

Intercultural Communication: Cultural Immersion in Barcelona

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: BCLA 3027

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: xxx

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to enrich the students' intercultural learning during their sojourn in Barcelona. The content facilitates students' ability to make meaning of their experiences with cultural others. It takes an experiential, constructivist approach to intercultural communication that requires students to interact with the local community and analyze their experiences through the lens of intercultural theories such as ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, identity, cross-cultural adaptation, and verbal and non-verbal communication. The course helps students develop a critical awareness of their ethnocentric beliefs and the ability to shift their perspectives, leading to a deeper understanding of other cultures. By connecting students' real-life experiences with intercultural theories, it aims to improve students' capability to engage in effective and appropriate communication across cultures—a valuable skill in the globalized and increasingly multicultural societies in which we live.

Course Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of how culture influences values, behaviors, and communication preferences in oneself and others.
- Conceptualize how cultural differences and similarities might impact communication in

various contexts (e.g. business, migration, tourism, education, etc.).

- Develop the ability to shift one's perspectives, behaviors, and attitudes to better adapt and communicate in cross-cultural situations.
- Analyze how social identities and privilege lead certain groups to obtain certain advantages and disadvantages in intercultural contexts.
- Understand the importance of Catalan identity, language, and culture in Barcelona as a tourist city and as a minority group within Spain.

Methodology

Students are expected to attend each class and field study course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Active class participation is essential in this course. Experiential learning activities will require students to engage with the local community in a way that is authentic to Spanish/Catalan culture. In-class field studies also require students to closely observe local culture as well as interact with local people in shops and on the street. Students are expected to come to class with the readings completed (approximately 20 pages per week), and be prepared to analyze their intercultural experiences abroad using course concepts in both small group work and larger group discussions.

Required Reading / Materials

Textbook

Jackson, Jane. *Introducing language and intercultural communication (3rd edition)*. London: Routledge, 2024.

Readings & Resources

Aslani, Soroush, Jimena Ramirez-Marin, Zhaleh Semnani-Azad, Jeanne M. Brett and Catherine Tinsley. "Dignity, Face, and Honor Cultures : Implications for Negotiation and Conflict Management" In *Handbook of Research on Negotiation*, 249-282. Edited by Mara Olekalns and Wendi L. Adair. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013.

Baker, Will. "English as a lingua franca and intercultural communication" In *The Routledge handbook of English as a lingua franca*, 25-36. Edited by Jenkins, Jennifer, Will Baker, and Martin Dewey. London: Routledge, 2018.

Bou, Enric. & Food and the Everyday in Spain: Immigration and Culinary Renovation." *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 97, no. 4 (2020): 681-700.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14753820.2020.1699344>

- Cocola-Gant, Agustin, and Antonio Lopez-Gay. "Transnational gentrification, tourism and the formation of 'foreign only' enclaves in Barcelona." *Urban studies* 57, no. 15 (2020): 3025-3043. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098020916111>
- Covert, Hannah H. "Stories of personal agency: Undergraduate students' perceptions of developing intercultural competence during a semester abroad in Chile." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 18, no. 2 (2014): 162-179. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315313497590>
- Davidson, Robert. "Barcelona: the siege city." In *The Barcelona Reader: Cultural readings of a city*, Edited by Enric Bou & Jaume Subirana, 97-116. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1ps31wn.6>
- Duffy, Andrew. "If I say you're authentic, then you're authentic: Power and privilege revealed in travel blogs." *Tourist studies* 19, no. 4 (2019): 569-584. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797619865387>
- Hall, Edward T. "The Power of Hidden Differences." In *Intercultural Communication: Basic Concepts*, 165-184. Edited by Milton Bennett. London: Intercultural Press. 2013.
- Hofstede, Gordon. "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context." *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* 2, no. 1 (2011). <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/vol2/iss1/8/>
- Kim, Young Yun. "Beyond cultural categories: Communication, adaptation and transformation." In *The Routledge handbook of language and intercultural communication*, Edited by Jane Jackson, 241-255. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Kohls, Robert. "The values Americans live by." 1984. Retrieval from <https://homepages.se.edu/cvonbergen/files/2013/01/The-Values-Americans-Live-By.pdf>
- Martin, Judith N. & Thomas K. Nakamura. "Chapter 4: History and intercultural communication" In *Intercultural communication in contexts* (7th edition), 116-156. New York: McGraw Hill International Edition, 2018.
- Mitchell, Lynne, and Andrea Paras. "When difference creates dissonance: Understanding the 'engine' of intercultural learning in study abroad." *Intercultural education* 29, no. 3 (2018): 321-339. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2018.1436361>
- Morlan, Marguerite, and Steven Byrne. "Language choice and identity in the linguistic landscape of Barcelona." *Social Semiotics* 34, no. 5 (2024): 892-918. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2023.2223146>

Mroz, Aurore, and Julia Gorham. "From Caterpillar to Butterfly: Story of an Ordinarily Extraordinary Generation Z L2 Student Abroad." *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 36, no. 1 (2024): 312-349.

<https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v36i1.855>

Quan, Tracy, Rebecca Pozzi, Shannon Kehoe, and Julia Menard-Warwick. "Spanish heritage language learners in study abroad across three national contexts." In *The Routledge handbook of study abroad research and practice*, Edited by Cristina Sanz and Alfonso Morales-Front, 436-451. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Rodríguez-García, Dan, Miguel Solana, Anna Ortiz, and Beatriz Ballestín, "Blurring of colour lines? Ethnoracially mixed youth in Spain navigating identity," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, (2019): 838-860. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1654157>

Salsabila, Khansa. "Netflix: Cultural diversity or cultural imperialism." *Rubikon Journal of Transnational American Studies* 8, no. 1 (2023): 15-27.

<https://doi.org/10.22146/rubikon.v8i1.65480>

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Participation in class	15%
Homework (5 at 2%)	10%
Self-Reflections (2 at 7.5%)	15%
Midterm exam	20%
Country pamphlet Content, 50% Presentation, 50%	10%
Group project Written findings, 7.5% Video/presentation, 7.5%	15%
Travel blogs (3 at 5%)	15%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Graded assignments include:

Participation: Student engagement in class is essential to students' learning in this course. The teaching style is student-centered and mixes short lectures with small group work, open discussions, role plays, debates, and other activities that require students to apply intercultural theories. Therefore, students are expected to come prepared with all their homework completed to maintain an active learning environment.

Homework: Experiential homework assignments (e.g. *el bar de siempre, menú del día, lo que*

me mueve, los cerros de Barna, mercat local, etc.) push students to go outside of their comfort zones by exploring local neighborhoods, engaging in cultural practices, and interacting with Spanish/Catalan people. Short worksheets to be filled out will guide the students' learning followed by a group discussion of their experience in class. All experiential homework assignments are to be submitted **via Canvas before class**.

Self-reflections: Self-awareness of how culture impacts our behaviors and communication is the first step to developing intercultural communication competence. Students will complete two, 750 word written self-reflections: 1) at the beginning of the course, reflecting on their initial reactions to living in a new culture and to set intentional goals for their time abroad, and 2) at the end of the course, with a focus on students' intercultural learning to date and how it may be applied in their future.

Midterm exam: The midterm exam is designed to provide an indication of the students' progress towards learning key theories related to intercultural communication before applying them to specific contexts in a more meaningful way. The midterm exam consists of open-ended responses that demonstrate an ability to shift perspectives and provide multiple interpretations for cultural practices.

Country pamphlet: Each student will choose a country (of their own choice or from a provided list) and create a travel brochure that goes beyond typical tourist information to provide a potential traveler with cultural nuances that could lead to a more intercultural experience. During an in-class travel fair, students will present their pamphlets and explain the value of their intercultural trips to their classmates.

Group project: Each group must choose a topic of interest to investigate about Spanish/Catalan culture. Separately, each student must interview a local person for approximately 15 minutes about the topic. Individually they will turn in a brief write up with their findings. Then using the data obtained from their informants, the group must film two role play videos: one of miscommunication and one of good communication between people from the US and Spain. The total length should be approximately 5 minutes. Each group will present their videos as well as their key take-aways from their interviews.

Travel blogs: Students will analyze their personal European travel through the lens of intercultural communication, using the contexts explored in the second half of the term. They will write 3 blogs of approximately 300 words about 3 different countries analyzing 3 different topics. Furthermore, they will respond to three of their classmates' blogs (about 150 words each) by providing new interpretations of the experience. This creative assessment encourages students to critically reflect on their own experiences, as well as those of their classmates, demonstrating an understanding of the role of intercultural communication in these contexts.

Course Content

Unit 1

Introduction to Intercultural Communication

- Introductions. Course outline, requirements, and expectations
- What is culture? What is intercultural communication?
- Ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and generalizations
- Cultural relativism

Unit 2

Developing Intercultural Competence during Study Abroad

- Friendship models of international students
- Intergroup contact theory
- Uncertainty/anxiety management theory
- Reflection on research findings about learning outcomes for study abroad students

Unit 3

Social Scientific/Functionalist Approach to Intercultural Communication

- Hofstede's cultural dimensions
- Hall's high/low context and monochronic/polychronic cultures
- Cultural comparison: US and Spain

Unit 4

History, Culture & Intergroup Interactions

- Kohl's US values
- History, power and intercultural communication
- Colonization, immigration and questioning the "melting pot"

Unit 5

The Catalan Context

- Catalan history and relationship with Spain
- Catalan language, identity and culture
- Local, national and international identities within Barcelona

Unit 6

Identity & Cross-Cultural Adaptation

- Social identity theory and social identities in Barcelona
- Identity and cross-cultural adaptation
- W-curve, Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, and Kim's (2001) model of cross-cultural adaptation

Unit 7

Interpretivist/Constructivist Approach to Intercultural Communication

- Qualitative research with a focus on ethnography
- Interviewing—getting the insider perspective
- Group project topic choice and interview question development

Unit 8

Verbal Communication

- Globalization and the English language as the lingua franca
- Pragmatics and semantics: application to the Spanish language
- Direct versus indirect requests and politeness
- Power and prestige: accents as a social identity marker

Unit 9

Non-Verbal Communication

- Recognizing non-verbal communication

- Environment, body movements, proxemics, paralanguage, touch
- Expressing emotions across cultures

Unit 10

Intercultural Communication in Daily Life

- Popular culture, globalization, and cultural imperialism
- Eating cultures: mediterranean diet, regional v national cuisines, food stereotypes
- Drinking cultures: dry v. wet drinking culture, socializing and rituals

Unit 11

Intercultural Communication in Contexts

- Business and negotiations: Erin Meyers' culture map
- Tourism: authenticity and power dynamics
- Conflict resolution: honor, face and dignity cultures

Unit 12

Going Home

- Reflection on intercultural learning
- Reverse culture shock
- Leveraging intercultural learning in your career
- Opportunities for future intercultural development

Field study and experiential learning components may include:

- Guest speaker
 - Catalan identity, culture and language
- Field studies
 - **La encuesta local:** This class activity pushes students outside their comfort zones by requiring them to interview local people on the streets. Overcoming anxiety in such interactions is essential for living abroad. Furthermore, the

provided questions help students recognize commonalities they might share with locals.

- El bar de siempre:** Students will take the metro and go outside of the city center alone to observe local café/bar culture.
- Menú del día:** Students will have lunch the local way by ordering a 'menu of the day'. The activity gives students the opportunity to try the local dishes as well.
- Lo que me mueve:** One of the best ways to meet local people is through common interests. For this homework assignment, students will practice a hobby of their choice (e.g. basketball, yoga, climbing, running, volleyball, open mic night, etc.).
- Los cerros de Barna:** Students will be provided with a list of prospective viewpoints to gain a new perspective of Barcelona from up-above.
- El mercat local:** Local markets demonstrate community ties as well as provide authentic examples of traditional Catalan/Spanish food culture. Students will be required to visit a local (not tourist) market, observe its patrons and products, and ask about one curiosity to local people.
- La yincana:** This competitive scavenger hunt is intended to improve students' ability to observe and pick up on subtle cultural nuances in a multicultural neighborhood in Barcelona.

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).