

# INTERCULTURAL PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

IFSA Rome

**US semester credit hours:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Course Code:** IB386-07 / COM386-07

**Course Length:** Semester

**Delivery Method:** Face to face

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Suggested Cross-listings:** International Business, Communications

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to improve your ability to communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

As much as anything, this is a course in personal development designed to prepare you to study and work successfully domestically and abroad with people from every part of the world. Success is a function of your ability to communicate across cultures, build cultural intelligence, and global dexterity. Critical skills include your ability to decode the context, understand yourself, and to respond creatively. Utilizing intercultural theory, we will explore the complexity of culture through paradox, stereotypes, verbal and non-verbal communication, personal beliefs and values, and strategies for building cultural intelligence and adaptability.

Examination of Italian work environments, professional practices, and business etiquette will be an important and underpinning feature of the course. Local guest speakers representing such areas as multicultural team leadership and international young professionals will augment your learning. At all times, theoretical learning will be linked to personal experiences and perspectives.

While this course is likely to contribute to a positive study abroad experience; in the long term, the aim is to enhance your effectiveness in multi-cultural organizations whether domestically or abroad.

## COURSE DELIVERY

Course delivery will be accomplished through a variety of means including lectures, guest speakers, readings, discussions, in-class exercises, group conversations, video viewings, and utilization of Myer-Briggs Type Indicator (MTBI) resources.

Students are expected to read or view assigned resources in advance and be prepared to actively discuss them in class. In most meetings, the instructor will overview the topic and then facilitate a group discussion, drawing out relevant themes, following up on specific lines of inquiry, and prompting students' thoughtful engagement with the topic.

## COURSE SYLLABUS

Students are encouraged to bring their prior learning experiences into class discussions (based on experiential learning theory) and to make cognitive connections between this course and others in the IFSA Program in Italy whenever possible (based on the philosophy of integrative learning).

### STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Define and apply intercultural theories presented in class
- Articulate their personal values, beliefs, and communication style
- Relate the effect of their personal communication style to their ability to work in cross-cultural contexts
- Construct and apply strategies for modifying their personal communication style while retaining your values
- Demonstrate strengthened written and oral communication skills
- Observe Italian business etiquette and appreciate many complexities of Italian working environments
- Become familiar with resources available for further research on intercultural business communication
- Make cognitive connections between learning in this course and other learning experiences in the IFSA Rome

### COURSE OUTLINE

Class	Topic	Readings & Assignments Due for Class
1	Course Overview	Review syllabus. Class expectations, class rules, evaluation methods, etc. Build community.  Are there any specific topics students you want to be sure are covered during this course? Are there any specific goals you have for this course?  What do you already know about business communications in Italy?
2	What Is Intercultural Business Communication?	Definitions, discussions of concepts, preparation for first readings. What is the cultural iceberg? Are there other analogies that work better for you?
3	Culture: Introduction	HOFSTEDE, G. 2011. "DIMENSIONALIZING CULTURES, THE HOFSTEDE MODEL." ONLINE READINGS IN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE. <a href="http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/vol2/iss1/8/?&amp;sa=U&amp;ei=9owuVLrgCIfXaqznglgJ&amp;ved=0CEsQFjAJ&amp;usq=AFQjCNFBrStE0AJaAVPLrpU8s-IDqibYvw">http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/vol2/iss1/8/?&amp;sa=U&amp;ei=9owuVLrgCIfXaqznglgJ&amp;ved=0CEsQFjAJ&amp;usq=AFQjCNFBrStE0AJaAVPLrpU8s-IDqibYvw</a>  <a href="#">"International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior" by Nancy Adler</a>

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		How do the different dimensions differ? What really makes each stand out? How does understanding these different dimensions benefit you in the professional world?
4	Developmental Models and Ethnocentrism	<p>“A Developmental Approach to Training for Intercultural Sensitivity,” Milton Bennett</p> <p>Discussion of how this resonates for students and faculty so far. What’s already changed since arriving abroad? Given a scenario, what recommendations would you have for supporting someone in each stage to the next stage?</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vKRFH2Wm6Y&amp;t=2s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vKRFH2Wm6Y&amp;t=2s</a></p>
5	Local Business Practices	Review <i>Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands</i> for Italy. Discuss differences and similarities with U.S. and other regions. What are your thoughts on this? Have you already observed these differences in your everyday life on site?
6	Guest Speaker: Local Business Practices in Rome	Submit 5 questions that you have for the Guest Speaker who can reflect local business practices in Rome. You should plan to ask at least one of your questions during class. Questions should be typed and printed and submitted as a hard copy (5 points).
7	Ethnocentrism and cultural paradoxes	<p>“Shakespeare in the Bush”: Bohannon (I recommend reading a synopsis of <i>Hamlet</i> before reading “Shakespeare in the Bush” if you are not already familiar with this Shakespeare play. It will make your life easier!)</p> <p>“Us and Them” David Sedaris:  <a href="http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2004/jun/sedaris/usandthem.html">http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2004/jun/sedaris/usandthem.html</a></p> <p>These essays are much less formal than the others read so far. They illustrate (perhaps extreme) points of view when it comes to intercultural understanding and communication. Have you ever encountered people here or at home that remind you of these writers? If you were in a business setting and encountered a colleague with little understanding of your culture and even less ability to adapt to it, what steps would you take to address this situation?</p>
8	Stereotypes	<p>ATTIAH, K. APRIL 30, 2015. HOW WESTERN MEDIA WOULD COVER BALTIMORE IF IT HAPPENED ELSEWHERE. <i>WASHINGTON POST</i>.  <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2015/04/30/how-western-media-would-cover-baltimore-if-it-happened-elsewhere/">http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2015/04/30/how-western-media-would-cover-baltimore-if-it-happened-elsewhere/</a></p> <p>JOYCE S. OSLAND, ALLAN BIRD, JUNE DELANO AND MATHEW JACOB. 2000. BEYOND SOPHISTICATED STEREOTYPING: CULTURAL</p>

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		<p>SENSEMAKING IN CONTEXT. THE ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE (VOL. 14, NO. 1,) PP. 65-79.</p> <p>So much of what we encounter in cultures is related to stereotyping. What are the benefits of stereotypes? What are the dangers of stereotypes? What place do stereotypes have in business? Should stereotypes be avoided/ignored at all costs?</p>
9	Cultural Perspectives	<p>“BODY RITUAL AMONG THE NACIREMA”  <a href="http://www.ohio.edu/people/thompsoc/Body.html">http://www.ohio.edu/people/thompsoc/Body.html</a></p> <p>KOHL, R. “THE VALUES AMERICANS LIVE BY”  <a href="http://www1.cmc.edu/pages/faculty/alee/extra/American_values">http://www1.cmc.edu/pages/faculty/alee/extra/American_values</a></p> <p>Have any of you read the essay on the Nacirema before? What’s unique about the “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema?” Does it seem familiar? Bizarre? Hard to understand? Obvious?</p> <p>“Values” is an older essay? How have these values changed? Make your own lists of these values. How do these compare to the values you perceive on this program? How might you find a middle ground?</p>
10	Communicating and Negotiations Across Cultures	<p>“Cultural Intelligence: Surviving and Thriving in the Global Village” by Thomas and Inkson</p> <p>Using <i>Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands</i> as a starting resource, how do different strategies greeting/interacting differ around the world? What advice would you give to a colleague who will be going abroad to a new culture for the first time on business? You can look at local culture here or pick a third culture to examine.</p>
11	Guest Speaker: Facilitating Multicultural Working Teams	<p>Submit in 5 questions that you have for the Guest speaker who can reflect on different negotiating strategies locally and if possible comparing these to others around the world. You should plan to ask at least one of your questions during class. Questions should be typed and printed and submitted as a hard copy (5 points).</p>
12	Exam Review	<p>Review in preparation for Exam</p>
13	Exam	<p>Exam over readings and vocabulary (100 points)</p>
14	MBTI Workshop: Personal Communication Style	<p>Workshop. MBTI Communication Style Assessment should be completed before the start of class.</p>

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15	MBTI Workshop: Personal Communication Style	Review MBTI results.
16	Discussion of results	How do your MBTI results prepare you for success in the business field in the U.S. ( <i>Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands</i> p. 544)? How do your results differ from the local culture here? Where do you see potential conflicts? Where do you see potential benefits? Small groups will prepare recommendations for an intercultural training of members of your home office who will be traveling here – to be presented at the end of class (10 points).
17	Why Global Dexterity Matters	Global Dexterity: Part 1
18	How to Develop Your Own Global Dexterity	Global Dexterity: Part 2
19	Fine-tuning Your Global Dexterity	Global Dexterity: Part 3 & Conclusion
20	Drawing Connections	Final Paper Part 1 due. In small groups, discuss your findings of how your MBTI type aligns to Hofstede's dimensions. How does this relate to how you see yourself doing business? Each group should select a presenter to discuss a summary of your discussion.
21	Outsourced	View and discuss film <i>Outsourced</i>
22	Outsourced	View and discuss film <i>Outsourced</i>
23	Global Dexterity Application	Looking back at your business plan from class #15 and considering what you observed in viewing <i>Outsourced</i> – how would your training recommendations change based on these resources? In small groups, revise your plan and present the changes to the group (10 points).
24	Comparisons	Final Paper Part 2 due. In small groups discuss how you found Hofstede's dimensions to compare to the local culture? How/where do you see this displayed? Utilize resources like <i>Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands</i> in your discussion and paper.
25	International Young Professionals Panel: Challenges of Living in a New Culture	Submit 5 questions that you have for professionals who are experiencing professional life in a different culture from the one in which they were raised. You should plan to ask at least one of your questions during class. Questions should be typed and printed and submitted as a hard copy (5 points).
26	Intersectionality	Discuss concept of intersectionality. How does application of this idea to your study abroad experience impact your learning?

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		Identities based on gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, ability, size, national origin, citizenship status, religion, language, literacy, etc., are all influenced by one another and cannot be neatly separated to determine which sole identity defines an individual's experience.
27	Prescription for Success	Final Paper Part 3 due: In small groups, based on your final paper parts 1 and 2 what "prescription for success" did you come up with for adapting to this culture? How will/could you experiment, test yourself, etc?
28	Cultural Empathy	Discuss concept of cultural empathy. How does application of this idea to your study abroad experience impact your learning?  Cultural competence is the ability to interact comfortably in a foreign society. Cultural empathy is the ability to accept another cultural point of view, to think of the particular way in which the people of society different from your own think and interact as a right way.
29	Guest Speaker: Using Your Study Abroad Experience Professionally	Submit 5 questions that you have for using your study abroad experience professionally. You should plan to ask at least one of your questions during class. Questions should be typed and printed and submitted as a hard copy (5 points).
30	Discuss Outcomes; End of class feedback	Final Paper due (Parts 1, 2, and 3 - all tied together *revisions as needed*). Final two-page reflection on "take-aways" due. Class discussion on take-aways and next steps. Integration of learning.

\*Note: Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

### RESOURCES

- Molinsky, A. (2013). *Global Dexterity*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press. ISBN-13: 978-1-4221-8727-2
- Morrison, T. & Conaway, W. 2006. *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands (2nd Edition)*. Avon: Adams Media. ISBN-978-1-59337-368-9
- *Outsourced*. Film from 2010 starring Josh Hamilton and Ayesha Dhaker. Available on Amazon.com and Netflix.
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MTBI) Communication Style Assessment. There are several online resources for this, including: <https://careerassessmentsite.com/tests/myers-briggs->

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[tests/mbti-communication-style-report/](#)

### EVALUATION METHODS

The course instructor will provide specific requirements and grading rubrics for individual assignments for the course. Your final grade in the course will be comprised of the following course requirements:

Course requirements and point allocations are listed below.

- 1 Exam. 100 points. The exam may be a combination of true/false, matching, multiple choice, short answer, and essay.
- MBTI Communication Style Assessment: 30 points. This assessment is a critical piece of several class activities and will feed into your final paper/presentation. It's important that this is completed by the date specified in the syllabus.
- Guest Speaker Questions: 5 points each. There are a number of guest speakers in this class and students should approach these unique opportunities thoughtfully. Students will prepare 5 questions for each speaker based on the topic and speaker biography. Questions will be submitted, typed, at the end of the class in which that speaker has presented.
- In class group activities: 10 points per person/per activity.
- Final Paper:
  - Part 1: 30 points. This part should synthesize several of the topics and theories discussed in class in combination with your assessment information regarding your personal communication style. Discuss your MBTI Communication Assessment, what did it say, how does this compare to your perspective on yourself (accurate, lacking, new)? When thinking about Hofstede's 6 dimensions and the scores for your country of origin, how do you think your communication style compares to these dimensions? Do you feel you tend to be close to these dimensions or far?
  - Part 2: 30 points. Review the Hofstede website for the country you're in (<https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>). What are the 6 dimensions of that country? How does your communication style prepare you for communicating in that country? Are there areas where you've experienced challenges? Why?
  - Part 3: 30 points. Using the Hofstede dimensions for your country of choice, *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands*, and Molinsky's 6 areas for diagnosing the cultural code, where do you think that you will have to adapt your communication style in that country? What are your thoughts or recommendations for yourself about developing your own global dexterity? What's your "prescription for success?"

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- Final version: 30 points. Parts 1, 2, and 3 with any corrections made, smooth transitions between sections, updates based on group discussions, etc.
- Final Project Reflections: 50 points. Considering the three group discussions you've had about your final paper (parts 1, 2, and 3) craft a written response and reflection. Your Final Project Reflection should be about 3-4 pages and should reflect on your experience discussing these assignments in your group and writing your own assignments. What patterns did you notice? Were there outlying experiences from others (or from yourself) that did not seem to align with the experiences of the group? Does learning the perspectives of others cause you to reinterpret your own understanding of your personality type in relation to your current destination, etc? What are your overall "take-aways" from your experience writing this paper, working with your groups, and understanding the perspectives of others?
- Class Participation. 60 points. Students are expected to be in class, prepared, and ready to discuss the readings. Participation is a function of attendance and participation.

Exam 1	100
MBTI Communication Style Assessment	30
Guest Speaker Questions (5 points each)	20
In-class group assignments (5 points each)	20
Final Paper Part 1	30
Final Paper Part 2	30
Final Paper Part 3	30
Final Paper 3-part final draft with transitions	30
Final Presentation Reflection	50
Class Participation Grade	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>

Grades will be assigned based on the following points (no rounding of percentages).

- A = 360-400 points (90%)
- B = 320-359 points (80%)
- C = 280-319 points (70%)
- D = 240-279 points (60%)
- F = < 240 points

### **Timely Submissions**

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the course instructor and generally only in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of

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academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

IFSA takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your instructor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may result. The incident will be reported to the IFSA resident director as well as your home institution.

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