



Cross-Cultural Communication

Lecturer: Verena Brenner

The accelerating pace of globalization has made cross-cultural competence an indispensable qualification for today's university graduates. This seminar introduces students to different approaches of comparing cultures and their value systems as well as to the principles of intercultural communication. It familiarizes them with the concepts and methods developed by intercultural anthropologists for analyzing cross-cultural misunderstandings and therefore look for a deeper understanding of different cultures.

The class contains two components:

I. A culture-general section giving a global overview of the major areas where cultures differ with special focus on the cultures of the participants as well as the German culture. Case studies, simulation games, role plays and short films provide concrete illustrations and make students aware of their own cultural moorings. Topics include: stereotypes and prejudices, ethnocentrism, individualism/collectivism, status, gender roles, concept of time and space, verbal and non-verbal communication styles as well as conflict resolution.

II. The participants will also explore cultural differences between their own cultures and the German culture by doing their own case studies in specific areas of interest through interviews, observation of selected situations, and a photo excursion.

Methods:

- Lectures
- Discussions
- Group Work
- Excursions (self-guided)
- Portfolio
- Interviews
- Films

Cross-Cultural Competence does not only include knowledge about (other) cultures, countries and languages, but also self-reflection, communicative awareness, tolerance of ambivalence, change of perspective, and empathy. Thus, the academic assessment of the course reflects these multiple competences needed by using the portfolio method. The portfolio includes a variety of tasks, e.g. reflection tools, reading assignments, two short presentations to be presented in class, test questions on case studies regarding cross cultural misunderstandings. The students deepen the learning experience and prepare for upcoming sessions, while allowing the teacher to assess their understanding of the matters discussed



Course Schedule:

45 contact hours/4 ECTS

Topic
Introduction to class & cross cultural competence
Culture and values & simulation
Cultural differences, part 1
Excursion: museum
Cultural differences, part 2
Cultural differences, part 3
Excursion: museum
One country – various cultures
German film
Migration and Cultural Change
Excursion: museum
Photo Excursion
Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution
Presentation of results of Photo Excursion

Course requirements & grade:

participation (50%), submission of portfolio tasks (50%), equivalent to 4 ECTS

Over the duration of the class, the portfolio method is used as a tool to deepen reflection, allow discussion, and connect the topics discussed with personal experience. During or after each of our classes students will receive tasks or handouts to be completed, including multiple choice, creative writing and other exercises, case studies, excursion reports, creative writing, mind maps, thus allowing for a continuous assessment of cross cultural competence and personal development.