



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

BU 203 - CROSS CULTURAL RELATIONS

Dr. Balbir B. Bhasin



“Together with politics, culture creates the environment in which international management operates”.

--Rajib N. Sanyal

“Japanese and American management is 95 percent the same and differs in all important aspects.”

--T. Fujisawa, Cofounder of Honda Motor Corporation

Prerequisites: None: but an interest in other cultures will help!

Days & Timings: One a week for 12-14 weeks – each meeting for 3 hours

Office Hours: Students are welcome to meet with me as per posted office hours or by appointment or an hour prior to class.

Texts: *The Cultural Dimension of International Business* 4th Edition, by Gary P. Farraro, Prentice Hall, (June 25, 2001). ISBN: 013090327-2

Blunders in International Business by David A. Ricks, Blackwell Publishers; 3rd edition (January 2000) ISBN: 063121776

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Introduction

Two facts are indisputable. One is that continuing globalization has become a reality in our lifetime. The second is that culture influences the practice of management. There is clear link between successful global business and cultural awareness and sensitivity. Good business practice, coupled with good cultural skills, should be an unbeatable combination. One would think that good business practice automatically would include good intercultural skills. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and therefore both need to be stressed. Knowledge and concepts from the areas of cultural studies and international business are combined so that the practice of global management may be improved.



Course Description

“Organizations, both profit and not-for-profit, deal with people of different cultures. Therefore, cultural sensitivity and awareness of different perceptions, values and traditions are important management skills within the same nation, there are people with different cultural backgrounds, and culture changes not only from country to country, but even from region to region. Students come to understand these differences and to learn not to rely on self-referential criteria.”

We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors. But, they all fit nicely into the same box.”

Unknown

Purpose of the Course

To introduce the student to culture and its impact on international business practices, using the basic concepts employed in sociology, anthropology, history, political science, management, marketing, finance and economics, and apply these concepts to the global arena. The goal of the course is to expose the student to fundamental concepts in international culture, to better function and succeed in the multinational environment. The student will be required to conduct university-level research, and show both written and oral communication skills.

Course Approach

Although some lecture is unavoidable, the course is primarily discussion and project-oriented, which will expose the student to various dimensions of critical cross-cultural thinking and to team skills. The course also has an experiential learning premise, given that students better learn what they can experience, and one good way to learn is to teach others.

A significant portion of this course will involve student participation. Assignments will include writing a critical essay on American values; interviewing an individual from a different culture and presenting the findings to the class; and a term project which will be a written as well as in-class presentation of country/culture research and its effects on business. There will be a fair amount of group work and public speaking involved. There will be no final examination.

We must learn about other cultures in order to understand, in order to love, and in order to preserve our common world heritage.”

- Yo Yo Ma



Course Requirements

You will be expected to adequately *prepare* for each class session, *attend classes regularly*, and *participate* in the *class and case discussions*. The text and required readings will be used in classroom discussions.

More than three absences will result in a full letter grade drop for the course. If you miss a class for any reason, *you* are responsible for all material covered and assignments given. You should ascertain from your classmates exactly what handouts or assignments were given. You are also to ensure that you read your email daily for any instructions that may be sent. All assignments must be completed and submitted in time. At least one letter grade will be deducted from assignments that are turned in late. There will be *no make up* for assignments not completed. Students are expected to maintain a high degree of positive personal attitude to allow for a meaningful learning environment in the classroom.



Personal discipline in attitude and study is paramount for success in this course. *Coming to class late, talking in class and causing distraction, disrupting the class in any way will not be tolerated.* There will be a fair amount of *group work* and *public speaking* involved, which is aimed at preparing you for teamwork and professionalism in work and life. *Academic honesty regulations as stipulated in the college guidelines will be strictly enforced.*

Teaching Tools:

Lectures & Class Discussions
Individual & Group Presentations
Textbook Readings
Supplementary Readings
Audio Visual Presentations
Critical Essay and expose
Tests and Examinations

"I do not wish my house to be walled on all sides and my windows stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible."
- Mahatma Gandhi

Evaluations:

Attendance	10
Participation	10
Critical Essay	10
Cross Cultural Interview	10
Mid Term Exam	20
Country Specific Research	40
Total	100



Critical Essay:

Write a critical essay **HOW world CULTURES CAN BE DIVIDED INTO GROUPS OR CLUSTERS** The essay should be around 3-5 pages (single spaced) and should be based on at least three reference articles or reports.

Cross Cultural Interview:

Students will be *individually* required to interview a person from a culture other than their own, and required to record and present their findings in class.



Group Country Culture Project:

Students will be assigned to a group and required to complete a cultural diversity evaluation of a foreign country. The research report will cover:

The historical background of the country;

The social-political framework,

The cultural, social, ethical, religious and other values of the given society and how they impact the organization to be set up in the foreign country;

Issues of concern to the local government and people with regards foreign investment activity; and

Conclusions will be drawn as to what the US Corporation needs to do in response to these observations that will allow for an effective management set up in the country.

Students will team up in groups of three. Each group will choose a country from those listed below (as assigned by the Professor), and research the culture and business customs of this country. The group must then write a **15-20 page paper** (single spaced) summarizing this information.

The group must also prepare a creative presentation (skit, role play, game etc.) to illustrate this culture to the rest of the class. The presentation will be evaluated on content as well as creativity and presentation skills. The grade for this project will be based on the paper and presentation weighed equally.

Please pay particular attention to the chapters covered in class relating to cultures, change, organizations, ethics, communications, behavior, negotiations, leadership, motivation, convergence or divergence and implications for managers. Countries will be selected to allow for focus on regions representing the various continents and cultures.

"Even when we interact daily with people of other ethnic groups, we rarely talk about racial issues. It seems too scary to people. But we must start doing it! We have to break down the barriers between us and talk openly, honestly, and with respect. The rewards far outweigh any concerns we may have."

Sue Alperin



Competencies:

College Level Competencies

Communications Skills: Oral

The student will be required to make several oral presentations. The purpose is to help the student become a better oral communicator through practice and greater exposure to the communications process.

Communications Skills: Written

The student will be required to further develop his/her writing skills by researching the history, culture, etc. (see research requirements above) of a particular country; this research paper will be presented according to APA standards. A minimum of two visits to the Writing Lab is required. The purpose is to help the student increase his or her writing skills.

Course Level Competencies

Specialized Knowledge

The course content focuses on determining the elements and functions of culture in a foreign country and within a geographic region; this represents the individual student's and the teams' ability to take research and apply it, since there is little literature available on country cultures. This also exposes the student to an exercise in logic and intuitive thinking.

Teamwork

Since the student will be required to work in teams on three separate projects, he/she will be exposed to the dynamics of socialized power and putting the task ahead of relationships; a portion of the grade on each project will be determined by confidential peer performance evaluations done by all other team members;

Accountability

To encourage high standards, the student will be given various deadlines during the course, in which portions of all projects are due. Since the group portion of the research project cannot be completed without the country-specific information, strict deadlines will be imposed on completion of the individual portion of the project.

With all the diversity in the world, people of different religious groups, color, race, education, development, and maturity, there is one thing in common among all of us. One thing that ties each one of us to every other one, we are all moving into the future, at the same speed, simultaneously on this journey.
-Anonymous

Assessment of Competencies/Evaluative Criteria

Grades for each project will be based on the criteria included in each project description. The final exam will be curved, based on overall class scores.

Academic Integrity Policy:

The University has a standing policy in place with regard to academic integrity. Please refer to the section on *Academic Standards, Policies and Procedures* in the current Undergraduate or Graduate catalog for a detailed explanation of the policy. As stated in the University policy, students are expected to have an understanding of and commitment to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and reasonableness as expressed in the University's policy on Academic Integrity.

"Men hate each other because they fear each other, and they fear each other because they don't know each other, and they don't know each other because they are often separated from each other."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Course Schedule

Session	Chapter	Subject	Assignments
1	Welcome Chapter 1	Course Outline & Expectations Introduction What is Management?	<i>Essay assignment on Cultural Clusters Discussion</i>
2	Chapter 2 <i>Term Project</i>	Culture & International Business <i>Cultural Interview Assignment Briefing & Country Selection</i>	Lecture & Video Essay due <i>Project Groups</i>
3	Chapter 3 Chapter 4	Communicating: Language Nonverbal Dimension	Lecture & Discussion Discussion
4	<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Cross Cultural Interview</i>	<i>Presentations</i>
5	<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Cross Cultural Interview</i>	<i>Presentations</i>
6	Chapter 5 Chapter 6	Contrasting Values Negotiating across Cultures	Discussion Discussion
7	Chapter 7 Chapter 8	Coping with Culture Shock Developing Global Managers	Discussion Discussion
8	Chapters 1-8	Mid-Term Examination	Short Essays
9	Term Project	<i>Culture research presentations</i>	<i>1 & 2</i>
10	Term Project	<i>Culture research presentations</i>	<i>3 & 4</i>
11	Term Project	<i>Culture research presentations</i>	<i>5 & 6</i>
12	Conclusion	Course Evaluation and Summary	
13	Exam Week	Final Examination	(if necessary)

