

CMS 321 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS
WINTER II Term 2017
Tuesday mornings 9am to 12:30pm
Jan.10/17/24/31, Feb. 7/14/21/28, 2017.
Instructor: Kit Voorhees kit.voorhees@doane.edu

Course description:

Communication between and among cultures in the interpersonal and organizational context will be studied. Differences in communication behaviors due to nationality, ethnicity, gender and social status are explored. Students will study their own cultures, as well as the cultures of others, to develop greater awareness of patterns of thinking, beliefs, assumptions, values, and cultural norms that influence communicative (verbal, nonverbal, body language and listening) behaviors. **This course fulfills the Cultural Perspectives requirement of the Doane Plan.**

TEXTBOOK: Understanding Human Differences: Multicultural Education For a Diverse America., Ken L. Koppelman with R. Lee Goodhart. FIFTH Edition ISBN 9780134044316. (loose leaf edition) **Note: that this is a new edition.**

SYLLABUS

There will be an emphasis on both domestic and Global Cultures as well as the enormous variety of ethnic and cultural groups residing in the United States. – Part of the course work will involve some internet searches into specific ethnicities and cultures of the world. Such searches will be assigned as various subjects and/or questions arise in our class discussions.

You will also be responsible for assigned readings in our text: **Understanding Human Differences** (see above for ISBN). We will spend time exploring the various cultural and sub-cultural groups in the U.S. Particular attention will be placed on studying how immigrants to this country are treated and have been treated throughout the past one hundred years. Some time will also be given to the study of those cultures that have been oppressed by our government during the Indian Wars.

Cause and effect of economic status, language, education, gender, ethics and religion will be explored not only through statistical information but also through such lens as pre-existing bias, racism, and historical considerations. The class will be driven by weekly assignments based on assigned readings in the textbook as well as relevant internet research. Overarching questions will be posed weekly and thoughtful, clear and convincing responses to the instructor will be expected in a timely manner. Sharing of student comments, without revealing authorship, will become part of the class mechanism. This is based on my belief that an exchange of ideas, insights, and opinions is a vital part of any class work.

By the third week of the term, each student is to have chosen a single culture/sub-culture within the U.S. to explore throughout the quarter. I suggest you make a list of at least three such groups that are of particular interest to you. This will help us avoid duplication of research projects. Sub-cultures can be as diverse as country-specific current immigrants, age related groups such as senior citizens, occupational groups such as artists, gender-specific groups such as women in politics and GLTB individuals and groups, specific racial groups, and others to be discussed as you present your choices.

COURSE GOAL:

Students will develop a broader and deeper understanding of U.S. sub-cultures and selected world cultures and how communication between and among various cultures can be facilitated.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will develop a greater understanding of various sub-cultures as they have evolved and developed in the U.S.
2. Students will learn how nationalism, religion, values, cultural bias, stereotypes, and personal bias inform our behaviors and the behaviors of others.
3. Students (collectively and individually) will be able to identify the blockages, both personal and societal, that affect and/or negate successful cross-cultural communications.
4. Students (collectively and individually) will be able to develop a series of strategies that will help bridge those blockages that impede successful cross-cultural communications.

GRADING Attendance & Participation: Keeping to a firm schedule of assigned readings and responses are integral to the successful completion of any course. Consequently, staying on the requested reading and research schedule will count **for 20% of your grade.**

Assignments: **An extensive, comprehensive response to each week's readings and assignments, as well as your personal reflections on assigned readings are to be emailed to the Instructor weekly.** These are to be received no later than 10 am on the assigned weekly due dates following each class meeting. These responses will count for **30% of your grade.**

Research of your selected research topic of a U.S. culture/sub-culture should be an ongoing process throughout the quarter. Consequently, weekly updates on your research findings and/or questions for the Instructor will count for **25% of your grade.** These updates will be given verbally during each class meeting.

A final written report on your chosen area of research will count for **25% of your grade.** You will be given guidelines on what to cover within 48 hours of your accepted choice of the approved topic.

Instructions:

Please explore and select a website of your choice on Climate Change or Immigration before the first class meeting. Be prepared to fill out a short description of your chosen subject for discussion that we can use to lead our first class discussion.

PREPATORY READING ASSIGNMENT: to be undertaken prior to our first class meeting.

Many factors contribute to people leaving their home countries and migrating to another. These include famine, political strife, war, persecution and personal need.

Our news is currently very much centered on the causes and effects of Global Warming and Immigration. Indeed, these were highly contested points of discussion during the current political race by presidential contestants. Please find articles (pro and/or con) that deal in depth with this subject and bring a copy of your chosen article to the first day of class. (this is a graded assignment) Be prepared to introduce a discussion on one or more of the problems that this projected climate change/immigration is expected to create and some potential solutions that are being considered in the United States.

OVERVIEW OF READING SCHEDULE FOR CMS 321, WINTER II Term, 2017

All assignment are due to be sent, via internet, to kit.voorhees@doane.edu. *These weekly assignments are due no later than 12 noon on SUNDAY of each week. Due dates are noted at the end of each week's assignment. Final Research Paper is due, via Internet, no later than March 8th.*

Week one: Please read the three chapters of Unit I and send me your thoughts on each chapter. Consider the following:

- What surprised me? Why?
- What is the most important statement in each chapter?
- What do I disagree with or question?

This assignment is due to me on January 15,

Week two: Please read Chapters 4 & 5. Assignment: please write a thoughtful essay on your own experiences with xenophobia (as discussed in Chapter 4.) Include personal consideration of attitudes toward linguistic diversity that you hold. Choose a race studied in Chapter 5 and write a thoughtful essay on your experiences with people (multiple) of one of the races covered. Consider also, how our language creates a sense of 'other' concerning members of races other than your own.

This assignment is due to me on January 22

Week three: Please read Chapters 6 & 7. Assignment: please read Exercise #2 on page 160 and select 4 of the discussion questions and give a thoughtful and ‘informed’ response to each of the 4 you have selected. I suggest that you do a bit of Internet research prior to your choice of response questions. After you’ve read Chapter 7, please research the Indian boarding schools in both Pennsylvania and Nebraska. Please write your reactions to the government mandate that created these schools and the implementation of the schools.

This assignment is due to me on January 29.

Week four: Please read Chapters 8 & 9. Assignment: Please answer the following questions from a personal perspective and with great honesty.

- How have you benefitted from Institutional Racism?
- How have you been mis-served from Institutional Racism?
- What changes should we implement to decrease Institutional Racism in our own town, county and state?

This assignment is due to me on February 5.

Week five: Please read Chapters 10 & 11. Assignment: There are six boxes that identify Myths & Realities of homosexuality. Select one of the myths and undertake further Internet research of the particular myth you have selected. You may choose either a pro or con stance in supporting either the myth or the reality of your chosen subject. Write a defense of your stance. For Chapter 11 you may choose any area for discussion. Do the requisite Internet search and present a theory or premise on which you base your discussion and define, defend and suggest needed reforms for your area of discussion.

This assignment is due to me on February 12.

Week six: Please read Chapter 12. Assignment: Please write your own definition of a person or group that has been labeled disabled. This should be a relatively short and cogent definition that covers the many facets of the disability under study. Then either interview a person suffering from that disability or interview a social worker who works with such disabled people. Analyze your interview questions and answers carefully and write your findings. Please describe your process in your assignment as well as your findings. Include all questions that you asked.

This assignment is due to me on February 19.

Week seven: Please read Chapter 13 & 14. Assignment: Since each of you has already experienced both elementary and secondary education I want you to consider your school experiences in light of the information you have gained by reading Chapter 13. Describe what you recall as is relevant to this chapter. What did and did not you experience culturally? What were and were you not taught about various cultures? Then please consider Doane College and suggest a variety of suggested practices or changes that could be implemented to improve our climate of holistic diversity at Doane-Lincoln College. Finally, after having read the final Chapter, please formulate and send to me a

single discussion question to be posed when we meet during the final week of class. This question can be taken from any concept discussed through the entire 14 Chapters of our text. **This assignment is due to me on February 26.**

Week eight: Our final class meeting will consist of two parts. The class will begin with a general class discussion of the questions that you submitted to me the preceding Sunday Feb. 26. The remainder of the class time will be given over to your oral presentations of your research subject. The oral presentation will cover the highlights of your findings and must include an excerpt from YouTube that will illustrate or augment some facet of your oral presentation. **Journal of final class meeting is due to me on March 5.**

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

Occasional additional readings will be assigned in response to classroom discussions and questions. These will be Internet assignments for which you will be given one week to complete.

RESEARCH PROJECT:

Your research subject must be submitted for approval no later than January 24.

Your completed research paper is due no later than March 7. This paper is to be submitted via Internet to me at kit.voorhees@doane.edu.