Cross-Cultural Communication

The accelerating pace of globalization has made cross-cultural competence an indispensable qualification for today’s university graduates. This seminar introduces students to the principles of intercultural communication. It familiarizes them with the concepts and methods developed by intercultural anthropologists for analyzing cross-cultural misunderstandings, particularly in a business environment.

The class contains three components:

I. A theoretical, culture-general section giving a global overview of the major areas where cultures differ. Drawn from a wealth of empirical data from all over the world a workable list of those cultural categories is presented in which cross-cultural conflicts are most likely to occur. Case studies provide.

II. Topics include: ethnocentrism, individualism/collectivism, status, gender roles, attitude towards the environment, concept and management of time, activity and motivation, interactions, verbal communication, expression of emotion, non-verbal communication, educational styles, religion, medicine, and finally, globalization and ethnic identity.

III. Once a week students will join an in-progress class at the University of Stuttgart called “Approaches to Intercultural Competence”. This will provide them the opportunity to be integrated not only with German students but also within a culturally diverse set of international students. They will work in project groups to produce and brief a culturegram. The third component is culture-specific: Students will go on excursions in the Stuttgart area visiting museums and other places which are important to Germany in general and to Baden-Württemberg in particular.

Methods
- lectures
- discussions
- group work
- excursions

Schedule
8 hours per week from Mondays until Thursdays

ECTS-Credits 4