

## **EXPLORING COMMUNITY & CULTURE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT**

### **Online Course Outline**

#### **Phase I: Group A Only (one assignment/week for 4 weeks)**

##### **Week 1 Goals and expectations**

###### Preparation for Discussions

- Watch Instructor video: *Course Goals and Structure* (Course structure, deliverables, grading, online communication, etc.)

###### Discussion Forum

- Discussion of goals and expectations (Types of travel, nature of tourism, similarities/differences from study abroad, students' travel experience to date, prior experiences with online learning)

##### **Week 2 Culture and Accommodation**

###### Preparation for Discussions

- Read <http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture> section 1.2.1, the iceberg metaphor for culture.

###### Discussion Board

- Describe three examples of cultural difference you have observed in your host country. What are the observable indicators of difference? What factors might underlie the observable differences? Why is it important to reserve judgment about these observable phenomena until you are more familiar with the cultural underpinnings?

##### **Week 3 Experiential Encounter with Difference**

###### Preparation for Discussions

- Keep a journal for one week. Make a list of differences you notice in your host country from your home environment. These observations might be taken from conversations with your homestay family, a ride on a bus, a visit to the post office, a meal in a restaurant, etc. Your observations may involve things like people's demeanor and behavior, the physical environmental, or locals' interpersonal style, but provide at least one example of an *interaction* between two or more people in which you noticed difference from what you're used to. Describe the environmental setting and document your impressions and reactions in detail.

## Discussion Forum

- Post a brief list of the differences you noticed. Provide details of the ways in which each experience was familiar/unfamiliar (including things like people's body language, the way parents interact with children, the way buildings looked or traffic operated, the way people greeted each other, whether people seemed rushed/relaxed, etc.)

## **Week 4 Reacting to difference**

### Preparation for Discussions

- Review your journal notes from last week.

## Discussion Forum

- Choose your most powerful experience of difference from the list. Describe your experience of this difference in as much detail as possible. What was your emotional reaction (desire to engage/disengage, impatience, fascination, lack of connection)? How did you feel towards the people involved (distance, empathy, superiority, pity, kinship, irritation, admiration)?
- Reflect on your experience of the "otherness" of the person or people in this example. What challenges might you have integrating with this group?

## Phase II: Both Groups (two assignments/week for 11 weeks)

### Week 1: Course Introduction: Moving towards Ethnorelativism

#### Preparation for Discussions

- Group B only: Watch Instructor video – *Course Goals and Structure*
- Read Bennett, *Intercultural Communication*
- Read Bennett, *Intercultural Constructivism*
- Read Gordon, *Going Abroad: Traveling like an Anthropologist*, chapters. 1, 2

#### Discussion Forum

1. Describe an experience you've had of successfully integrating into a new community (a new family, town, school, or social group, for example). What was unfamiliar or uncomfortable that is now familiar? What were your feelings about the group when you first encountered it and how have they evolved based on your experience of integration? How does this experience relate to Bennett's discussion of ethnocentrism/ethnorelativism? To what degree did you come to hold the "Native point of view" (Gordon, p. 26)?
2. Given your short time abroad, how can you move beyond "kitschiness" and "cosmopolitanism" as defined by Gordon? How do you plan to move towards ethnorelativism as described in the Bennett articles? Identify a community in the U.S. to which you are an "outsider" in Gordon's terms. What tools do you think you would need to engage successfully with this community? Which of these might you hope to develop during your study abroad?

### Week 2 Reflection on Cultural Identity

#### Preparation for Discussions

- Read Adler, [\*Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Multiculturalism\*](#)
- Watch Instructor lecture – *Cultural Identity Mapping*

#### Discussion Forum

1. Post a picture of your current cultural identity map. Reflecting on the Adler reading, discuss the way your cultural affiliations have contributed to this identity. What contextual factors (historical, political, ethnic, socioeconomic, etc.) have shaped it? To what degree are multiculturalism as defined by Adler and ethnocentrism as defined by Bennett your goals?
2. Comment on your classmates' postings. What similarities and differences do you see in your goals and motivations? Based on your review of these and the Bennett and Adler readings, how are your definitions of engagement and integration developing? How do you anticipate that your cultural identity will evolve during your study abroad? Do you think it's possible to avoid having "a

U.S. experience in the vicinity of your host country” as described by Bennett?  
Should it be a goal, and if so, how might you move towards it?

### **Week 3: Definitions of Community**

#### Preparation for Discussions

- Read Gordon, *Going Abroad*, chapter 3
- Read: Posthill, *Localizing the internet beyond communities and networks*

#### Discussion Forum

1. Identify a non-majority community you've encountered in your host country and how membership in it is defined. What are its defining characteristics (dress, behavior, belief systems, physical appearance, etc.)? What contextual factors (history, socioeconomic status, etc.) contribute to its increasing/continuing/decreasing separateness?
2. Using the Posthill description of the Malaysian community as a guide, provide a detailed description of the community from your last posting. How do members interact with one another to the best of your knowledge? How is this community perceived by the majority community? How does it perceive and interact with outsiders? To what degree is integration by outsiders possible and through what mechanisms?

### **Week 4: Preparing for Engagement**

#### Preparation for Discussions

- Read Gordon, *Going Abroad*, chapters 4 and 8
- Review the material on: <http://changeyourlens.org/how/>
- Watch digital storytelling video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rebl0mKYahs&list=PL0xpUyg1-vP6xUIAISiWqgX--twGzXT-w&index=2>
- Review example of final project from Australia program

#### Discussion Forum

1. What change in your personal lens do you hope to accomplish? In the digital storytelling video, what did you notice about the storytellers' level of integration into her host community? How are your goals similar to or different from hers? How might your avenues for engagement approximate or differ from hers?
2. To what degree do the various examples reflect ethnographic inquiry into the communities studied? How do your observations of these sources inform your own final project? To what degree do you hope to uncover the “hidden transcript” in Gordon's terms? What level of integration do you think is feasible for you in one semester? How might you achieve it and what measures of integration might you use?

## Week 5: Self-assessment

### Preparation for Discussions

- Watch Instructor lecture: *Cultural Analysis* (introduction of framework)
- Read Mendez, *The Culture Solution*, chapter 2

### Discussion Forum

1. Complete cultural profile on p. x of *The Culture Solution*. Describe your areas of greater/less flexibility. Describe the challenges the reading predicts you will face in cultural contexts with tendencies different from your own. Describe judgments you would likely have in those environments and judgments others would be likely to make about you.
2. Describe your experience in your host country to date. Identify judgments on your part and/or any judgments you think you're experiencing from others. What strategies are you using to get along? If integration is a goal, for which dimensions do you have the greatest opportunities for developing flexibility and moving towards ethnorelativism as defined by the Bennett readings? What cultural tendencies do you notice in your groupmates' descriptions of their host countries? How might you react if you were studying abroad in their locations?

## Week 6: Project Proposal

### Discussion Forum

1. Submit your Final Project Proposal, including a plan for community engagement, according to the instructions. Comment on at least two groupmates' proposals. In what way is your project similar/different from others? How do they reflect differences in study abroad location, individual experience/individual goals, etc.?
2. Review the instructor comments on your Project Proposal. Based on the instructor feedback and what you have observed in your groupmates' proposals, revise and resubmit your proposal or explain your intention to continue with it as originally written. What additional dimensions has reviewing others' proposals added to yours?

## Week 7: Stereotyping

### Preparation for Discussions

- Watch Adichie video: The Danger of a Single Story  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en)
- Read Mendez, *The Culture Solution*, chapter 3

### Discussion Forum

1. Discuss stereotypes of U.S. Americans held by people in your host country. Identify the cultural tendencies from the framework in *The Culture Solution* that might give rise to them. Discuss common stereotypes of your host country held

by people in the U.S. Based on the Gordon reading, how do you think the concepts of power and elitism may relate to these stereotypes? Discuss some ways to recognize/ accommodate diversity there and move beyond stereotypes. What stereotypes of U.S. Americans (or other group you're perceived as belonging to) are operating in your host country? What U.S. cultural tendencies as defined by the text might be the basis of these perceptions? What strategies have you tried to minimize being subject to this stereotyping? What else might you do?

2. Describe one or two striking intercultural experiences you've had (homestay discussion, class incident, meeting you attended, etc.).
  - Analyze these examples for evidence of cultural tendencies. Identify **two** tendencies that are salient in these examples but less prevalent in the US.
  - Provide one visual depiction (such as a photo or video) and a written description and of the way a **third** tendency manifests itself in your host country.

## Week 8 Analyzing Difference

Preparation for Discussions

- Read Mendez, *The Culture Solution* chapter 10

Discussion Forum

1. With reference to the examples of intercultural experiences you posted last week, describe your personal reaction and discuss:
  - How does your experience relate to the game analogy of culture?
  - How do your experience and the experiences reported by your groupmates inform your goals for engagement and integration? What impediments limit your participation? Your acceptance by others?
1. Describe significant historical/political/socioeconomic or other contextual factors in your host country that seem to be contributing to the tendencies you identified in your examples.
  - Do you see evolution in these tendencies (based on differences between older people and younger people or large cities and rural areas, for example)?
  - What forces seem to be driving this evolution?

## Week 9 Applying Cultural Knowledge in New Contexts

Preparation for Discussions

- Read *Potential for Synergy* posting
- Read *Intercultural Business Scenario* posting.

### Discussion Forum

1. Discuss the cultural tendencies you see in each character, how they lead to conflict, the strategies each could use to become more effective, what each could learn/how each could benefit from integrating.
2. How did you experience the reading from Nancy's perspective after reading the same story from Affendi's perspective? How does Nancy's behavior relate to the game metaphor? How does it relate to your experience in your host country? What are you learning from your exposure to new cultural tendencies?

## **Week 10 Articulating the Value**

### Preparation for Discussions

- Watch Instructor lecture – *Unpacking Your Transferrable Skills*

### Discussion Forum

1. Describe two salient experiences from your study abroad and your learning from each. Translate these experiences into talking points for resumes or interviews identifying the transferrable skills you gained.
2. Imagine you're in an interview. Answer each of the following questions using an example from your study abroad experience.
  - Describe a time when you had to deal with interpersonal conflict. What factors did you take into consideration? How did you manage the situation and what was the result?
  - Describe a difficult decision you had to make. What factors did you take into consideration? What process did you use and what was the result?

## **Week 11 Summarizing Your Experience**

### Preparation for Discussions

- Group A only: Read Jesionka, *Dealing with Reverse Culture Shock*  
<http://www.ytravelblog.com/dealing-with-reverse-culture-shock/>

### Discussion Forum

1. Post your Final Project Presentation
2. Comment on the transferrable skills and other learning you see in your group members' projects

## Phase III: Group B Only (one assignment/week for four weeks)

### Week 1 Reflection on Identity

#### Preparation for Discussions

- Watch Rory Sutherland video *Perspective is Everything*  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/rory\\_sutherland\\_perspective\\_is\\_everything?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/rory_sutherland_perspective_is_everything?language=en)

#### Discussion Forum

1. Discuss how the Sutherland video relates to intercultural interaction. In particular, what does his example of the arrival time countdown in the London subway suggest about intercultural interaction?
2. Describe strategies you've developed to integrate with your community of choice and how successful they have been. Where have you resisted? Strategized successfully? Integrated? What are the difficulties with analyzing daily experience and implementing new strategies?

### Week 2 Experiential Encounter with Difference

#### Preparation for Discussions

- Explore a new social context or community. This might involve visiting a new part of town, attending an event hosted by an unfamiliar social group, etc. Make a list of cultural tendencies you notice in this community. Your observations may involve things like people's demeanor and behavior, the physical environmental, or locals' interpersonal style, but provide at least one example of an *interaction* between two or more people in which you noticed difference from what you're used to. Describe the environmental setting and document your impressions and reactions in detail

#### Discussion Forum

- Post a brief list of the cultural tendencies you noticed. Provide details of the ways in which each experience was familiar/unfamiliar (including things like people's body language, the way parents interact with children, the way buildings looked or traffic operated, the way people greeted each other, whether people seemed rushed/relaxed, etc.)

### Week 3 Assessing Your Learning

#### Discussion Forum

- Discuss your activity from the previous week
  - Identify four cultural tendencies that were operating in the environment. Describe how your skills at cultural feature identification have developed during the semester
  - Describe your reaction to the tendencies that were different from those of the US. How do you think you would have reacted to them before completing this course?
  - How will this shift help you deal with difference in new contexts (future travel destinations, relationships, work, parenting, etc.)?



## **Week 4 Taking It with You**

### Preparation for Discussions

- Read Jesionka, *Dealing with Reverse Culture Shock* <http://www.ytravelblog.com/dealing-with-reverse-culture-shock/>

### Discussion Forum

- Discuss how you've changed since you left home (attitudes, preferences, habits, perceptions of the US, etc.) What will you miss about your host country? What measures might you take to mitigate difficulty with re-entry?