

COMM 541: Critical Approaches to Culture and Communication

Fall 2015

Dr. Gust A. Yep

San Francisco State University

TEXTBOOKS:

Sorrells, K. (2013). *Intercultural communication: Globalization and social justice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [abbreviated as “S”]

Sorrells, K., & Sekimoto, S. (Eds.). (2016). *Globalizing intercultural communication: A reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [abbreviated as “Reader”]

COURSE PURPOSE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The purpose of this course is to increase your knowledge of intercultural communication from a critical perspective. In this course, you will develop a greater understanding of the role of power, history, globalization, discourse, and language in intercultural communication. Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain how individuals manifest, express, perform, and negotiate culture through communication;
2. Discuss how race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and nation are produced in various cultural contexts;
3. Explain ways that various groups create, maintain, contest and change their cultural communication patterns;
4. Apply knowledge of (inter)cultural communication patterns to enhance human interaction in a diverse society;
5. Evaluate the ethical implications of theories, research, and practices regarding culture and communication; and
6. Recognize and respect a variety of communication styles, expressions and performances of culture in various national and international contexts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Two examinations.** You will take a midterm and final examination in this course. The exams will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions. The majority of the questions will be integration and application questions. Each exam is worth 100 points.

2. **Term project.** You will select an intercultural communication topic from a list that I will provide in class. There are five parts to this project: (a) Computer search, (b) Paper # 1 (Synthesis), (c) Paper # 2 (Application), (d) Paper # 3 (Reflection and evaluation), and (e) Oral presentation. The term project is worth 160 points.

3. **In-class activities and homework.** In-class activities are dyadic, triadic or in groups, followed by debriefing and discussion of relevant concepts and theories. Homework is typically assigned at the end of class, focusing mostly on “concepts to think about” for the next class. In-class activities and homework are worth 40 points.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week	Topic	Reading
1	Course overview: Discussion of policies and assignments; Development of ground rules; Introduction to culture and communication; A brief history of the field; Developing a critical vocabulary for the study of culture and communication, Part I: Overview of key terms	S, ch. 1
2	Developing a critical vocabulary, Part II: Culture, positionality, ethnocentrism, history, power, globalization, intercultural praxis; Form semester groups	S, ch. 2 Reader, pp. 13-21
3	Identities in the global context, Part I: The social construction of difference	S, ch. 3
4	Identities in the global context, Part II: The social construction of race; Globalization and transnationalism COMPUTER SEARCH DUE	Reader, pp. 24-41 Reader, pp. 65-83
5	Identities in the global context, Part III: Intersectionality; Language and power	Reader, pp. 86-101 Reader, pp. 104-121
6	Cultural space: Identity, place, glocalization; Identity and whiteness	S, ch. 4 Reader, pp. 123-141
7	Catch-up; review for midterm MIDTERM EXAM (S, ch. 1-4; Reader, pp. 13-21, 24-41, 65-83, 86-101, 104-121, 123-141)	
8	Border crossing: Migration and intercultural adaptation; Narratives of intercultural adaptation	S, ch. 5 Reader, pp. 188-205
9	Popular culture: Media, representation, culture, and resistance; New media in the global context PAPER # 1 DUE	S, ch. 6 Reader, pp. 228-246

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------------|
| 10 | Intercultural relationships:
Romance, friendships, cyber relationships, alliances | S, ch. 7
Reader, pp. 144-165 |
| 11 | Intercultural communication in the workplace:
Capitalism, globalization, neoliberalism | S, ch. 8
Reader, pp. 168-185 |
| 12 | Intercultural conflict, Part I:
An analytical framework | S, ch. 9 |
| 13 | Intercultural conflict, Part II:
Culture, race, and religious conflicts
PAPER # 2 DUE | Reader, pp. 249-266 |
| 14 | ORAL PRESENTATIONS
PRESENTATION OUTLINES DUE | |
| 15 | ORAL PRESENTATIONS
PRESENTATION OUTLINES DUE
PAPER # 3 DUE
Intercultural communication for social justice
Course summary
Review for final exam | S, ch. 10 |
| 16 | FINAL EXAM
(S, ch. 5-10; Reader, pp. 144-165, 168-185, 188-205, 228-246, 249-266) | |