

COMMUNICATION STUDIES 656: SPRING 2009
SEMINAR IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-3:45; Wednesday 5:30-6:45 and by appointment

Course Context

Welcome!! In this course, we are all learners and teachers. Your experiences and capacities as human beings are valuable resources for us all. Respect for yourself and others are vital for creating a positive learning environment in this class. I look forward to working with you to make this happen.

Course Description

This seminar provides an opportunity to explore existing and emerging issues, theories and practices in intercultural communication. Throughout the course, we will be engaging with each other, the material, and the larger community on three interconnected levels, as articulated here:

- 1.) A primary level of engagement in this course is as human beings interacting in a multicultural society and global community. What capacities are necessary to navigate the diverse, complex, and challenging intercultural terrain in which we find ourselves? In this class, we will focus on articulating, developing, and practicing our capacities as intercultural communicators.
- 2.) A second level of engagement involves conceptualizing and theorizing intercultural communication and ICC research. We will examine a range of theories and methods with attention to the epistemological and methodological assumptions and issues supporting and surrounding various paradigms. From a critical perspective, we will ask questions such as: Which theories have been privileged, marginalized and silenced in the ICC field? Who speaks for whom? And for what purpose? How do race, gender, class, and sexuality intersect to inform theories and practices of intercultural communication?
- 3.) This course also includes a third level of engagement that can be described as “creative and critical praxis.” At this level, we are in the process of translating and transforming our theoretical and methodological understanding of intercultural communication into practice in everyday life. This is a highly creative and emergent process where critical consciousness, self-reflexivity, and social/community involvement meet.

Texts

656 Reader: Available at Sun Star Copies Center in the shopping mall at the corner of Plummer and Reseda (next to Baskin Robins). Each student will read one of the following three novels:

Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail by Ruben Martinez

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman

What is the What by Dave Eggers

Course Procedures

Grading:

All assignments must be completed in order to pass this class. All assignments must be turned in on time!! Late work will be reduced on letter grade for each class session it is late.

Academic Honesty:

Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to university policies regarding academic honesty, as specified in the current CSUN Catalog and Schedule of Classes. If you are uncertain about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, consult the university Catalog and Schedule of Classes for definitions and for information concerning your rights and responsibilities.

Overall Course Expectations:

This course requires a substantial degree of engagement, participation, and effort. I have designed the class to incorporate practical “field” experience and creative assignments, along with reading and writing. Everyone is expected to stay current with the reading and be prepared for discussions in class. As you read the assigned work, try to grasp the main concepts, assumptions, themes, and ideas. We are interested in seeing a broad systemic view rather than isolating individual elements.

Course Evaluation

Participation/Insights	10 %
Reading Response Papers	20 %
Experiential Exercises and Reflection Papers	15 %
Ethnographic “Novel”: Critical Reading/Presentation	10 %
Exam	20 %
IC Research Project and Presentation (including prospectus/annotated bib/paper/presentation)	25 %

Total 100 %

Course Requirements

Participation (10 %):

Participation is critical in creating a positive learning community in this class. The success of this seminar depends upon your level of engagement. Everyone will be expected to contribute in both collaborative and individual ways.

We will begin our weekly sessions (some, not all) by sharing intercultural “insights.” Insights refer to “ah-ha” experiences, observations, understandings, or acts where we make connections between something in our everyday lives and our understanding of intercultural communication processes and practices.

Reading Response Papers (20%):

The purpose of these papers is to insure a high level of engagement with the reading material and class discussions. Focus on what interests you, what you find problematic, what provides insight and new understand. I do not want a summary of the reading!! Focus each paper on one or two themes or topics and develop your ideas and questions around these issues. **NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED!!** Papers should be approximately two pages in length.

Experiential Exercises and Reflection Papers (15 %)

Field Experience Reflection Paper

As a class, we will agree on a Saturday in the semester when we will all participate in an intercultural field experience. All students are expected to attend. The experience will take approximately six hours and will enable students to participate in “creative and critical praxis.” The intention of the experience is to give students the opportunity to translate and transform our theoretical and methodological understanding of intercultural communication into practice. This is a highly creative and emergent process where critical consciousness, self-reflexivity, and engaged experience meet. Each student is required to write a 2-3 page reflection paper articulating her/his learning from the experience by integrating your personal insights with the course content.

Identity Mobile and Paper

The construction, negotiation, and representation of identity are central themes in this course. For this assignment, students will construct a visual representation of their identity in the form of a mobile. The mobile offers a metaphor for fluid, multiple, layered, and intersecting notions of identity. The purpose of the assignment is to reflect upon your identity, to consider how others have constructed your identity (whether that is in terms of race, class, gender, or sexuality), and to envision the ways in which you are an active agent creating yourself and the world around you. A two-three page (typed) essay

(with bibliography) discussing your understanding of your identity construction, as well as application and extension of theories discussed in the reading is required. The identity mobile will be graded on level of engagement not artistic ability.

Ethnographic “Novel”: Critical Reading/Presentation (10 %)

To paraphrase Clifford Geertz, anthropology (and the study of intercultural communication) is like literature; both are acts of interpretation, even acts of the imagination. The three ethnographic/documentary “novels” chosen for this class—*The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* by Anne Fadiman; *What is the What* by Dave Eggers and *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail*—are interpretive and imaginative renderings of intercultural encounters and the conflicts, joys, trials and successes that accompany them. At the core, each is a testament to the power of the human spirit to navigate, endure and triumph in the context of powerful geopolitical, social, cultural and personal forces.

Students will select one of the three novels to read, research and present. Group presentations will be approximately 40 minutes including time for questions/discussion. Groups should consult with the instructor prior to the presentation.

Presentations should provide the class with:

- a.) a summary of the book
- b.) a broad geopolitical context for understanding the situations/issues of the novel
- c.) analysis through the application of intercultural theories and concepts from functionalist, interpretive, critical and postcolonial perspectives
- d.) questions for discussion

Intercultural Research Project and Presentation (25 % Total)

The purpose of this project is for you to engage in intercultural research. The project may be developed and completed individually or in collaboration with one other person in the class. All projects require written documentation, which must be completed individually. You have a variety of options for this project including the following:

- 1.) You may conduct empirical research and write a scholarly paper on an intercultural communication topic such as adaptation processes/practices of specific cultural groups, attitudes towards intercultural/interracial dating/friendships/romantic relationships, behaviors/attitudes that constitute intercultural alliances, bi/multicultural identity development, intercultural communication in the workplace or intercultural conflict management.
- 2.) You may research and write a scholarly paper using critical ethnography to examine a cultural/intercultural “site” or place such as a workplace, neighborhood, or venue

applying concepts, theories and methods of interpretation and analysis discussed in class.

- 3.) You may research and write a scholarly paper on a “text” such as a media event or performance, a form of popular culture, or a form of creative work such as film, or music that addresses intercultural issues or themes related to the class. Your critical analysis of the “text” may address issues or questions of identity, cultural adaptation, processes of assimilation, hybridity, contested representation, etc.
- 4.) You may research and write a scholarly paper on an intercultural issue or topic such as current U.S. immigration policies and practices, the impact of globalization on intercultural relations, controversies regarding racial profiling, intercultural communication and tourism, or current trends in intercultural training. You may use functionalist, interpretive, critical, post-colonial or a combination of these approaches to research your topic.
- 5.) You may research, participate in and write a scholarly paper about a current social movement such as the anti-war movement, immigrant rights movement, the anti-immigrants rights movement, the alter-globalization movement. As an activist/research, you will want to address the intercultural issues and dynamics that relate to the movement you research using ethnographic or critical ethnographic methods.
- 6.) You may research, design and implement a training program in intercultural communication at a business, educational or community setting. Your scholarly paper should include research on intercultural training theory, methods, facilitation and ethics.

Research Project Process and Documentation

a.) Research prospectus

The 3-4 page prospectus should include:

- 1.) A general description of your topic
- 2.) Why this topic is significant
- 3.) Your method for investigating the topic
- 4.) Preliminary bibliography (5-6 sources)

b.) Annotated Bibliography (10% of the total 25% for the research project)

The annotated bibliography should focus on a single concept, theme or theory related to your research project. The annotated bibliography should be as comprehensive as possible, identifying all significant works dealing with the topic and offering a brief annotation of each work. The annotated bibliography should be typed, single space with double space between entries and should be approximately 8 pages in length. You are

expected and required to formulate your own annotations. **Turn in their annotated bibliographies NO LATER THAN APRIL 1st.**

c.) Final Paper (15 % of the total for the research project)

Written documentation for all projects should be approximately 18-20 pages including bibliography. The paper must follow either American Psychological Association (APA) or Modern Language Association (MLA) style manual.

d.) Project Presentation

All projects will be presented in a “mini-conference” during the last two class meetings.

Exam: (20 %)

There will be one take-home essay exam, which requires you to synthesize, integrate and think beyond the theoretical, conceptual and practical issues we will cover in class. You will have one week to work on the exam.

Tentative Course Schedule

1/21 Introduction and Orientation to the Course

1/28 Intercultural Communication: Historical Foundations

- Bennett-Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective
- Leeds-Hurwitz-Notes on the History of ICC
- Hall-Key Concepts
- Sorrells-Gifts of Wisdom: An interview with Dr. Edward T. Hall

DUE: Response Paper #1

2/4 Intercultural Communication: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

- Martin & Nakayama-Thinking Dialectically about Culture and Communication
- Sorrells & Nakagawa-Intercultural Communication Praxis and Social Justice
- During- Introduction to Cultural Studies Reader
- Williams & Chrisman-Intro to Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory

DUE: Response Paper #2

2/11 Intercultural Communication in the Global Context

- Sorrells-Understanding the Context of Globalization
- Appadurai-Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy
- Nederveen Pieterse-Globalization and culture: Three paradigms
- Sardar and Davies-Why do People Hate America?

DUE: Response Paper #3

2/18 Functionalist Approaches

- Gudykunst-Uncertainty Reduction
- Ting-Toomey/Hofstede-Values Orientation/Dimensions of Culture
- Kim-Cross Cultural Adaptation
- Ting-Toomey-Intercultural Conflict: A Face Negotiation Theory

DUE: Prospectus for Intercultural Research Project

2/25 Interpretive Approaches

- Carbaugh-Toward a Perspective on Culture
- Ribeau-How I Came to Know
- Tanno-Names, Narratives and the Evolution of Ethnic Identity
- Baldwin & Hecht-The Layered Perspective of Cultural Intolerance

DUE: Response Paper #4

3/4 Critical and Postcolonial Approaches

- Halualani-Connecting Hawaiians: The Politics of Authenticity
- Beasley-Migrancy and Homodesire
- Nakayama-Dis/orienting Identities
- Mendoza-Bridging Paradigms

DUE: Response Paper #5

3/11 Race, Gender, Class, and Sexuality

- Winant-The Historical Sociology of Race
- hooks-Race Talk, Killing Rage, Ending Racism
- Lui, et. al.-The Color of Wealth
- Katz-The Invention of Heterosexuality
- Halualani et. al.-Between the Structural and the Personal

DUE: Response Paper #6

3/18 Whiteness: Performing and Resisting Power

- Frankenberg-Being White, Seeing White
- Carrillo-Rowe & Malhotra-Unhinging Whiteness
- hooks-Overcoming White Supremacy
- Kivel-What Does an Ally Do?

DUE: Response Paper #7

3/25 Culture and Identity: Politics and Poetics

- Collier-Cultural Identity
- Yep-My Three Cultures
- Weeks-Necessary Fictions: Sexual Identities and the Politics of Desire
- Nance and Foeman-On Being Biracial in the US

Due: Identity Mobile and Reflection Paper

4/1 Representation and Commodification: Critical/Postcolonial Perspectives

- Tanno & Jandt-Redefining the “Other” in MC Research
- Clifford-Traveling Cultures
- Spivak-Can the Subaltern Speak?
- Sorrells-Embodied Negotiation: Commodification and Cultural Representation

DUE: Response Paper #8

4/8 Spring Break: No Class

4/15 Ethnographic Novel Group Presentations

DUE: Group Presentations

4/22 Global Border Crossings: Migration and Media

- Hegde-Translated Enactments: Relational Configurations of Asian Indian Immigrant
- Fernandez-Border Crackdown
- Crothers-American Popular Culture and the Future of Globalization
- Raymond-Pop Culture and Queer Representation

Hand out Take-home Exam

4/29 Intercultural Alliances and Activism

- Allen, et. al.-Intercultural Alliances
- Goodman-Hope and Possibilities
- Broome, et. al.-“In the Thick of Things”: Dialogue about the Activist Turn

DUE: Take-home Exam

5/6: Final Project Presentations

5/13: Final Project Presentations (Exam Schedule: 8:00-10:00)

DUE: FINAL PROJECT DOCUMENTATION (12/13)