

# Communications 280: Intercultural Communication

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*NOTE: This syllabus is intended as high-level overview of the course and course requirements. For details, particularly on assignments and due dates, consult Modules in Canvas.*

## About the Instructor

I've had a varied career ranging from journalism to information technology, with a common thread of communication. Most recently, I was Manager of Strategic Planning and Communication for Information Technology Services at Washington and Lee University, where I managed all communication channels for ITS and oversaw an assessment and change-management process.

I collaborated with faculty members at W&L to create and manage several online resources for intercultural learning, including an Irish literary studies database and a searchable library of images related to culture and language.

I have significant experience with intercultural communication as a result of my education, interests and travels. As an adolescent I attended school for four years at international schools in Geneva, Switzerland and Brussels, Belgium, with classmates from all over the world. As an adult, I've travelled many times to Latin America, including Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala, serving local churches in those countries and providing translation for North American teams. You'll be hearing some of my first-hand stories about intercultural communication mishaps and breakthroughs. I look forward to hearing your stories as well.

## Course Description and Objectives

Intercultural Communication is a vitally important topic with relevance to personal life, business, civic life, peacebuilding and more. In this course, you'll get a broad conceptual overview of the field through the required textbook as well as online videos and other resources. You'll interact frequently with me and other students to challenge and apply those concepts. You'll also participate in field exercises to observe and interact with other cultures and reflect on those experiences.

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify key dynamics that underlie intercultural communication
- Identify your own culturally based communication style
- Articulate how attitudes, stereotypes, language and other factors can contribute to conflict when communicating with people of disparate cultural backgrounds
- Develop strategies to communicate effectively in an intercultural context

## **Textbook**

Martin, Judith N., and Thomas K. Nakayama. *Intercultural Communication in Contexts*. 7th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2017. ISBN 978-0073523934. Paperback, used and rental options available.

## **Grading and Evaluation**

- 40 percent: Weekly assignments and discussion board posts
- 10 percent: Field exercise 1: Intercultural interview and report
- 10 percent: Field exercise 2: Family history OR Cultural-Group History
- 10 percent: Field exercise 3: Covid and Culture
- 10 percent Field exercise 4: Media analysis
- 20 percent: Final Project

See Canvas for assignment details and grading criteria.

## **Course Schedule**

Week 1:

Chapter 1 - Foundations of Intercultural Communication:  
Week 1 Discussion Board: post an introduction

Week 2:

Chapter 2: The History of the Study of Intercultural Communication  
Discussion board: questions for intercultural interview  
Real-time online meetings: TBD

Week 3:

Reading: Chapter 3, Culture, Communication, Context and Power  
Field exercise 1: Intercultural interview and report

Week 4:

Reading: Chapter 4, History and Intercultural Communication  
Week 4 Discussion Board: Histories and Identity Formation

Week 5:

Reading: Chapter 5, Identity and Intercultural Communication  
Field Exercise 2: Family History OR Cultural-Group History

Week 6:

Chapter 6: Language and Intercultural Communication  
Discussion board: Language and Culture

Week 7:

Chapter 7: Non-Verbal Codes and Cultural Space

## Field Exercise 3: COVID and Culture

Week 8:

Chapter 8: Understanding Intercultural Transitions

Discussion board: culture shock

Real-time online meetings: TBD

Week 9

Read: Chapter 9, Popular Culture and Intercultural Communication

Discussion board: Intercultural relationships, dialectical perspective

Week 10:

Read: Chapter 10, Culture, Communication, and Intercultural Relationships

Weekly exercise: submit outline for final project

Week 11:

Chapter 11: Culture Communication and Conflicts

Field exercise 4 due: media analysis

Week 12:

Chapter 12: Striving for Engaged and Effective Intercultural Communication

Chapter 11-12 quiz

Week 13:

Discussion board: life plan for in-depth cultural study

Week 14:

Week 15:

Final Project

## Policies

- **Late work will not be accepted. Exceptions may be granted if you seek permission for an extension (normally no more than a day or two) at least 24 hours prior to the assignment due date**
- No extra credit will be awarded in this course. You can earn the best grade by keep up with the assignments, following instructions carefully and contacting me promptly with any questions or concerns.

Additionally, these Mary Baldwin University policies apply to this course:

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Students with Disabilities – Academic Resource Center, Accessibility Services Program Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require

Mary Baldwin University to provide academic adjustments or accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students who require reasonable accommodations must identify themselves as having a disability and/or medical condition and provide current diagnostic documentation to Dr. Jenny Joczik, Director, Academic Resource Center / Accessibility Services Program Coordinator. All information is confidential. Please visit the office's website at <https://go.marybaldwin.edu/learning-skills/swd/> or contact Dr. Joczik at [vjoczik@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:vjoczik@marybaldwin.edu).

### **Communication Between the Program and Students:**

E-mail - All official student communication from the administration, course instructors, faculty, and staff will be sent to the student's MBU e-mail address ONLY. The program will not send e-mail to personal accounts other than MBU. Students are required to check their MBU email accounts often, even while on vacation or away from campus.

### **Plagiarism**

The work that you present in this (or any other) class must be your own. Presenting the ideas – the words, expressions or concepts - of others without citing the source of those ideas is plagiarism. A student who fails to credit the source of an idea is violating the intellectual property rights of the original author. This applies to all work submitted - including but not limited to papers, case studies and discussion board postings. The minimum penalty for plagiarism is a grade of zero for the assignment; the maximum penalty is expulsion from Mary Baldwin University.

### **Responding to Disruptive Student Behavior**

Mary Baldwin University is dedicated to the free pursuit of knowledge, and courses are designed and governed by the faculty in various ways to promote learning. The classroom ethos that instructors seek is both open to dissenting opinions and respectful of all members of the campus community. To that end, every instructor has the right and responsibility to maintain classroom order, and students, in adherence to the Mary Baldwin University Code of Conduct, are required to follow course policies and instructions regarding class behavior. Instructors may elect to hold students who engage in disruptive behavior accountable, in accordance with the published university policies and procedures. <http://www.marybaldwin.edu/fac-staff/administrative-forms-documents/>

### **Students with Disabilities**

Mary Baldwin University is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities who are academically qualified and is committed to providing appropriate support. The college does not waive requirements for degrees or alter admissions requirements for any student, but we make every effort to accommodate students with identified and documented disabilities.

Accommodations are available to students with disabilities that are available at <http://www.marybaldwin.edu/learning-skills/swd/>.

### **Attendance**

Participation is an essential part of learning in this program. Participation (both the initial and subsequent interaction) within the discussion groups is required in the week in which the

discussions are posted and active. If you will not be able to attend a weekly discussion because of a planned activity, e.g., business travel, contact your professor at least one week in advance of your absence. If you were not able to attend a weekly discussion due to unforeseen circumstances, advise your professor at your earliest opportunity. Multiple absences from any one or more than one class may jeopardize your standing in the program.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance in the online course is required and defined as active participation in the course. Online courses will, at a minimum, have weekly assignments to record student participation, which can be documented by any or all of the following methods:

- Completion of tests
- Submission/completion of assignments
- Participation in Discussion Forums
- Communication with the instructor

Students who do not log on to the course within the drop/add period will be dropped from the course. (Drop/add and withdrawal dates are listed in the published semester schedule and University Academic Catalog). Students who fail to maintain active participation in an online course as defined in the course syllabus will be processed in accordance with the University's current attendance policy, which may include any of the following actions:

- Meeting with the course instructor or the Program Director
- Meeting with the faculty advisor
- Referral to the faculty committee to determine an appropriate course of action which may include any of the following:
  - Warning letter to be placed in the student's temporary file
  - Letter of reprimand to become part of the permanent record with the Registrar
  - Dismissal from the Program

### **Mandatory Follow Up with Instructor**

Students scoring a grade of "C" or below on the first scheduled examination/test/assignment in a course will be required to meet with the course instructor to discuss test/assignment performance. Students are expected to have reviewed the examination/test/assignment and be prepared to talk with the course instructor about strategies for improvement.

### **Honor Code**

Mary Baldwin students pledge to uphold the Honor Code. They pledge to refrain from cheating on assignments, papers and tests, to refrain from plagiarism, and always to be honest in their dealings with faculty, staff and other students. To maintain the integrity of the system, students, faculty and staff who witness Honor Code infractions are expected to report them.

Should I become aware of an Honor Code offense in this classroom, I will encourage the student(s) to self-report by e-mailing the Honor Council chairwoman or by filing an incident report at <https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MaryBaldwin>. If the student(s) does not self-report within 24 hours, I will submit the report myself.