

## SEMESTER AT SEA 2008 COURSE SYLLABUS

Discipline: Business Communication

Semester and Year: Spring 2008

SEMS 108: Intercultural Business Communication

Lower Division

Instructor: Dr. Richard O. Dalbey

Home Page: [www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~rdalbey/](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~rdalbey/) (check out my International Photo Gallery)

**Suggested Pre-requisites:** The course requires a satisfactory knowledge of grammar, language usage, mechanics, and syntax. Any previous lower division course in beginning Rhetoric and Writing Studies, English 100, Business Communication, or Business English is highly recommended. This course is ideal for lower and upper division students.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The nature of intercultural communication, an overview of culture and contrasting cultural values, cultural shock, language, oral and nonverbal communication patterns, written communication patterns, global etiquette, business and social customs, intercultural negotiation process, intercultural negotiation strategies, and laws affecting international business and travel.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of business globalization and the stumbling blocks to intercultural communication.
2. Increase your understanding of systems that are universal to all cultural groups and their relationship to communicating and negotiating in a global setting.
3. Appreciate the role that values play in communicating effectively with persons from other cultures.
4. Understand the nature of cultural shock and its relationship to success in overseas assignments.
5. Understand how language affects intercultural business communication.
6. Be able to evaluate through oral and nonverbal communication patterns and their relationship to intercultural business communication.
7. Know the guidelines for writing international messages in English.
8. Understand global etiquette.
9. Learn business and social customs
10. Be able to define the intercultural negotiation process.
11. Be able to differentiate between negotiation strategies.
12. Understand the differences between home country laws and host country laws that affect business and travel.

## **TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE**

1. The nature of intercultural communication.
2. Universal systems (economic, political, educational, marriage and family, and social hierarchies and social interaction).
3. Contrasting cultural values (semantic differences, attribution and perception, attitudes toward women, work attitudes, attitudes toward ethics, religious influences, individualism and collectivism).
4. Culture shock
5. Language
6. Oral and nonverbal communication patterns.
7. Written communication patterns (international English, writing tone and style, letter formats, resume and job search information).
8. Global etiquette (business cards, position and status, dining practices, tipping, gift giving)
9. Business and social customs (greeting and handshaking, verbal expression, male and female relationships, humor in business, superstitions and taboos, dress and appearance, customs associated with holidays and holy days, office customs and practices, customary demeanor/behavior, bribery, special foods and consumption taboos).
10. Intercultural negotiation process (characteristics of effective negotiators and cross-cultural negotiation considerations).
11. Intercultural negotiation strategies (strategies and role of the media).

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND READING**

*Intercultural Business Communication*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, by Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 2007.

*Intercultural Communication for Business*, Managerial Communication Series, by Elizabeth A. Tuleja, Mason, OH: South-Western, 2005.

## **FIELD COMPONENT**

The “Proposed Field Requirements,” along with the list of suggested practica, will be posted on the website in an area separate from the syllabus.

While visiting the various ports, students will have the opportunity to understand social customs, learn about clothing and food preferences, assess political patterns, understand religious and folk beliefs, learn about economic and business institutions, and appraise the nature of ethics, values, and laws. There will be individual and group assigned projects while in each port for oral presentations. For instance, here are some suggestions for discussion:

1. While in Salvador, Bahia, describe an incident involving oral and/or nonverbal miscommunication with Brazilians you met while in port. Suggest a plausible explanation for the miscommunication.

2. Prepare a short skit as a group to illustrate nonverbal communication blunders that you made while visiting Salvador, Bahia, or any other port.
3. Demonstrate the amount of eye contact and body language considered appropriate in the United States, India, and Japan. How do greetings differ from each of these cultures to another?
4. Role-play to show how a business card is presented to someone from Japan.
5. Research the tipping practices of an Asian country of your choice and make a comparison with tipping practices in the United States. Report your findings to the class.
6. Research the gift-giving practices of each of the following countries and make a brief oral presentation to the class: Brazil, South Africa, India, Japan, and China. Include appropriate and inappropriate gifts and other related information such as gift presentation and reciprocation.
7. Explain how women in business are treated differently in the United States, India, and China.
8. Identify cultures in which business dress may be different from that work in the United States.
9. List some consumption taboos of people in various countries you visited.

Students will likewise write paragraphs on their port intercultural experiences while at sea. For instance, you just spent five days in Salvador, Bahia; write a brief paragraph demonstrating your understanding of kinesics with Brazilians (kinesics is the term used for communicating through various types of body movements including facial expressions, gestures, posture and stance, and other mannerisms that may accompany or replace oral messages).

Meet the People: The Bahamas has a People-to-People program to help visitors meet the locals – an excellent port class activity.

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION**

### **A. Field Requirements 80%**

1. Individual Field-Directed Practica (FDP) and Short Papers (40%):  
Students are required to complete two (2) practica for this course from the list below (other practica may be substituted with permission of the instructor). One of the practica should be a FDP led by Dr. Dalbey. Students will use these trips to build a discussion diary of differences in communication patterns in the countries that we visit. Students must write a well-written three page paper that explains why communicating clearly across cultures is important to business associated with each practicum (each practicum and the subsequent paper is worth 20 points for a total of 40% of your course grade).

2. Two Trip Journals (40%): Students will keep a journal of their in-port cross-cultural communication experiences that describes, catalogues, and analyzes any of the following:
  - a. contrasting cultural values, customs, cultural shock, language, oral and nonverbal communication patterns, written communication patterns, global etiquette, business and social customs, intercultural negotiation process and strategies, laws affecting international business and travel observed in each port.
  - b. how students adapted their personal communion style to each destination.
  - c. patterns of miscommunication observed or experienced in each port and how, in hindsight, these moments of miscommunication could have been avoided or blunted.

You will have a set of journal entries for each of the 13 ports we visit beginning with the Bahamas and ending with Costa Rica.

All journal entries will be typed up and handed in twice during the course. Each journal is worth 20 points for a total of 40% of your course grade.

B. **On-Ship Pre-Port Oral Presentations (10%)**

C. **Class Participation 10%**

There will be no final examination