Communicating Across Cultures
Module 3/GEB6930/Section 01B5

Professor Christine Ogan
Class meets 4:05-6 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays in Hough 340
January 4-February 22.
Office hours will be on Mondays from 3-3:50 p.m. or by appointment in the
MAIB/MSM Suite

About the Class:

In the 21st century it is possible for us to speak through electronic devices with most
anyone living in the most remote parts of our world. Increasingly sophisticated
translators even allow us to communicate with people who don’t speak our language,
when English—now nearly a universal language—is not spoken. Yet despite all the
technological advances that improve such communication we still have conflicts with
those who do not speak the same cultural languages. 2016 has demonstrated how this has
happened in Belgium, France, the USA, the UK, Turkey, Syria, and Hong Kong,
among others. Within cultures, we have conflicts over refugees, immigrants and ethnic
differences. Overcoming such cultural barriers is essential for individuals, organizations,
governments and businesses to do their work successfully.

This course will address the reasons for the cultural barriers within and across
countries and the theories scholars have developed to explain them. It will identify the
ways in which individuals and organizations acculturate within new cultural
environments. We will also discuss societal-level characteristics that lead to individual
differences and identity formation, try to explain why we experience culture shock, and
use stereotypes to describe those from other cultures, while also focusing on the
development of improved intercultural relationships.

Students will have an opportunity to learn about the cultural codes and practices of those
who live in another region of the world through a class assignment.

Professor: Professor Christine Ogan, the instructor for this class, has had many
intercultural experiences, both in her personal and professional life. Her
intercultural life began when she married across cultures and began married life in
Turkey. She has also lived and worked in the U.K., Belgium, the Netherlands, and
Hong Kong over the years—and spent shorter periods of time in many other
countries. In each of these places she has had to learn how best to communicate
with people who have many different cultural practices. In 2016 she published
(along with her colleagues at KU Leuven in Belgium) several articles on the use of
social media (Facebook and Twitter) in a social movement by ethnic minorities who
live in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany as part of a larger study of the ways in
which immigrants and ethnic minorities build social capital in cultures other than
the ones where they were raised or where their families were raised. She has also recently published an article, based on social network analysis, on the characteristics of the tweets posted during a social movement in Turkey. Her current research examines the framing of the immigration and refugee issues in the United States by the press during the 2016 U.S. election campaign.

Class Procedures:

Based on my experience in teaching this class, I have made some changes to the following procedural changes.

Use of Devices: In previous years the students have told me that in their classes where cell phones were prohibited discussion was more lively and engaged, and that students paid better attention. Accordingly, cell phones will be switched off and put away during the class. Please also turn off the wifi connection on your laptops, which will allow you to take notes, but not to be distracted by social media or other web-based sites. For more of the rationale behind this decision, please read: [https://medium.com/@cshirky/why-i-just-asked-my-students-to-put-their-laptops-away-7f5f7c50f368#.rtlil55dm](https://medium.com/@cshirky/why-i-just-asked-my-students-to-put-their-laptops-away-7f5f7c50f368#.rtlil55dm)

In return, I will place the power point slides for all classes online at least two hours before class so that you may take notes on the slides during our class discussions.

Seating Choices: Because the topic of this class is intercultural communication, you are asked to choose seats that allow you to make new intercultural contacts. Therefore, inasmuch as possible, you should not sit next to anyone from your own culture (defined as your ethnic or national background), nor should you sit next to someone you know well through your association at UF. If you have a question about the seating arrangement, please ask me about it.


Other readings will be placed on the Canvas site for this class.

For Discussion: On several days during the module, you have some short readings to do. These readings will be points of departure for discussions we will have on the days for which those readings are assigned. Typically, the topics of these readings provide current examples of one or more of the concepts you are reading about in your text for that day. You should come prepared to talk about your reactions (based on other assigned reading or theory discussed in class) to the assigned discussion reading material.

Assignments:

1. In order to understand the issues in intercultural communication more clearly, you are asked to select an individual (from the campus environment) who does not share your cultural identity. That could be an international student who came to Gainesville from another country or it could be a student who has grown up in the
USA, but is of a different race or who may be immigrants themselves or have parents who are immigrants. **THIS SHOULD NOT BE SOMEONE YOU ALREADY KNOW OR WHO IS IN YOUR PROGRAM HERE AT UF. IT SHOULD NOT BE SOMEONE YOU LIVE WITH OR HAVE HAD PREVIOUS PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL CONTACT WITH.** The individual you select should be willing to meet with you at least three different times for about 30 minutes to an hour. During these interviews you will ask about several of the intercultural issues/theories that are raised in class as they pertain to this person. Following the three interviews, you will write a paper about the intercultural topics you discussed, the differences between your culture and that person’s culture, the potential barriers to communication that might need to be resolved and the approach you would take to overcoming those barriers. More information about the interviews and the paper will be distributed in class, including some rubrics for evaluation. The paper will be due on **February 15.**

(2) A second assignment will involve the viewing of a film (documentary or feature film) that includes intercultural relationships. You will need to answer 2-3 essay-type questions about the content/themes/details of the film based on the concepts and theories discussed in class. It will be due on **January 25.** I will post the details about this assignment in Canvas.

**Grading:** Final grades will be determined as follows.

- Final Examination 35%
- Mid-term Quiz 20%
- Paper 25%
- Film Assignment 10%
- Class Participation 10%  (Includes attending class, coming prepared by reading the material assigned for that day, possibly adopting an app, and contributing to the class discussion).

If you need to miss a class for an illness, please contact me in advance of the scheduled class so I will know not to expect you.

**Course Outline:**

**Day 1; January 4:** What is Culture? How does intercultural differ from cross-cultural and international communication? What does perception have to do with culture? Why does any of this matter? And which topics will we address in this class?

Read: Chapters 1 and 2 and 6 in your text for this week. Be prepared to talk about an intercultural experience you have had.

**Day 2, January 9:** Cultural Dimensions relating to individuals, organizations and countries
Finish the reading under Day 1; We discuss Chapter 6 today

For Discussion: In advance of today’s meeting, complete the exercise from the handout (also in Canvas listed as Hofstede exercise) by answering the questions in writing. We will discuss your answers in class.

Day 3, January 11: The Intercultural within a Country’s Culture; Value Orientation Theory, social distance

Read: Chapter 7, 11


For Discussion: Wayne Drash and Jackson Loo, “Culture Clash in Iowa: Where Bubble Tea Shops Outnumber Starbucks.”

JANUARY 16 is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: NO CLASS

Day 4, January 18: Identity and intercultural communication

Read: Chapter 12 and 9 in the text


Day 5, January 23: The Sociorelational Context

Read the following: Chapter 8 and 9

**Day 6, January 25:** The Perceptual Context: Barriers to intercultural communication.

Read: Chapter 3 in text


**Day 7 and 8, January 30 and Feb.1:** Verbal and Nonverbal Codes

**Quiz over material through Jan. 27 to be held on Day 8, Feb. 1. 45 minutes at the beginning of class.**

Read: Chapter 5 for January 30 and Chapter 4 for February 1 in text;


**Day 9 and 10, February 6, 8:** The role of Media in Intercultural communication

Reread pp. 27-33, in text.


**Day 11, 12; February 13, 15:** Intercultural communication and ethnic minorities

Read Chapters 10, 11 in text.


**PAPERS DUE TODAY**

**Day 13, February 20:** Developing Better Intercultural Relationships and Managing Conflict.

Read: Chapters 13, and 14 in your text


**Day 14, February 22:** Final Exam (4:05 p.m.-6 p.m.; location TBA)