

**Soc 169C – Cross-Cultural Communications**  
**University of California, Berkeley**  
**Mondays and Wednesdays, 5-6:30pm**  
**101 Moffitt Library**

**Instructor: Edwin Lin, Fall 2021**

**Email: [edklin@berkeley.edu](mailto:edklin@berkeley.edu)**

**Office Hours, Sign-Up at <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/icwie>**

**Mondays and Wednesdays 1:15pm – 2:45pm**

**492 Social Sciences Building OR via Zoom online**

**Zoom Office Hours Link: <https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/99441395960>**

**Reader: Rachel Park, [ropark@berkeley.edu](mailto:ropark@berkeley.edu)**

***Overview of Course Content:***

With globalization, the Internet, and the general shrinking of time and space, cross-cultural interaction has become a necessity in people's everyday lives. This course approaches the field of cross-cultural communications both on the level of large-scale cultural differences as well as common everyday interactions. Whether one is traveling abroad or just communicating with someone of a different background, the skills of cross-cultural understanding are required for successful communication.

This class is designed to be an applied culture class—one in which we are not interested in academic or theoretical understandings of culture, but rather seeking to apply the concepts of culture in everyday life and society. As such, the class is run as somewhere in between a seminar and a workshop with some guided lectures and case studies to support the overall direction of the course.

In this class, we will interrogate different aspects of cross-cultural communication and cultural differences: race, socioeconomics, family, social relationships, politics, education, gender, and religion. Throughout exploring these topics, we will strive to engage in personal self-reflection, hands-on experience, and to understand the connections to larger social structures.

Specifically, the goals of this course are: 1) to describe, learn, and see common and important patterned social and cultural differences, 2) to provide a space for students to reflect on their own personal experience with cultural difference, and 3) to encourage students to engage with different cultures in a hands-on way and to meaningfully experience and grow in their cross-cultural communication skills.

***Office Hours:***

Feel free to come into office hours for anything, course or life related! Please sign up at the link at the top of the syllabus if you know in advance that you'd like to come in. If you do not sign up, you are still welcome to drop in, but I do sometimes step out of the office/Zoom call when there is no appointment to run a quick errand.

If office hours are full or you cannot make the times, you may email me to set up another time. If you have a very short question, you can try to drop by and sneak in before/after a student for a quick question (as not every student will use the entire 15 minutes they signed up for)—but be prepared to wait patiently as well.

Office hours can be done in-person (487 Social Sciences Building) OR online via Zoom (<https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/99441395960>).

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

***Grade Breakdown for 4 Unit Class:***

Participation	15%
Group Activity	10%
Cultural Self-Analysis Paper	30% Total
Personal Timeline	5%
Interview About You	10%
Paper	15%
Cultural Subgroup Paper	45% Total
Proposal of Cultural Subgroup	5%
Field Report	10%
Deep Description	10%
Final Paper (10-12 pages)	20%

***Grade Breakdown for 3 Unit Class:***

Participation	15%
Group Activity	15%
Cultural Self-Analysis Paper	30% Total
Personal Timeline	5%
Interview About You	10%
Paper	15%
Cultural Subgroup Paper	40% Total
Proposal of Cultural Subgroup	5%
Deep Description	15%
Final Paper (8-10 pages)	20%

**\*\*\*NOTE: Attendance is absolutely mandatory in this class. Missing more than 3 classes will result in an automatic fail for the course. You get two free absences, but the third lowers your grade, the fourth results in an auto-fail.** No actual points are given for attendance (this is somewhat reflected in your participation grade) but attendance will be taken every class. To get credit for attending a class, you must not be more than 10 minutes late and must stay to the very end of the class; otherwise it will be considered an absence. If you have problems with attendance due to an emergency, sports schedule, or health issue, please talk to me early in the semester to see if we can work something out so that you do not fail due to attendance.

**\*\*\*If English is not your first language,** or you have trouble writing in English, there are resources on campus to help in writing your papers.

1. Visit the Student Learning Center (SLC) on UC Berkeley campus. Check out their website and their writing resources at <http://slc.berkeley.edu/writing>
2. Look on the bCourses website for our class. I have posted some resources in a folder labeled "Writing Resources." These are some rather thorough guides written specifically by and for the Sociology department.

### ***Structure of our Class***

The class will be held in person. We will meet all together for the first two and a half weeks of the semester. After that, half the class (designated by the professor) will meet on Mondays while the other half of the class will meet on Wednesdays. This will allow for smaller classroom interactions and hopefully more sharing and relationship building. **You must be able to make BOTH times, however, to join the class** as you do not get to pick which day you will be meeting on. This is also so that if we do need to meet all together, there is no time conflict that will hurt your attendance. More information on this will be given the week before the class split.

### ***Participation***

This class is run somewhat like a discussion section, which means that while I do give lectures and assignments, I also expect you to engage with the material and to be ready to share about how your experiences relate to the class material. The more you are able to share about your experiences, the more other students and yourself will benefit from our discussions, and the better you will do in the class. In this way, the class RELIES on participation and social learning.

Please come to class prepared to discuss the week's reading and/or topic. Your participation during class is crucial to learning, understanding, and growing in your cross-cultural communications. In this class especially, what you get from it is what you put into it, so participation is absolutely key.

“Participation” does not mean simply speaking out a lot. The content, quality, and depth of your participation are just as important as how many times a week you speak. I do take notes and keep record of participation, including large group and small group discussions.

For those of you who may dislike participating in large groups or spontaneous participation, there are several options that I am happy to work out with you. If you are at all concerned about participation, please see me *early* in the semester in office hours to talk about this. But due to the nature of this course's subject matter, sharing about your experiences in class is truly an important and critical part of the course, so I encourage you to put yourself out there!

### ***Group Activity:***

In small groups of 4 or 5, you will be expected to prepare a creative and interactive group activity on one of the week's topics. The activity should last around 20-25 minutes. The week before your group's activity, I will meet with the group after class to briefly talk through the lecture and readings. I invite you to be very creative with these student-led times, from playing games and creating fun activities to presenting interesting examples/case studies and leading debates and discussions. The goal of all these group activities should be **discussion and interaction** in the online classroom.

The groups will be created during the third week of class. These student-led times will receive a group grade and they will be graded based on 1) preparation, 2) discussion and interaction, and 3) meaningful activity. Don't worry—they will be graded in a rather low-stakes way to alleviate any concerns or tensions you have with group projects in general.

### ***Cultural Self-Analysis Paper:***

This assignment is broken down into 3 parts: a personal timeline, an interview done with a family member, and a final analytical and reflective paper.

The first part is a **personal timeline** where you will be asked to construct and submit a timeline of your own biography/history. The exercise is meant as a reflective one, to help prepare

you to write the cultural self-analysis paper and also to interrogate some of the most formative and memorable events that you have experienced in your life so far.

The second part is an **interview about you** where you will conduct an interview/conversation with a close family member about how they perceive or see you. The family member should be someone close to you who has seen you grow up. This could be a mother or father. It could also be a sibling or grandparent who helped raise you. The goal of this interview is to get a third person perspective on who you are. Questions will be provided for you to go through during the interview/conversation. You will submit a recording of the conversation and a short reflective summary of what you learned during the conversation.

The final part is writing the **cultural self-analysis paper**. This assignment is a 4-5-page double-spaced 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.

### ***Cultural Subgroup Paper***

A cornerstone of this course is that you will be required to engage in a cultural subgroup throughout the semester. Starting from the second week of class, you should begin to look for an appropriate (most likely remote) cultural subgroup that would allow you to 1) engage relatively regularly with the same community or group of people, 2) provide you a space to interact with people who are different from you, and 3) give you some exposure to a real subculture community that exists (even in a virtual setting).

The paper is broken down into four assignments: a **proposal** due early in the first month of the course, a **field report (for 4-unit students only)** in the middle of the course, a **deep description** due toward the middle-end of the course, and a **final paper** due during finals week.

You will be required to participate in this subgroup on a weekly or biweekly basis (once or twice a week is the standard for the 4-unit class, whereas once every week or two is the standard for the 3-unit class). Alternative time structures can be worked out, but hours spent on this service project must be relatively equivalent to 2-4 hours per week/2 weeks.

The **proposal** will help identify early in the semester a good subculture and community space (online or in-person) that you can access during this time. Whatever you choose, make sure that this will not put you at any health risk and only what you are comfortable with.

The **field report (for 4-unit students only)** will provide students with some guidance as to how to interact and engage with the cultural subgroup. You will be given instructions of some things to notice and ways to interact and engage with people in the community. You will then be expected to submit a short report on your experiences.

The **deep description** will actually function like writing an early draft of a portion of the final paper. This assignment has you describing key cultural characteristics, norms, or values that you have noticed in the cultural subgroup you have been engaged with. You will end up submitting a 4-5-page paper that provides descriptions and specific examples from your engagement. This will serve as the beginnings of your final paper.

The **final paper** will be a 10-12-page formal paper (8-10 pages for the 3-unit students) that includes the deep description of the cultural traits of the subgroup and what you learned from this experience. The paper will also include self-reflection in terms of how you see their culture as different from yours in various ways and how cross-cultural communication can become important in engaging with the cultural subgroup.

***Grading Scale for the Class:***

A+ (98-100)

A (93-97)

A- (90-92)

B+ (88-89)

B (83-87)

B- (80-82)

C+ (78-79)

C (73-77)

C- (70-72)

D+ (68-69)

D (63-67)

D- (60-62)

F (everything below 60)

## Course Policies (detailed info also available on bCourses)

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED!** The only exception is for approved DSP accommodations and documented extreme emergencies (e.g. hospitalization, death in the family, COVID-19 related issues, etc.). All assignments will all be “handed out” and completed through the bCourses website. There is a one-hour grace period where you can still submit your assignment even though it will be considered late. Late assignments, even assignments just a couple minutes late, are penalized up to a full grade (e.g. up to a 10% deduction). If you miss this grace period, you will be unable to get credit for 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 and time.

\*NOTE: The reason I have a strict policy on late assignments is because I am concerned about unknowingly participating in a system that privileges certain racial, cultural, socioeconomic, family background influences that may account for one student asking for an extension while others keep silent about their circumstances. In a rather sizeable class, I feel it is important to have a strict “no late assignments” policy.

- PLEASE submit your assignments early! Do not wait for the last minute, especially given the late assignment policy for the class, so please save us all some stress and extra work and submit things *at least an hour in advance of the due date and time.*
- On bCourses, you can submit assignments early and re-submit them (to override the submission) at a later date. They will not be graded until the due date passes. So submit assignments early to avoid last minute technological errors so that you at least get some credit in case of emergency.
- **Back-up your work!** Stolen laptops, broken laptops, etc. are a real risk of the technological era. If you encounter such a problem, ***no extension will be given.*** It is therefore your responsibility to back up your work so that you can still turn in the assignment in case a technologically related tragedy occurs.
- **If you encounter an error in submission**, please take a screenshot of the error that includes the date and time of the error (your computer’s date/time clock is good enough) and email your assignment with the screenshot attached to your reader and me. In order for your assignment to be accepted as on time, **your reader and I must receive this email before the submission due date.**
- It is your responsibility to make sure you submitted the correct assignment and that the assignment was fully submitted, so **please after submitting your assignment, check to be sure that the correct document was successfully uploaded onto bCourses.** If you submit the wrong assignment or if it was unsuccessfully uploaded, we have no choice but to give you a 0 on the assignment.

### ***Disabled Students' Program (DSP)***

If you are part of the Disabled Students' Program (DSP) and require special accommodations, please try to make arrangements in advance—this will guarantee you access to your accommodations. If you do make arrangements last minute, we will try our best to still accommodate, but try to ask in advance, even if it's just in case.

To ask for an extension or accommodation using your DSP letter, you must first be sure that your DSP letter allows for the accommodation you are requesting. Then, send an email with your DSP letter attached to me (the instructor). If you are asking for an extension, please **suggest a reasonable due date** (allowed by your letter) to turn in the assignment.

Please follow these instructions carefully. Over the years, DSP has expanded to include many more students, and teaching very large classes without GSIs can make it difficult to handle these cases—so please make our job easier by following these instructions!

### ***Grading Philosophy:***

I believe that the grade you get is the grade ***you earn***. I also believe that your final grade in the course should reflect an accurate assessment of the entire body of work you submit for the class. If something unexpected or tragic occurs with one assignment (e.g. you do much worse on an assignment due to personal circumstances, you were unable to turn it in on time and received a 0, etc.), I will still evaluate the rest of your coursework to see what grade you deserve for the entire course—in other words, focus on the other assignments and show you deserve an A in the course in spite of one major slip-up. You will never receive a grade **lower** than what you earned by sheer point calculation, but you may receive a grade **higher** if your work proves it (e.g. improvement, exceptional final exam, etc.).

I review every grade submitted at the end of the course and will handle things like borderline grades, rounding, etc. based on the performance of your work as a whole. I even (sometimes) re-read your already graded work to see if you should be bumped up from a B+ to an A- if you are on the borderline. These are done for **every** student, regardless of whether you email me or not (to ensure a fair playing field for all my students), so there is no need to “advocate” for yourself—just focus on the work and prove you deserve (i.e. earn) the grade you are hoping for.

### ***Re-grade Policy:***

If you want a re-grade, please follow the following steps. You have two weeks after receiving your grade to initiate the beginning of this process. I do not do re-grades after this two-week cut-off (to avoid people asking for re-grades at the end of the semester because their grades are borderline).

1. Meet with the reader (remotely) to discuss why you got the grade you got.
2. Write a cover letter to the reader and to me that explains how you understand his/her perspective and why you still have an issue with the grade (what you thought was mis-graded). I realize that you hopefully also discussed this in person, but we would like to have something written down for clarity and reference.
3. Your reader or I will re-grade your work (the entire thing) and whatever grade you get becomes the final grade (either higher or lower). Whether your reader re-grades it or I do depends on whether your reader believes there is something that could be adjusted or not.
4. If your reader re-grades the assignment and you are still unsatisfied, you may refer the issue to me. I should warn you that in general (on average from what I have seen), I might be a tougher grader than the reader. Whatever grade I end up giving is the final say on the matter.

Keep in mind, your reader grades **many** assignments. They probably have a sense for how your assignment compares to other people in the class. But grading many assignments could also allow for mistakes, so while that is possible, please have **sober judgment** over your own work and really consider the grader's perspective. Regardless of how much time or effort you put into the assignment, if it simply did not meet the requirements or if you did not adequately communicate what was in your head, you may still have gotten a lower grade (keep in mind, your reader has no idea how much time you spent on the assignment and isn't evaluating effort, but the expectation of the assignment based on a rubric or answer key).



## **Reading List and Semester Schedule**

Readings should be completed before class the date they are assigned. All readings are available on our bCourses site. Assignments that are “handed out” are done so completely on bCourses, but will be explained in class that day.

I want to be candid and upfront about the way readings work in this course. You will never be tested or asked to use readings in any graded assignment. Instead, the readings will do two primary things: (1) Provide meaningful context and necessary foundation to understand the concepts that we will be using throughout the course—this includes key concepts like culture and communication. (2) Provide useful context and details for case studies that will be used in-class discussions and participation. In this way, the readings are meaningful and you should do them. At the same time, they are usually relatively short, easy to read, and do not require deep reading or intensive note taking.

### **Week 1**

**Wednesday, August 25** Introduction: Syllabus and Course Details  
- C. Wright Mills. *The Promise*

**Monday, August 30** Culture: Defining Culture and Reflecting On It  
- Miner, Horace. June 1956. “Body Ritual among the Nacirema,” *American Anthropologist*, 58 (3).  
- Cultural Onion PDF

**Handout via bCourses: Proposal of Cultural Subgroup due Tuesday, September 14**

### **Week 2**

**Wednesday, September 1** Culture: Generalizations and Dimensions  
- Hofstede, Geert H. *Culture’s Consequences: comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001.  
- Hofstede’s Summary PDF

**Monday, September 6** **LABOR DAY – NO CLASS**

### **Week 3**

**Wednesday, September 8** Communication: Basic Model and Dimensions  
- Smith, Donald. 1992. “The Signals We Use,” *Creating Understanding: A Handbook for Christian Communication Across Cultural Landscapes*, pp. 144-164.

**Handout via bCourses: Interviews About You due Thursday, September 30**

**Monday, September 13** Communication: Miscommunication and Conversations  
- Tannen, Deborah. 1984. “The Pragmatics of Cross-Cultural Communication,” *Applied Linguistics*. 5 (3): 189-195.  
- Visible, Invisible Dialogues Examples

**Split Class into Monday and Wednesday Classes**

**\*\*\*Proposal of Cultural Subgroup DUE Tuesday, September 14\*\*\***

**Week 4**

**9/15 or 9/20**

Personalities: Knowing Yourself More

- Basic Values Test, Charts, and Grids
- MBTI Personality Test: <https://www.16personalities.com/>
- Take tests and read/save results (for in-class discussion)

**Assign Groups for Group Activities**

**Handout via bCourses: Personal Timeline due in-class Week 5 (next week)**

**Week 5**

**9/22 or 9/27**

History: Your Biography (so far)

- See bCourses Assignments for details on what to do!
- If you want, explore using <http://time.graphics>

**\*\*\*Personal Timeline Due TODAY\*\*\***

**Handout via bCourses: Cultural Self-Analysis Paper due Week 8**

**Week 6**

**9/29 or 10/4**

Race: Black Lives Matter Case Study

- Review Timelines of Black Lives Matter Events (2014 and 2020)
- 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](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)

**\*\*\*Interview About You Due THURSDAY, September 30\*\*\***

**Week 7**

**10/6 or 10/11**

Family, Identity, and Childrearing

- Chao, Ruth K. "Beyond Parental Control and Authoritarian Parenting Style: Understanding Chinese Parenting through the Cultural Notion of Training," *Child Development*. 1994 (65): 1111-1119. (skip "Results" section for technical reasons)
- Chua, Amy. "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior," *Wall Street Journal*. Jan 8, 2011. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704111504576059713528698754>

**Handout via bCourses: Cultural Subgroup Field Report (4-Unit Only) due Week 10**

**Week 8**  
**10/13 or 10/18**

- Education and Culture: Cultural Learning Styles
- New York Times “Inside a Chinese Test Prep Factory”
- \*\*\*Cultural Self-Analysis Paper Due THIS WEEK\*\*\***

**Week 9**  
**10/20 or 10/25**

- Gender and Culture
- Mead, Margaret. 1963. “Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies,” from *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, pp. 279-88. (As a reference)
  - National Center for Transgender Equality, “Supporting the Transgender People in Your Life: A Guide to Being a Good Ally.”

**Week 10**  
**10/27 or 11/1**

- Politics and Elections (Trumpsters Case Study)
- Go to this website and listen to 5 different people talk about why they support Trump:  
<https://www.usatoday.com/pages/interactives/trump-nation/#/?k=b5299s>

**\*\*\*Cultural Subgroup Field Report (4-Unit Only) Due THIS WEEK\*\*\***  
**Handout via bCourses: Cultural Subgroup Deep Description due Tuesday, November 23**

**Week 11**  
**11/3 or 11/8**

- Religion: Muslim Radicalization in Europe Case Study
- 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.

**Week 12**  
**11/10 or 11/15**

- Class and Culture of Poverty
- Leondar-Wright, Betsy. “Are There Class Cultures?” *Class Matters* 2014-2018, Accessed August 16, 2018:  
[http://www.classmatters.org/2005\\_07/class-cultures.php](http://www.classmatters.org/2005_07/class-cultures.php)
  - Cohen, Patricia. 2010. “Culture of Poverty Makes a Comeback,” *The New York Times*.

**Week 13**

**11/17 or 11/22**

- Social Networks and Relational Influence
- McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M Cook. (2001) “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks,” *Annual Reviews Sociology*. 27: 415-444.

**\*\*\*Cultural Subgroup Deep Description Due TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23\*\*\***

**Week 14**

**11/29 or 12/1**

Final Reflections + Personal Sharing!

**Handout via bCourses: Cultural Subgroup Final Paper due Friday, December 17**