

**COMM 256: Intercultural Communication**  
**Spring 2015**  
**Dr. Mary P. Lahman**  
**Manchester University**

**TEXTBOOK:**

Allen, B. J. (2011). *Difference matters: Communicating social identity* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

The purpose of this course is to discover how communication is influenced by culture and how culture is created and maintained through communication. To better understand the interdependent relationship between culture and communication, we explore how cultural identities are socially constructed. We also consider the implications of power as we communicate across contexts.

Second, we question the accuracy of social identity constructions such as gender, race, social class, sexuality, ability, and age. Recognizing that we “think under the influence” of socially constructed categories, we explore how to make conscious this often unconscious process when communicating with others. We will practice self-reflexivity in order to explain how we use dominant ideologies and everyday talk to enact *and* resist hegemony.

Because we explore how difference, power, and privilege matter, your daily participation ensures that we fully understand these concepts within and across socially constructed identities. We need each person’s previous knowledge and current research to fully examine the intersections of socially constructed identities as we seek to thrive in contexts both inside and outside the United States.

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Explain how difference matters and power matters when we communicate across contexts and cultures.
- Find a scholarly article about one of the identities in our text and summarize findings in an annotated bibliography.
- Write a white paper that uses the textbook to propose solutions to the problems caused by “thinking under the influence” of dominant belief systems uncovered in the annotated bibliographies.
- Collect data to explore the presence of dominant belief systems in classroom communication and present findings in a poster presentation.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (60 points)

*Objective:* Find a scholarly article about one of the identities in our text and summarize findings in an annotated bibliography.

*Step by Step Instructions:*

1. Demonstrate library research skills by finding **one scholarly research article** about a socially created identity we will study this semester: ability, social class, race, gender, sexuality, and age.
2. Complete a **“How to Read a Research Article” worksheet** to explore key findings, who participated in the study, how data was collected, and the practical implications of the study.
3. Write an **annotated bibliography** that contributes to our class understanding of how identities are socially constructed. Keep the following criteria in mind as you complete the assignment:
  - a. **Summary:** 1) Provides evidence used to support conclusions (data bases, interviews, observations, surveys, articles), 2) Describes expertise and audience of the author (position title, geographic location, subject matter).
  - b. **Evaluation:** 1) Updates and supports other sources (compares and contrasts articles: findings, sources, dates), 2) Explains how article provides evidence of “thinking under the influence” of dominant belief systems.

## 2. WHITE PAPER (60 points)

*Objective:* Write a white paper that uses the textbook to propose solutions to the problems caused by “thinking under the influence” of dominant belief systems uncovered in the annotated bibliographies.

*Step by Step Instructions:*

1. Find examples of **“thinking under the influence” (TUI)** in the annotated bibliographies.
2. Write a **white paper** that explains how TUI causes problems for your social identity group and how we can address these problems. The paper includes the following sections:
  - a. **Introduction:** explains how TUI directly affects each class member
  - b. **Background/Problem:** specifies how TUI causes the problems for this identity by providing detailed evidence from the text and research articles, and accurate citations
  - c. **Solution:** provides recommendations to address the problems, which are supported by evidence from the text and research articles, and accurate citations
  - d. **Conclusion:** calls each class member to action

### 3. POSTER PRESENTATION (80 points)

*Objective:* Collect data to explore the presence of dominant belief systems in our classroom communication and present findings in a poster presentation.

*Step by Step Instructions:*

1. Work with partner(s) based on interest in **one social identity** (ability, social class, race, gender, sexuality, age). Consult the white papers written for this identity.
2. Create a **research study** that explores the presence dominant belief systems in classroom communication. Collect data and explain findings in a poster presentation format (see D2L for samples):
  - a. **Project Title:** is specific and concise, generates interest
  - b. **Issue Explanation:** explains how the problem came to be with examples from the annotated bibliographies, states research question
  - c. **Methods:** explains data collection methods and instruments, method for analyzing data
  - d. **Results and Discussion:** interprets and summarizes data, uses tables/graphs for findings, explains how conclusion is reasonable based on data.
  - e. **References:** includes accurate and complete citations
3. Present **findings** in a poster presentation:
  - a. **Format and organization:** is organized and easy to read
  - b. **Answers questions:** exhibits depth of knowledge

### 4. QUIZZES (100 points)

#### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics &amp; Assignments Due</b>	<b>Readings Discussed</b>
1	Guidelines for Interaction	Handout
2	Difference Matters	Allen: Chapter 1
3	Power Matters <b>Quiz 1</b> (Allen Chapters 1 & 2)	Allen: Chapter 2
4	Ability Matters <i>Peer Edit for Annotated Bibliography</i>	Allen: Chapter 7

5	Race Matters <b>Annotated Bibliography Due</b>	Allen: Chapter 4
6	<i>Quiz 2</i> (Allen Chapters 4 & 7) Sexuality Matters	Allen: Chapter 6
7	Social Class Matters <i>Quiz 3</i> (Allen Chapters 5 & 6)	Allen: Chapter 5
8	<i>Spring Break</i>	
9	Communicating Social Identity <i>Peer Edit for White Paper</i>	Allen: Chapter 9
10	Gender Matters <b>White Paper Due</b>	Allen: Chapter 3
11	Age Matters <i>Quiz 4</i> (Chapters 3 & 8)	Allen: Chapter 8
12	Research Methods	Reading on D2L
13	Data Collection <i>Quiz 5</i> (Chapter 9 & Research Methods)	
14	Poster Creation	
15	<i>Peer Edits</i> <i>Presentation: Questions &amp; Answers</i>	
16	<b>Finals Week:</b> <b>Poster Presentations</b>	