

Learning Objectives:

- Define and elaborate on terms like culture, intercultural competence, global skills, globalization, etc.
- Differentiate between stereotyping, generalizations and cultural patterns
- Understand how today's global climate impacts the need for intercultural competence

Topic 3: Cultural Self-Awareness, The Process of Cultural Conditioning

Learning Objectives:

- Define terms such as 'cultural lens,' 'other,' 'cultural beings,' 'self-awareness' and 'cultural identity'
- Reflect, analyze critically and articulate the evolution of their own cultural identity
- Construct a 'multicultural self' model to illustrate the many layers of their own cultural self
- Analyze this model to think critically and reflectively on how their cultural identity effects interactions with different cultural identities

Topic 4: Cultural Learning, Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), Intercultural Competence Skills

Learning Objectives:

- Define and discuss the terms and concepts ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism
- Describe and interpret several development models and frameworks of intercultural competence / sensitivity
- Explain the six stages of Bennett's model of intercultural sensitivity and reflect on where they may fall individually on this continuum
- List specific skills and traits that individuals need to navigate cross-culturally in an effective and appropriate manner
- Identify culturally competent methods, skills and traits for conducting effective and appropriate research during their independent study project

Topic 5: Intercultural Communication: Communication Styles, Non-verbal Communication, Cultural Values Orientation

Learning Objectives:

- Articulate and illustrate different cultural communication styles in the context of their host-culture as well as culture-general scenarios
- Observe varying non-verbal communication styles and reflect on how such mannerisms affect communication across cultures
- Define and conceptualize the terms "high-context" and "low-context" culture
- Cultural patterns and evaluate, from a meta-level, how different communications styles fit into different cultural regions
- Reflect on and be aware of their own verbal and non-verbal communication styles

Topic 6: Cultural Values Orientation (continued), Community-based Service Project Orientation, Working in Diverse Groups

Learning Objectives:

- Compare and contrast cultural value orientations

- Articulate the theoretical concepts of service learning / community-based service pedagogy and philosophy and extrapolate a working definition applicable to their on-program service project
- Set realistic expectations about the effects of their service project and their contribution to the community

Topic 7: Intercultural Competence in the Workplace, Cross-cultural Conflict Resolution

Learning Objectives:

- Compare and contrast different conflict styles theoretically and analyze specific cultural conflict style observations on program
- Identify the importance of conflict resolutions in a multicultural workplace

Topic 8: Acquiring and Marketing Global Skills, Re-entry Process and Independent Study Presentations

Learning Objectives:

- Students will Produce a working list of the global skills acquired through intercultural competence training
- Articulate the importance of global skills in their future career placements
- Compose a set of expectations about their return to the United States and identify specific cultural transition / re-entry stages and emotions, both conceptually and practically

Total Contact Hours: 40 hrs.