

COM 412: Intercultural Communication

The University of Nevada, Reno
Fall 2020 - **Online**

Professor: Dr. Jenna N. Hanchey

Email: jhanchey@unr.edu

Office Hours: T 12-2pm over email; Zoom meetings on request

COLLEGE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

I realize that this semester will be a challenging one for many of us. We will be dealing with sick family and friends, and may become ill ourselves. We may struggle with grief, financial difficulties, job challenges, or maintaining housing. We may struggle with feeling lonely or isolated, and other exacerbated mental health conditions. Those of us who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) or from other marginalized groups have additional burdens created by differential access to healthcare, safety, and rights.

The conditions of semester require more grace and flexibility than others. For my part, that means that I have reduced the amount of reading and assignments that we would typically take on in this course. In addition, I am willing to discuss extending deadlines for assignments, if you let me know before an assignment is due that you are struggling to get it in. And I am always happy to answer questions over email or Zoom, no matter how basic you're afraid they might seem. For your part, this might mean being generous when a lesson doesn't immediately make sense, and being willing to ask questions about it or schedule a meeting to talk. It also might mean taking the time to explain things that you think seem obvious, to make sure we're all on the same page. Or it might mean being kind with a classmate on the discussion board who seems not to have understood the point of the reading. Assume the people around you have good intentions but are operating in bad contexts, until proven otherwise. Remember, none of us are at our best right now.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines theory, application, and analysis of intercultural communication including how communication impacts identity, group boundaries, preferences, and norms. The course content introduces students to aspects of power, both explicit and implicit, that establish intercultural communication interactions. By focusing on the interrelation between power structures and communication acts and exchanges between and within cultural groups, the course is designed to encourage students to explore how power dimensions and macro structures (governmental, historical, economic, media, institutional systems) frame and shape micro-intercultural communication encounters and contexts. Meaning, this course will introduce the student to both the hidden (beneath-the-surface) and visible (what we see but take-for-granted given its naturalized appearance) aspects of power that constitute intercultural communication encounters and relations.

This course satisfies Core Objectives 10, 11, and 13 of the Silver Core Curriculum.

Core Objective 10:

Students will develop a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate attentiveness to and analysis of diversity and equity.

Core Objective 11:

Students will apply and evaluate modes of academic inquiry, creative expression, or results of research to problems in historical and contemporary global contexts. Students will articulate connections among local, national, and international contexts and evaluate the ways that historical and contemporary global influences affect their current situations.

Core Objective 13:

Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge, enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues.

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for the course are as follows. Upon completion of COM 412, students will be able to:

- Identify intercultural communication processes.
- Define major concepts and theories of intercultural communication.
- Analyze intercultural communication in a variety of contexts.
- Compare the role of historical, political, and religious factors in creating cultural stereotypes, perceptions, fears, desires, and misunderstandings between groups.
- Demonstrate effective intercultural communication skills.
- Compare and contrast individual communication preferences with demands of global citizenship.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- (1) Halualani, R.T. (2019). *Intercultural communication: A critical perspective* (1st Ed.). San Diego, CA: Cognella. Available at the UNR bookstore or electronically at: <https://store.cognella.com/82042-1a-043>
- (2) Online readings on the syllabus or announced in class, which will be posted to WebCampus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Online Discussion Posts (10 x 20 pts.)

200 pts.

For 10 weeks of the semester, you will have to complete two online discussion posts by Friday at noon. Since there are 11 opportunities to post, your lowest score will be dropped. (There will be no discussion post the week we are analyzing *Black Panther*).

Each week, the first discussion post should include:

1. A detailed reflection on a concept/claim you found to be particularly important from the readings, tying it to examples from your own life, popular culture, and/or the news.
2. References to all of the readings/films for the week.
3. A question that you still have about the concept/a reading/a film.

The second post should be:

- A separate post that responds substantively to another student's question/thoughts.

I am **not** interested in whether you “agree” or “disagree” with the author, but how you see the argument relating to your own life, and to the other reading(s) for the week. I will provide a prompt question that might help you make connections. Make sure that you have thoroughly read and watched the lecture video *before* posting, as you cannot earn full credit if you clearly have not

prepared (e.g., if you ask a question in your post that I have already answered in the lecture video). Please see the rubric attached to the assignment for grading details.

***Black Panther* Critical Reflection**

150 pts.

One week of class, we will be watching the film *Black Panther* and reading essays that Communication scholars have written critiquing the film from a variety of intercultural perspectives. You need to read the introductory essay by Griffin & Rossing, as well as two other essays of your choice. Then, watch *Black Panther* (it is available under Course Reserves on WebCampus). Using concepts from the Halualani textbook, come up with your own argument about the film. It can be an argument about something that *Black Panther* did well, something it did poorly, or something that was both good and bad about the film. Although the focal point should be a critical intercultural communication concept or perspective from Halualani, you should also draw examples from the film and the three essays analyzing it to support your argument. Your paper should have three main points that support your argument, be written in Times New Roman 12 pt. font with 1-inch margins, and use APA citation style. The papers should be at least 3 full pages long, not including references.

Detailed instructions can be found under “Files” on WebCampus, and grading details can be found on the rubric attached to the assignment.

Intercultural Mix-Tape (Adapted from Dr. Joshua Gunn)

150 pts.

The culminating assignment for the semester will be the creation of a “mix-tape” (playlist) that represents your experience in the class, with a corresponding “liner notes” document explaining the choice of songs and how they connect to the readings. Your mix-tape must include at least one song that corresponds to each week of readings (meaning it will be at least 12 songs long). You may choose to order the songs however you choose, add additional introductory and conclusion songs, have multiple songs corresponding to certain weeks, and/or provide supplementary artwork. Just make sure to give your mix-tape a title, and be as creative as you would like! If you’re not musically-inclined, and would like to adapt the assignment toward another medium (e.g., artwork, film, TV, etc.), please set up a Zoom meeting with me during my office hours so that we could talk about what that might look like. You can turn in your mix-tape as a Youtube playlist, Spotify playlist, or even a word document with a list of links in it.

The liner notes, then, explains all of your choices—the songs you chose, the title of your mix-tape, the order of the songs, and any extra additions you have made—and connects them explicitly to the course material—readings, films, and lectures. There are lots of methods to choosing songs that correspond to each week: They may be songs that you find to be examples of the concepts we learned; they may track your own reactions and emotions to the course material; or they may extend the concepts we learned into new arenas. Your job is to make clear how each song demonstrates your experience in the course that week, why you chose it, and how it connects to the course concepts. There is no set length for the liner notes, but I would expect at least a few paragraphs detailing the choices for each song. Each song’s notes should include references to and quotations from readings, films, and/or lectures from that week of class.

The point of the assignment is to give you a chance to reflect over what you have learned in the class in a way that breaks out of the typical paper-writing grind and engages you in creative thought. There are a few reasons I think this is particularly important this semester: 1) It brings the readings from the semester home to what is important to you. 2) Music can be healing, and we all need some

extra comfort and support right now. 3) Music can express deep emotions and complex thoughts that we have trouble putting into words. 4) It gives you a chance to find the parts of the lessons that were most meaningful to you, and connect them to your life. 5) When you're writing papers and taking exams for all your other classes, this should be a refreshing way to reflect over what you've learned in a way that exercises a different part of your brain!

Detailed instructions can be found under "Files" on WebCampus, and grading details can be found on the rubric attached to the assignment.

Extra Credit

up to 10 pts.

You can earn up to ten extra credit points in this class. To earn extra credit, post a link to a news article, event, TV clip, song, etc. on the discussion board "Media & Links" and write a short explanation of how it connects to what we are learning in class. Each link you post OR substantive response you make to another student's post will be worth 2 extra credit points. Make sure to clearly cite course concepts, lectures, and/or readings.

GRADING

Grades are determined based on the number of points earned out of a maximum of 500 points. There is no extra credit given in this class, and there will be no rounding or curving of grades. Final grades are calculated as follows:

A	93%-100%	465-500 pts
A-	90%-92.9%	450-464 pts
B+	87%-89.9%	435-449 pts
B	84%-86.9%	420-434 pts
B-	80%-83.9%	400-419 pts
C+	77%-79.9%	385-399 pts
C	74%-76.9%	370-384 pts
C-	70%-73.9%	350-369 pts
D+	67%-69.9%	335-349 pts
D	64%-66.9%	320-334 pts
D-	60%-63.9%	300-319 pts
F	0%-59.9%	0-299 pts

In each assignment, you will earn a grade based on the following guidelines:

- A = Exceeds course requirements. Exceptionally well-prepared and executed completion of assigned work, indicating significant effort, individualized creative style, and demonstrating a thorough grasp of the material. For written assignments: writing is insightful and error-free; message is communicated clearly; research is exceptional; your argument is creative and nuanced.
- B = Meets and sometimes exceeds course requirements. Student demonstrates fundamental mastery of the material. Work is well-prepared and demonstrates considerable effort. Is

distinctly superior to an average or “C” effort. For written assignments: writing is generally effective with respect to clarity, directness, and conciseness; some uneven or awkward passages are apparent, as are a few errors in grammar or punctuation. Research slightly exceeds the requirements.

- C = Meets course requirements. Satisfactory completion of assigned work at a level of effort and competency normally expected of the majority of students (i.e., basic completion, average performance, reasonable effort and preparedness). Student demonstrates minimum mastery of the material. This is average work that fails to stand out in any way. For written assignments: writing is reasonably clear, concise, and direct; uneven or awkward passages are apparent, as are multiple errors in grammar or punctuation. Minimum research done.
- D = Basic course requirements are only partially met. Student does not demonstrate minimum mastery of the material. Receiving this grade indicates the unsatisfactory completion of assigned work, either through misperceived objectives or the failure to grasp key concepts. This work is below average. For written assignments: The message is not communicated clearly, directly, or concisely. There is considerable unevenness or awkwardness in passages, and work is characterized by errors in grammar or punctuation.
- F = Basic course requirements are not met. Student demonstrates little or no mastery of the material. Receiving this grade indicates either a failure to complete the assigned work, or failure to grasp key concepts due to lack of reasonable effort. Work is below the minimum level of acceptance. For written assignments: Writing lacks style, content, and format associated with a college-educated individual.

COURSE POLICIES

All written assignments must be typed in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double-spaced, with 1 in. margins (check these—sometimes margins are automatically set to 1.25 in, and must be changed). Late work will be marked off 10% each day for each day it is late. **If you are experiencing an emergency, crisis, or otherwise struggling to get the assignment turned in on time, let me know *before* it is due, and we may be able to work out an extension.**

Readings must be completed on the day they are listed on the course schedule. Be sure to read thoroughly, and take notes while reading; some of these readings are very theoretically and conceptually challenging. Lecture videos are intended to *complement* (not duplicate) the readings. Do your best to approach a text with an open mind toward a given author’s disposition and message. This means trying to understand how and why they are arguing what they are, which is typically more time-consuming than simply comprehending an author’s message. Give each author a generous reading!

Communication for this course will be maintained exclusively through WebCampus. Please make sure you are checking it often for updates from me, as well as readings, assignments, and grades.

Discussion of Graded Assignments

It is your right and responsibility to take an active interest in how you are evaluated in this or any class. If you believe you have been graded unfairly, please schedule a Zoom appointment during my office hours to talk about it. Be prepared to make a well-developed case regarding the evaluation. Your argument must be related to your assignment as presented, and based on how it compares with the criteria for the assignment (not how hard you tried, how you think it compares with someone else’s work, or how it will affect your final grade in the class or GPA). **Any grade appeals must be**

scheduled no sooner than 24 hours after but no later than one week after receiving the evaluation.

Discussion Guidelines

People and ideas must be treated with respect. Any discussion posts that dehumanize others will not be tolerated. You can disagree with ideas without belittling the people who express them, or making them out to be ridiculous. In particular, this means that racist, sexist, and homophobic language will not be tolerated in this class. The primary concern of our class discussions should be to try to understand where others are coming from, and what assumptions they are working from. After establishing those bases, it is easier to express how and why you agree or disagree with an author's or classmate's position.

In addition, I hope this will be a space where you may ask questions about things that you don't understand, and know that they will be met with help and encouragement. The people who sound "dumb" are often the ones who do not stop to ask questions, and think they know everything when they don't. Having a question is always okay. Everyone should feel comfortable expressing their confusion in this class, and knowing that they will be met with respect.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a serious offense in this course. University policies on academic dishonesty (see below) will be strictly enforced). Using the words and ideas of others is borrowing something from those individuals. It is always necessary to identify the original source of supporting information; you must cite the source of any material, quoted or paraphrased, that you use in your work. Proper documentation requires both referencing these sources in the text of your writing, and in a reference section at the end of your essay.

Putting your name on a piece of work indicates that the work is *yours* and that the praise or criticism is due to *you* and no one else. Putting your name on a piece of work in which any part is not yours, is *plagiarism*—unless the borrowed thought or wording is clearly marked and the work is fully identified. Keep in mind that plagiarism is a form of theft. Taking words, phrasing, sentence structure, or any other element of another person's ideas, and using them as if they were your own, is stealing. Simply paraphrasing the work of another without acknowledging the information source is also plagiarism. Merely restating another individual's ideas in different words does not make the ideas yours. ALL assignments are to be your original work. Using papers or presentations from previous semesters or other classes, even if they are your own, is still considered plagiarism.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include filing a final grade of "F"; reducing the student's final course grade one or two full grade points; awarding a failing mark on the coursework in question; or requiring the student to retake or resubmit the coursework. For more details, see the [University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog](#).

Disability Services:

Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the [Disability Resource Center](#) (Pennington Achievement Center Suite 230) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Audio and Video Recording

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Harrasment and Assault

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment for all. If you believe you have experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, whether on or off campus, or need information related to immigration concerns, please contact the University's Equal Opportunity & Title IX office at 775-784-1547. Resources and interim measures are available to assist you. For more information, please visit the [Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#) page.

Academic Success Services

Your student fees cover usage of the [Math Center](#) (775) 784-4433, [Tutoring Center](#) (775) 784-6801, and [University Writing Center](#) (775) 784-6030. These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to change with sufficient advance notice.)

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
8/24 – 8/28	Introduction to COM 412: Intercultural Communication		
8/31 – 9/4	What is Critical Intercultural Communication?	(1) Halualani – Chapter 1	Discussion Post 1 Due: Friday, 9/4, 12:00pm
9/7 – 9/11	Culture, Power, and Intercultural Communication	(1) Halualani – Chapter 2 (2) Ono – Reflections on “Problematizing ‘Nation’ in Intercultural Communication Research”	Discussion Post 2 Due: Friday, 9/11, 12:00pm
9/14 – 9/18	Re-Thinking Communication	(1) Halualani – Chapter 3 (2) Hall – Encoding/Decoding	Discussion Post 3 Due: Friday, 9/18, 12:00pm Guest Lecture: Reeham Mohammed, MA
9/21 – 9/25	Ideology	(1) Halualani – Chapter 4 (2) Bahrainwala – Shithole Rhetorics	Discussion Post 4 Due: Friday, 9/25, 12:00pm Guest Lecture: Dr. Lamiyah Bahrainwala
9/28 – 10/2	Speaking for Others	(1) Halualani – Chapter 5 (2) Alcoff – The Problem of Speaking for Others	Discussion Post 5 Due: Friday, 10/2, 12:00pm
10/5 – 10/9	Identity Layers	(1) Halualani – Chapter 6 (2) Sekimoto – Transnational Asia	Discussion Post 6 Due: Friday, 10/9, 12:00pm
10/12 – 10/16	Historical Memory	(1) Halualani – Chapter 7 (2) Hartman – The Dead Book	Discussion Post 7 Due: Friday, 10/16, 12:00pm
10/19 – 10/23	Racialization	(1) Halualani – Chapter 8 (2) Watch <i>The House We Live In: Race—The Power of an Illusion</i>	Discussion Post 8 Due: Friday, 10/23, 12:00pm
10/26 – 10/30	Global Blackness and Intercultural Communication: <i>Black Panther</i>	(1) Griffin & Rossing – <i>Black Panther</i> in Widescreen (2) Pick two additional essays from the special issue on <i>Black Panther</i> (3) Watch <i>Black Panther</i>	Black Panther Critical Reflection Due: Friday, 10/30, 11:59pm
11/2 – 11/6	Global Flows	(1) Halualani – Chapter 9 (2) Asante – Glocalized Whiteness	Discussion Post 9 Due: Friday, 11/6, 12:00pm Guest Lecture: Dr. Godfried Asante
11/9 – 11/13	Intercultural Relationships	(1) Halualani – Chapter 10 (2) Eguchi & Asante – Disidentifications Revisited	Discussion Post 10 Due: Friday, 11/13, 12:00pm Guest Lecture: Dr. Shinsuke Eguchi
11/16 – 11/27	NO COURSE WORK - HAPPY THANKSGIVING!		
11/30 – 12/4	Where Do You Go From Here?	(1) Halualani – Chapter 11 (2) Hanchey – All of Us Phantasmic Saviors	Discussion Post 11 Due: Friday 12/4, 12:00pm
Exam Week			Intercultural Mix-Tape Due: Friday, 12/11, 11:59pm

References

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