



SYLLABUS

CROSS CULTURAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Instructor: Simon Goldsworthy

Contact Hours: 40

Class times: Thursday 9.30am-12.30pm

London, UK

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Today individuals and organisations of all kinds have to operate across cultures to unprecedented extent. Globalisation, easier travel – pandemic and other international crises notwithstanding – and online communication have put a premium on the ability to understand and communicate with different cultures, both across and within borders. This course takes advantage of the UK's, and especially London's, position as an international and multi-cultural hub to explore the issues this raises and how cross-cultural communication can be optimised in practical ways.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Examine a range of theoretical approaches to understanding value dimensions across cultures
- Analyse the potential impact of cultural variables on business interactions
- Recognize potential barriers to communication and how to minimise them in spoken and written business discourse
- Conduct research using a variety of culture-specific and culture-general resources on business communication
- Demonstrate self-awareness of the mix of cultures that combine to determine one's own values, beliefs, and attitudes
- Recognize the common strands linking all cultures
- Acquire culturally transferable strategies to minimise misunderstandings stemming from cultural differences

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The course will consist of interactive lectures and classes, illustrated with examples and including contributions by guest speakers. Students will take turns to present on examples of cross-cultural communication in the news and will also participate in individual and group presentations in response to different briefs, followed by questions and discussion.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

- 1. Engagement in class 20%
- 2. Cross-cultural Seminar paper and presentation 40%
- 3. Cross-Cultural Communications Project 40%

1. Engagement in class (20% of course grade)

Your presence alone does not add to your engagement grade, but repeated unexcused absences will lower it even if you participate regularly when you are in class. Please see the GEO attendance policy for details. Your participation grade will be determined primarily by the frequency and quality of the following:

- a. your thoughtful and informative responses to class exercises and questions I pose
- b. participation in the weekly “cross cultural communications in the news” element of the class
- c. your contributions to discussions your classmates initiate, including seminars where others are presenting

Grading guidelines for participation

Engagement Component	90 to 100% (A range)	80 to 89% (B range)	70 to 79% (C range)	60-69% (D range)	0% (F)
Attendance (unexcused absences)	Misses 0 classes	Misses 1-4 classes	Misses 4-5 classes	Misses 5-6 classes	Misses >6 classes
In-class discussion, exercises	Always prepared, engaged and actively involved: provides examples, asks questions, makes thoughtful comments in class	Prepared and engaged but passive in class; participates when asked directly	Seldom participates but listens attentively	Does not pay attention in class	Disrupts class or behaves disrespectfully toward others
Overall Grade	Participation score is AVE (attendance, in-class engagement) Example: You attended all classes (100%), you seldom participated in class discussions but usually listened attentively (75%). Your final participation grade is $[(100 + (2*75))/3 = 83$ out of 100 points.				

2. Presentation on cross-cultural communications with specific country/region and written paper (40% total, of which presentation is one-quarter of grade)

Imagine you are undertaking an internship for a US **or** UK organisation (you choose). The organisation is about to have some important meetings with people from another country, or a distinct region within the same country. They want you to help them prepare for the meetings by providing a ten-minute presentation on the culture of that country (or region) as it pertains to communications. The planned meetings are likely to include social events as well as business discussions.

Assuming no prior knowledge of the part of your organisation, you have to explain what is different, what to expect, what will be expected of your organisation, and how your organisation's team should adapt so that it can communicate to best advantage. You will present individually to the class for about 10 minutes and then should be ready to take any questions. You will also hand in a properly referenced 1,000-word paper based on the presentation.

The course textbooks are a good starting point, but you will need to identify and use other resources, including the media, to develop and illustrate your points.

*There will be further discussion of this in class. **Please agree your choice of target country/region with the instructor. For this assignment you may not choose the UK or US as a whole as the country with which your organisation is planning to meet.***

3. Cross-Cultural Communications Project: team effort in groups of about 3 + individual papers (40% of course grade of which the presentation is one-quarter of grade)

For this assignment imagine that you have been hired by **either** a US **or** a European university (you will need to agree as a group). They regularly recruit study abroad students from universities the other side of the Atlantic who undertake internships while overseas – **please specify both where the students are from and their destination country/region.**

The university wants students to be prepared for the different communications culture both within and outside the workplace in their destination. They want you to make a group presentation lasting around 20 minutes, followed by questions, which could be delivered to students before they travel, and a 1,000-word guidance note, illustrated with examples. which will help students understand how best to communicate when abroad. Each student should play a full part in their group presentation, including preparation.

The guidance notes are individual and should be submitted by email by the Friday following the presentation. Feel free to change anything in the presentation if you wish. Making the presentation and guidance note useful, attractive and compelling for students is part of the challenge.

There will be more briefing on all aspects of the project during classes.

Grading Guidelines for the assignments

A-level work (90, 95, 100): This project meets all of the following criteria:

- A. Content – the project is complete (includes all required parts)
- B. Format – the project closely follows provided guidelines
- C. Quality of the analysis – conclusions are based on well-researched and thoroughly analysed information; the thought process is logical and demonstrates a clear understanding of the issues
- D. Quality of writing – the project is well-written; the ideas are organised in concise and clear fashion, there are few if any grammatical and spelling errors
- E. Application – the project skilfully incorporates relevant consumer research and concepts from the readings and class discussions
- F. Sources of information – all assertions are substantiated by reputable, current information sources, which are cited immediately following the assertions. All sources are also listed in a bibliography. Citations and bibliography must follow MLA or APA format (choose one to use throughout your reports).

B-level work (80, 85, 89): This project does not meet content, format, and/or quality of writing criteria. Nonetheless, it clearly demonstrates a good quality analysis and an excellent ability to apply relevant research to the issues at hand, and it meets requirements for sources used.

C-level work (70, 75, 79): This project may or may not meet criteria for content, format, and/or quality of writing. However, its major problems stem from a poorly developed analysis and incorrect application of research. For example, conclusions are poorly justified and there is little evidence of primary or secondary research.

D-level work (60, 65, 69): This project does not meet any of the specified criteria for content, format, quality of the analysis, quality of writing, and application of consumer research.

F-level work (<60): No project has been submitted for grading.

Expectations for Written Assignments (homework and project reports)

Writing guidelines: I expect you to adhere to the writing guidelines in the PSOBA handbook [“Expectations for Student Writing”](#). Good written communication is critical in business, and correct spelling and grammar are essential to good writing. Therefore, if a paper contains several such mistakes, I will deduct points and, if the errors are distracting enough, return it to you for corrections before grading it.

Deadlines: All assignments are to be submitted via email on or before the specified times on the due dates noted in the course calendar. It is your responsibility to keep up with all deadlines and submit everything on time. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act.

GENERATIVE AI

Students may use GenAI tools in this class to help with course work and assignments. Helpful uses include brainstorming ideas, creating outlines, editing, and so forth. However, if you include in your assignment submissions any content that is generated by GenAI, such as text, images, graphics, etc., you must cite the GenAI tool that is your source, in the same way that you must cite any content you use from other sources, such as books, articles, videos, the internet, etc.. Although open use of GenAI is allowed in this class, be advised that GenAI suggestions or content can be inaccurate, incomplete or otherwise problematic; using GenAI can impact negatively the quality of your work and your grades. I welcome questions and discussion about GenAI use in this course.

ATTENDANCE

Every class (whether on- or off-site) must be attended. Please refer to the GEO attendance policy for more details.

COURSE OUTLINE

Please note that details may change – you will be advised.

Class times: Thursdays 9.30am-12.30pm	Indicative Class Topics/Activities
Week 1, 2 April	<p><i>Meet & greet</i>, course overview</p> <p>London & its cultures</p> <p>Introduction to UK media scene</p> <p>Cross-cultural communications in the news</p> <p>Reading: <i>The Road to Somewhere</i> pp 1-47</p>
Week 2, 9 April	<p>Cross-cultural communications in the news</p> <p>(Dis-)United Kingdom – cross-cultural communications in the UK: Somewheres and Anywheres</p> <p>War, Propaganda & Communications</p> <p><i>When Cultures Collide: pp. 275-289, pp. 334-355</i></p>

Week 3, 16 April	<p>Cross-cultural communications in the news</p> <p>As visitors. Your top tips for cross cultural communication across the Atlantic</p> <p>What can't be said & why? Regulation & censorship</p> <p><i>When Cultures Collide: pp.147-165</i></p>
Week 4, 23 April	<p>Cross-cultural communications in the news</p> <p>Political communication</p> <p>Presentations 1</p> <p><i>The Road to Somewhere pp 49-79</i></p>
Week 5, 30 April	<p>Cross-cultural communications in the news</p> <p>Guest speaker: Football culture, Trevor Morris – 11.30am</p> <p>Presentations 2</p> <p><i>Watching the English, pp 208-266</i></p>
Week 6, 5 May Evening visit	<p>Camden Brewery 6.30pm https://camdentownbrewery.com/</p>
Week 6, 7 May	<p>Cross-cultural communications in the news</p> <p>Presentations 3</p> <p>Guest speaker: Fatima Zeb</p> <p><i>Watching the English, pp. 353-399</i></p>
Week 7, 14 May	<p>Cross-cultural communications in the news</p> <p>Contrasts in popular culture: each student to choose an example from outside the US and explain what it tells us</p> <p>Presentations 4</p>
Week 8, 21 May	<p>Advertising and international communication</p> <p>Cross-cultural communications in the news</p> <p>Presentations 5</p> <p>Reading: www.theguardian.com/media/advertising</p>

Week 9, 28 May	<p>Cross-cultural communications in the news</p> <p>Celebrity culture and the media</p> <p>Preparation for group presentations: tutorials</p>
Week 10, 4 June	Group presentations for Assignment 3

COURSE MATERIALS

Provided by the programme:

- Fox, Kate, *Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour*
- Goodhart, David, *The Road to Somewhere: The New Tribes Shaping British Politics*, Penguin 2017
- Lewis, Richard D., *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures*, 4th ed, Nicholas Brealey International, 2018
- Varner, Iris & Beamer, Linda, *Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace*, 5th ed, McGraw Hill, 2011