

Soc 169C

Cross-Cultural Communication

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UC Berkeley
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Most of us move in and out, around, and between various cultures throughout our lives. Some of this movement occurs on a daily basis, in subtle ways that we take for granted. The more remarkable cross-cultural experiences are more obvious, because they challenge our assumptions about behavior and meanings. In either case, we usually do not systematically analyze and reflect on our cultural choreographies in daily life. Furthermore, people tend to avoid voluntarily immersing themselves in the kind of challenging social situations that are best at prompting us to examine our core values, identities, and assumptions. Yet such situations are essential for developing empathy, or the ability to recognize and understand people's experiences, and cross-cultural empathy is the foundation for inter-being, especially in the era of globalization and growing ethnocentric nationalisms.

“Cross-cultural communication” invites students out into the field, where they participate in the social world of a particular group that is culturally distinct from themselves. Students practice a reflective form of ethnographic participant observation with the aid of a diverse curriculum. This curriculum covers the practice of fieldwork in addition to substantive texts on the intersections of culture and family life, class, race, social relationships, the workplace, politics, education, gender, romance, and religion. While exploring these topics, we will reflect on—and analyze—our personal experiences and their connections to these social structures, institutions, and cultures.

Goals of this course include: 1) describing and analyzing patterned social and cultural differences; 2) reflecting on personal experience of cultural difference; 3) engaging with a distinct group's social world to meaningfully experience cross-cultural communication; and 4) developing empathy and deeply understanding both ourselves and people who appear different from us.

Note: This class can be taken for 3 or 4 units.

Grade Breakdown for 4 Unit Class:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Group Presentations	10%
Proposal of Cultural Subgroup	5%
Cultural Self-Analysis Paper	15%
Deep Description of Cultural Subgroup	10%
Cross-Cultural Interview Reflection	15%
Cultural Self-Sharing Presentation	5%
Cultural Project Final Paper	25%

Grade Breakdown for 3 Unit Class:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Group Presentations	15%
Proposal of Cultural Subgroup	5%
Option #1: Cultural Self-Analysis Paper	20%

OR

Option #2: Cross-Cultural Interview Reflection	20%
Deep Description of Cultural Subgroup	10%
Cultural Self-Sharing Presentation	5%
Cultural Project Final Paper	30%

Participation and Attendance

Class Attendance is mandatory; missing more than one class will result in a penalty to your grade. Attendance is a condition for doing well, but also requires good participation while present. Please come to class prepared to discuss the week’s reading and/or assignment. Your participation during class is crucial to collective learning. “Participation” does not mean simply speaking out a lot. The content, quality, and depth of your participation are more important than how many times a week you speak.

This class is a seminar that asks you to engage with the material and to be ready to share about how your experiences relate to the class material. Please be mindful of group dynamics so that everybody feels comfortable to speak up. Keeping up with the weekly readings and field work is a condition of possibility for meaningful participation. There will be relatively short, in-class writing and collaboration opportunities to help you.

In-class work cannot be made-up under any circumstances, even if you have a legitimate reason (and evidence) for missing class.

Attention! Students who miss any of the first three weeks may be dropped or otherwise not allowed into the class.

Assignments

NO EXTENSIONS PERMITTED FOR ASSIGNMENTS! Instructions for each assignment will be handed out in class and posted on our BCourses website. All assignments must be printed out and submitted in class. Any late assignments will only be accepted if submitted as a PDF attached to an email to the instructor within one day of the due date and will be penalized a full grade (e.g. an A becomes a B). If you miss this grace period, you will be unable to submit your assignment and you will be given a 0 on it. Please be sure to turn things in on time and before the stated due date/time and please do not ask for an extension.

Group Presentations

Students will prepare a creative and interactive group presentation on one of the week’s topics. The presentation should last at least 30 minutes, and everyone must participate in some capacity during the presentation. We will form groups early in the semester. Each presentation will receive a group grade based on: 1) preparation; 2) creativity, performance, and interaction; and 3) content and meaningful insight.

Self-Analysis Paper

This assignment is a 4-5-page paper on how your personal culture(s) affects your current values, beliefs, and ways of communication. This paper is designed to allow you an opportunity to examine how your own cultural and social identities and history affect your identity. Your paper will be evaluated based on insightfulness, depth of reflection, detailed descriptions/examples, and your analytical approach.

Cross-Cultural Interview Reflection

This assignment compliments the self-analysis essay by requiring you to select a person that is of a different cultural background than yourself and interview them to learn about these differences and how they affect identity. Upon completion of the interview, a 4-5-page reflection should be written that reflects on the interview. What do you learn about yourself in your interview of someone with such a different cultural and personal history? What are key differences/similarities and what do these comparisons say about your own culture and identity?

Self-Sharing Presentations

In the last week of class, we will have a cultural celebration when students bring in something (activity, food, music, game, tradition, etc.) that they feel represents their cultural heritage or cultural identity. You will be required to introduce the cultural artifact, explain its meaning to you and your cultural identity. This celebration is meant to be fun, but also a chance for people to experience, engage, and learn from our class's diversity.

Project Final Paper

A cornerstone of this course is participation in a cultural subgroup throughout the semester. Starting from the second week of class, you should work with me to find an appropriate service opportunity or cultural subgroup that would allow you to: 1) engage relatively regularly with the same community or neighborhood; 2) provide you a space to interact with people who are significantly different from you; and 3) give you some exposure to a subculture in the Bay Area.

The paper is broken down into three assignments: 1) a proposal due in the third week of the course; 2) a deep description due in the middle of the course; and 3) a final paper due during finals week.

You will be required to participate in this subgroup on a weekly or biweekly basis (weekly standard is held for the 4-unit class, whereas the biweekly standard is held for the 3-unit class). Alternative schedules can be worked out, but hours spent on this service project must equal at least 2 hours per week. Please see me if you have questions about what an appropriate subculture would be.

The final paper will be a 10-12-page formal paper (8-10 pages for the 3-unit class) that discusses what you learned from this experience and how you see at least three of the course's themes in the cultural subgroup. It should include reflection that compares your culture(s) with the group's and considers the role of cross-cultural communication the cultural field.

Due dates

Variable: Group Presentations

Week 3, Thursday: Proposal of Cultural Subgroup

Week 6: Cultural Self-Analysis Paper due

Week10: Cross-Cultural Interview Reflection
Week 13: Deep Description of Cultural Subgroup
Week 15: Cultural Self-Sharing Presentation
May 8: Cultural Project Final Paper

Guidelines and Resources

Office Hours

Office hours are an integral part of college learning, and I encourage you to make use of them. Come with questions about course material or any relevant topic for discussion. I ask students to email me to arrange an appointment. This way, we can find a time that works for everybody who wants to meet with me. My email address is: j_kaiser@berkeley.edu. Please allow at least 24 hours for a reply. I usually do not use email over the weekend.

Formatting

All work must be formatted correctly. Familiarize yourself with MLA style formatting. Refer to The Purdue Owl Writing Lab.¹ Then, note the following variations that we use in our course's modified MLA format style:

- single space* the header at the top-left of your first page (name, course, assignment, due date);
- center your creative title above the start of your text;
- no title page;
- use *two spaces* between sentences;
- single space* block quotations;
- 1" margins;
- doubled-spacing;
- pagination;
- 12-point Times New Roman font;
- staple pages together;
- no contractions.

Student Learning Center (SLC)

The SLC provides peer writing tutors. You are expected to make use of their services. You do not need an appointment. Find them in the Chavez Center (<http://slc.berkeley.edu>).

Disability Accommodations

If you need disability-related accommodations in this class please inform the instructor. Students who need academic accommodations should contact the Disability Students Program, 260 Cesar Chavez Center.

NOTE: Plagiarism, broadly put, is the presentation of another's words and/or ideas as one's own. It is grounds not only for automatic failure, but also for administrative disciplinary action. This also applies for other forms of academic dishonesty (a.k.a. cheating). Please see the Berkeley Campus Code of Student Conduct, Section III B, Academic Violations, and Section IV, Disciplinary Procedures.

¹ <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Course Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

-----Week 1-----

Tuesday, 1/17: Introduction to Course

Thursday, 1/19: Culture

C. Wright Mills. *The Promise*.

Miner, Horace. June 1956. "Body Ritual among the Nacirema," *American Anthropologist*, 58 (3).

-----Week 2-----

Tuesday, 1/24 Survey of Cultures and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede, Geert H. *Culture's Consequences: comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (p. 24-31). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001.

Thursday, 1/26 Communication and Cultural Capital

Samovar, Larry A., Richard E. Porter and Edwin R. McDaniel. 2010. "Chapter 1: Communication and Culture: The Challenge of the Future," in *Communication Between Cultures*, Boston: Wadsworth, pp. 1-26. **(AS REFERENCE)**

DiMaggio, Paul. "Cultural Capital and School Success: The Impact of Status Culture Participation on the Grades of US High School Students," *American Sociological Review*. 47 (2) 1982, 189-201.

Handout: Proposal of Cultural Subgroup

Next week we meet in separate sections/days

-----Week 3 (1.31&2.2)-----

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Hall, Stuart. "Foucault: Power, knowledge and discourse." *Discourse theory and practice: A reader* (2001): 72-81.

Axtell, Roger E. 1993. "The Dos and TABOOs of Body Language around the World," in *The Dos and TABOOs around the World*, 3rd ed. Parker Pen Company.

Tannen, Deborah. 1984. "The Pragmatics of Cross-Cultural Communication," *Applied Linguistics*. 5 (3): 189-195.

Proposal of Cultural Subgroup Due

Begin divided Tuesday-Thursday class meetings

Handout: Cultural Self-Analysis Paper

-----Week 4 (2.7&2.9)-----

History and Cultural Patterns; Participant Observation

Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. Ch. 1, "Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research." In *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Harris, Marvin. 1974. "India's Sacred Cow," in *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches: The Riddles of Culture*, Random House.

-----Week 5 (2.14&2.16)-----

Race and Culture; Participant Observation

Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. Ch. 2, "In the Field: Participating, Observing, and Jotting Notes." In *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Cooper, Brittney. "In defense of black rage: Michael Brown, police and the American dream," *Salon.com*, http://www.salon.com/2014/08/12/in_defense_of_black_rage_michael_brown_police_and_the_american_dream/

Anderson, Carol. "Ferguson isn't about black rage against cops. It's white rage against progress." *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ferguson-wasnt-black-rage-against-copsit-was-white-rage-against-progress/2014/08/29/3055e3f4-2d75-11e4-bb9b-997ae96fad33_story.html

Timeline of Black Lives Matter Movement: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-07-14/black-lives-matter-timeline/7585856>

-----Week 6 (2.21&2.23)-----

Interviewing

Weiss, Robert. 1995. Ch. 1, "Introduction" and Ch. 4, "Interviewing." In *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press.

Handout: Cross-Cultural Interview Reflection

Cultural Self-Analysis Paper due

-----Week 7 (2.28&3.2)-----

Education and Culture; Participant Observation

Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. Ch. 3, "Writing up Fieldnotes I: From Field to Desk." In *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Caplan, Nathan, Marcella H. Choy, and John K. Whitmore. 1992. "Academic Achievement in Southeast Asian Refugee Families," from "Indochinese Refugee Families and Academic Achievement," in *Scientific American*, p.36-44.

Manner, Barbara. "Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences in Students," *Journal of College Science Teaching*. March/April 2001.

-----Week 8 3.7&3.9-----

Gender and Culture; Participant Observation

Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. Ch. 4, "Writing Up Fieldnotes II: Creating Scenes on the Page." In *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

- Mead, Margaret. 1963. "Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies," from *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, pp. 279-88. (As a reference)
- Gefen, David. 2005. "If you spoke as she does, sir, instead of the way you do: a sociolinguistics perspective of gender differences in virtual communities," *ACM SIGMIS Database*, 36 (2): 78-92.

-----Week 9 (3.14&3.16)-----

Class and Culture of Poverty; Participant Observation

- Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. Ch. 5, "Pursuing Members' Meanings." In *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Lewis, Oscar. 1961. "Introduction," in *The Children of Sanchez*. New York: Vintage Books, pp xxiii-xliii.
- Cohen, Patricia. 2010. "Culture of Poverty Makes a Comeback." *The New York Times*.

-----Week 10 (3.21&3.23)-----

Religion and Culture; Participant Observation

- Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. Ch. 6, "Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Memoing." In *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Dalgaard-Nielsen, Anja. "Violent Radicalization in Europe: What We Know and What We Do Not Know," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. 33(9): 797-814.
- Henley, John. "How do you deradicalise returning Isis fighters?" *The Guardian*. November 12, 2014.

(Handout: Deep Description of Cultural Subgroup)

Cross-Cultural Interview Reflection due

-----Week 11 (3.28&3.30)-----

Spring break, no class

-----Week 12 (4.4&4.6)-----

Social and Cultural Capital; Participant Observation

- Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. Ch. 7, "Writing an Ethnography." In *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital," In J. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, Greenwood), 241-258.

-----Week 13 (4.11&4.13)-----

Political Life and culture

- Thompson, Derek. March 1, 2016. "Who are Donald Trump Supporters, Really?" *The Atlantic*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/who-are-donald-trumps-supporters-really/471714/>
- Irwin, Neil and Josh Katz. March 12, 2016. "The Geography of Trumpism," *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/13/upshot/the-geography-of-trumpism.html>

Deep Description of Cultural Subgroup due

-----Week 14 (4.18&4.20)-----

Economic Life: Social Media and Workplaces

Nelson, Michelle R. and Hye-Jin Paek. "Cross-Cultural Differences in Sexual Advertising Content in a Transnational Women's Magazine," *Sex Roles*. 53 (5/6): September 2005, 371-383.

Frith, Katherine, Ping Shaw, and Hong Cheng. (March 2005) "The Construction of Beauty: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Women's Magazine Advertising," *Journal of Communication*. 55 (1): 56-70.

De Mente, Boye. 1987. "Japanese Etiquette and Ethics in Business," from *Japanese Etiquette and Ethics in Business, 5th Edition*, Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Business Books, pp. 71-81, 84-89, 91-97.

-----Week 15 (4.25&4.27)-----

Cultural Self-Sharing Presentations

Final Paper due by 2pm Monday, May 8th in my box in 410 Barrows. No electronic or late submissions will be accepted.