

Online Syllabus: All course information posted online, including policies, is subject to being changed until the first day of the semester. Check the date at the bottom of the document for currency.

**COMM 463:
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

3 credit hours; Spring 2011
Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY

Instructor:	Sabine Chai	Office Hours*: T, 9-11am
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*During office hours, I will be reachable through skype and phone. I will also attempt to answer emails coming in during those times immediately, but please be patient as others may be emailing me too.

Syllabus Contents:

1. Course Information (e.g., objectives, how to succeed in this course, required materials, assignment/activities overview)
2. Course Policies (e.g., how to contact the instructor, policies on missed exams and late assignments, plagiarism/cheating policies, privacy online)

Course Information

What does the course cover?

Course Description. This course is designed to create an understanding of dimensions of communication theory that apply across cultural boundaries. Emphasis is placed on both theoretical and practical awareness of communication in and between cultures.

This course fulfills a core requirement for Communication Studies and Corporate and Organizational Communication majors.

The course requires the prior completion of COMM300 and COMM200 or instructor permission.

What will I learn in this course?

Course Objectives. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- Name, explain, and critically analyze major theories and fundamental concepts of culture and intercultural communication.

- Identify and explain social science, interpretive, and critical approaches to intercultural communication research and their influence on research questions asked and answers found.
- recognize, explain, and provide examples for the scope of cultural influence on their own and others' daily interactions.
- apply major theories and fundamental concepts of culture and intercultural communication to analyze real world issues related to culture and intercultural communication.

Why is this material important?

In our world today, contact with other cultures is not optional. Both within the U.S. and across borders, different groups of people depend on each other more than ever before for the fulfillment of basic needs, such as food, clothes, security, and many others. Most likely your future in the workplace will require some form of intercultural communication, either interpersonally, mediated, or through global influences on your environment. In either case, understanding of intercultural communication processes will serve you well.

To constructively work together with members of other cultures, respecting and understanding each other are pre-requisites. Neither of these come natural. Growing up, we learn our own culture's ways and tend to see these as the natural, logical, right way of thinking or acting. Once one culture is privileged in one's mind by being seen as "natural", others easily appear as deviations from nature – not a good starting point for intercultural communication.

In this course, you will learn to understand culture as a force that influences each and every one of us in more ways than we usually realize. We will study cultural patterns and theories that help us understand why people think and act the way they do. Seeing culture at work in our own lives is a good basis for understanding how culture works in the lives of others, what drives our and others' decision making and behavior, and learning to respect our own and others' ways of life.

Language. This course will be conducted in English and is designed for a North American audience.

Time. All times mentioned will be Central Standard Time.

Who is most likely to succeed in this course?

1. Students who approach the course material with a sincere interest in improving their understanding of culture and its influence on our lives.
2. Students who read and/or listen to instructions carefully, do their best to follow them, ask questions when they do not understand course material or assignments, regularly participate in class discussion, and submit any required material on time.

3. Specifically for an online course, students should

(Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Academic and Student Affairs, 2011)

a. be self-directed and motivated

An online course offers you much flexibility in where and when you want to work on the course material. BUT: That also means that you have to be responsible yourself for planning your approach to the course and motivating yourself to get started!

b. have good basic computer skills

You do not have to be a computer wizard, but you need to be comfortable with some basics, such as creating word files and saving them in various formats, emailing and, very important, the use of various blackboard functions and the internet in general. To avoid problems in the course of the semester, make sure the computer you plan to use is protected by a good antivirus program.

c. have good time management skills

Have you already set aside the time you will spend on this course? If not, now is the time to do it! You need to reserve three hours (which you would normally spend in the classroom) plus 2-3 hours for each of those hours for the outside class work you would have to do. That makes 9-12 hours per week. An online course may be flexible, but the workload is just as real as in a face-to-face course. Set yourself up for success by planning what time you will use for this course now! Then, make sure you stick to your plan!

d. be able to read and write well (and ideally like reading!)

An online course naturally requires more reading and writing than a face-to-face course. Therefore, please carefully consider whether you are comfortable (and can be happy) with both before deciding to take this course!

e. have continual access to a computer with Internet access

This course will require you to be online frequently (i.e., at least every other day). A typical week could look like this: The weekly introductory video and any lecture material become available Monday for you to watch; you have until Wednesday to submit a worksheet showing that you watched the videos and did the readings; once you submit the worksheet you can take the weekly quiz; once you took the quiz, you can participate in the discussion of the week. One activity builds on the other, so you will need to be on blackboard frequently in the course of the week!

f. feel comfortable asking questions when they need help.

This applies to all courses but online courses even more than face-to-face courses. In a face-to-face class, I may see questions in your face and ask whether anything is unclear. In an online class, that is not possible. So, you really need to take the initiative and ask when you need help!

g. be willing to share their experience with their instructor and fellow students in online discussion.

In an online class, the discussion board is much like our classroom where we can share ideas and experiences. The more people are ready to share, the more exciting the course will be. Plus, participating increases your own motivation and performance in the course!

Requirements

Textbook

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2010). *Intercultural communication in contexts* (5th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.



Other Requirements

- At least one email address you check frequently
- At least one telephone number under which you can be reliably reached
- Access to the internet (a high-speed connection is strongly recommended)

Strongly Recommended

- A skype account and a webcam

Course Requirements – Overview

The course grade will be determined by the performance on the following exams and assignments:

Midterm Exam	75 points	
Final Exam	100 points	A = 630 and above
Topic Paper and Presentation	120 points	B = 560 – 629.44
Topic Paper Blog	40 points	C = 490 – 559.44
Topic Paper Blog Feedback	30 points	D = 420 – 489.44
Topic Paper Peer Feedback	20 points	F = 419.44 and below
Reflection Paper	50 points	
Discussion Board Leadership	30 points	
Worksheets	55 points	[5 each]
Quizzes	65 points	[5 each]
Discussion Board Contributions	85 points	[17x5]
<u>Class Participation</u>	<u>30 points</u>	

Total

700 points

Exams - Two exams will be given in this course. All exams have to be taken at approved proctoring centers. You will have five days to choose from for scheduling your exam for each of the two exams. You can use Topnet to schedule an exam on the WKU campus. To get help with scheduling your exam for a different location, go to <http://www.wku.edu/testing>. Instructions for either option are posted on Blackboard. Remember to schedule your exams at least 4 days before you plan on taking the exam! The earlier you schedule, the more likely you are to get the exam time you want.

Exam questions will be taken from the textbook, lecture, and class activities. Students are responsible for material in the chapters assigned even if not discussed in class. The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions. The final exam also contains a take-home element consisting of a reflection on your experience and learning from interacting with our discussion board guests.

See Course Policies for policies on missing exams.

Topic Paper and Presentation –The purpose of this assignment is to give students the opportunity to explore one issue related to intercultural communication research and practice in-depth and explore the connections between intercultural communication theory and application. Students will write a paper and prepare a presentation to be posted to blackboard. Each student will also provide feedback for (and receive feedback from) two classmates on their work before the final paper is submitted. Detailed instructions will be available on blackboard.

Paper due for peer feedback: April 16th.

Peer feedback due: April 20th.

Paper due: April 27th.

Presentation due: April 30th

Topic Paper Blog – While working on your topic paper (i.e., from week 8 of the semester), you will be keeping a blog that chronicles your work and progress on your paper. You will also be assigned three blogs of your classmates to follow. The purpose of this assignment is to help you stay on track with your work, to widen your horizon as you see four topics develop (instead of just one) and to profit from your classmates' great ideas and encouragement (while sharing your own ideas with them).

Reflection Paper - This assignment gives you the opportunity to reflect on your own identity. You will be asked to choose one aspect of your identity (e.g., a specific value or belief), describe its background (e.g., what exactly do you value/believe and where/how/from whom did you acquire this value/belief), and describe how this aspect of your identity influences (a) your thinking in regard to a few example issues and (b) your communication with people who do and do not share your background.

This assignment does not require literature research but focuses on self reflection and the application of concepts learned in class to personal experience. You will hand in a well-written

summary of your reflections (about 3 pages). **Papers due: March 2nd.**

Worksheets – The purpose of having worksheets for each set of readings is to help you stay on track with the course material and make sure you do not miss some of the most important points in the readings. You can fill them out as you read (i.e., completing them should not take you much additional time). Completing them on time is an easy way for you to get credit for fulfilling basic course requirements (i.e., reading). **Due: each Wednesday.**

Quizzes – After submitting your worksheet each week, you will complete a quiz on the material covered in lecture and the textbook. The purpose of these quizzes is to give you an opportunity to check your understanding of the course material. Quizzes will be completed online. Quiz questions for each student will be drawn randomly from a pool of questions, so any two students are unlikely to get the same quiz questions. **Due: each Wednesday.**

Discussion Board Leadership – Once in the semester, you will collaborate with a small group of classmates to provide leadership for the discussion board. This will require you to finish your readings one week early and develop questions, examples, case studies, or any other material pertinent to that week's material that you feel should be discussed by the class. You and your group will run the material you develop by the instructor for feedback. It will, then, be posted Monday morning of your leadership week together with any material by the instructor. You are expected to be actively participating in the discussion of questions you brought up.

Discussion Board Participation – You are required to participate in the class discussion each week. The purpose of this assignment is to create opportunities to exchange ideas between classmates, to get help answering questions from classmates or the instructor, and to create a learning community. Unless otherwise specified, two postings per week are required and will be graded both on quantity and quality. In weeks when, for example, feedback on other students' presentations is needed, more postings will be required, but they will also receive more points. If you submit more than the required number of postings in any given week, the best ones will be graded. Standards for quality postings are included as Appendix to this Syllabus. Please read them carefully.

Course Participation: The purpose of having a separate participation rubric, apart from discussion board participation, is to give credit to students who go above and beyond the requirements for discussion board participation in participating in discussions, helping answer questions others post, bringing up good questions or ideas of their own, and in general being outstanding "online course citizens".

About Assignments –

- **All written assignments must conform to APA style (5th or 6th edition).** The following APA manual is available at the Helm-Cravens library.

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the*

American Psychological Association (5th ed.). Washington, DC:

Author. [APA]

- **Late Work** - All assignments must be submitted to blackboard on their due date. E-mail submissions will not be accepted for credit unless an assignment is specifically announced as an e-mail assignment. No late work will be accepted without prior approval from the instructor. Failure to obtain prior approval will result in a 10% grade deduction for the assignment per day that the assignment is late. Submitting a corrupted file (i.e., a file that cannot be opened) will be counted as no submission, so check the file you are submitting to make sure it is not corrupted. If I cannot open the file you submitted, I will notify you and the late “clock” will continue to tick until a version I can read is sent.
- All written documents have to be in **Word doc, docx, or rtf** format

Course Policies

Please note: Before discussing our rules for the course, let me **warmly thank** the many students who are conscientious and courteous while endeavoring to meet course obligations. I **do** notice your efforts. It is you who make teaching a joy. Thank you for being there!

That said, rules are there to make sure **everybody** is on the same page before we embark on this learning experience together. So, please read the sections below carefully and hopefully we can avoid most issues in the course of the semester.

Contacting the Instructor

Email: The by far best way to reach me is **email**. I will check my email at least twice a day, Monday through Friday and usually once on the weekend. You can usually expect a response from me within 48 hours Monday through Friday, and on Monday if you email me on the weekend. If you do not receive a response within that timeframe, I probably did not get your message. In that case, please check your email to make sure it fulfills the requirements below and re-send it.

Required email format: Always include our course name and section number in the subject line plus a brief heading related to the content of your email. For example: “COMM463: Reflection paper question”. I get a lot of emails and scan through them for emails from students. Including an appropriate subject line will ensure that I notice your email.

Within the email, make sure to always include the following: a greeting, a closer, and your name. Including these items is basic courtesy in email exchanges. You will make a much better impression on whoever you email if you include these basic features.

Phone: You can call me in my office or through skype. The phone could be a good way to reach me during office hours (unless I am talking to another student at the time) or if we have arranged a time to talk. At other times, please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Skype/Webcam: Either during office hours or at other arranged times, we can have meetings

through skype using either just audio or webcams. Seeing each other can be very helpful especially if we need to discuss more complicated issues. So, if you do not have a webcam yet, please consider getting one.

Office: I will be on the WKU campus four times during the semester; once end of January/early February, twice in April, and once in May. During these times, we can set up meetings in my office, FAC 141. Details for these times will be posted on blackboard.

“Attendance” Policy

According to the University Senate, **“Registration in a course obligates the student to be regular and punctual in class attendance.”** In an online course, we do not have regular class meetings, but you are expected to regularly log into the course site, get updates on what is happening in class, and stay on track with readings, listening to lectures, engaging in discussions, and in general fulfilling course requirements. Please know that blackboard keeps a record of your presence in (or absence from) the course site.

Other Student Obligations

- You are responsible for your own learning. It is of no benefit to you if the understandings are in my head and not yours. Therefore, I will happily answer questions, as formulating good questions is part of the learning process, but ultimately the responsibility for acquiring a good understanding of the course material lies with you.
- You are responsible for keeping track of activities and due dates in the course. I will provide reminders early in the semester (and the syllabus has all deadlines listed), but you are expected to organize your own approach to staying on track and making due dates.
- If you have questions, it is your responsibility to ask. I will answer happily, but cannot read your mind to find out that you have a question.
- You are expected to actually be the person you represent yourself to be on all work. If not, this is grounds for failing the course.
- On the first day of the course, you will know when every assignment and exam is due. Look at it now and plan your term! *If you don't like a due date, set your own earlier than the stated one. If your health or life is unpredictable, work ahead of the stated deadlines.*

What happens if bad weather, computer crashes, server outages, or the like interrupts the usual class activities?

In the event of an emergency local to you (but not to me or vice versa) that results in loss of connection (a technology breakdown, tornado, ice storm, hurricane, earthquake, etc.) do your best to contact me by any means once it is reasonable to do so (phones, fax, postal mail, smoke signals). Continue to make reasonable independent efforts toward course completion as per the syllabus. I do watch for news of the places in which my students are so I may be aware of the problem. Contact me sooner, rather than later.

Arrange a back-up plan for Internet access in case your primary computer fails. Libraries may

offer a terminal, for example. WKU tends to do maintenance tasks on the weekends so you may experience periodic outages. Please act with all haste to fix your computer within 2-3 days of a problem. It has been my experience that computers which are nonfunctional for longer than that result in significant problems in finishing coursework. I've had people try to use a neighbor's computer. That tends to hurt the relationship with the neighbor since you will be there frequently or sacrifice coursework.

Please avoid viruses by using virus checking software, avoiding e-mails with "humorous" attachments, and avoid using thumb drives or floppies that have been used on public machines. If you don't know the sender, don't open it.

What if there's a power outage while I'm taking an exam?

Your proctor should have a print backup exam that you can take. I try to be more available during exam times and you should try and contact me immediately as well. Sometimes there are things I can do to help. Power outages are less common at Testing Centers which is one reason I prefer to use them.

What about missed exams?

Drive carefully, check your car tires, get medicine at the first signs of ill health, set two alarm clocks but don't miss the exam dates, especially as you schedule them. You have 5 days to get your exam done and you get to schedule it—so you should be able to show-up. Make-up exams are given only under three circumstances (and only those!) and with appropriate documentation (no exceptions!).

What are those special circumstances?

1. A personally life-threatening emergency (includes fever over 100 or being shipped off by military). Appropriate documentation of the emergency is required in order for me to assign a grade. The following are not life-threatening emergencies: Your best friend's relative dies; a cold (no fever); a hangover; a trip to Bermuda; a wedding. Life is about making choices. They are not always easy choices. I hope no one has to make these types of choices in this class, but having to make a difficult choice is part of being an adult, it is not a sign of being mistreated. I give you advance notice so you can make necessary arrangements. There are no surprises in this class so you can plan your life from day one. If you are seriously sick, get a note from the MD, save pharmacy receipts if you don't have insurance or think of how else it could be independently documented in a manner your peers would approve.
2. Business accepts as an excuse the **deaths of grandparents, parents (includes step), children, spouse or person for whom you are guardian** with documentation; so I'll follow the same model. You have the opportunity on your Student Information Sheet to list the names of those in your immediate "family" however you define that. **I do need documentation of the death** to keep faith with the other students in the class. Although I am very sympathetic I need a newspaper obituary and funeral home card or confirmation from an established citizen, such as the minister, giving the date and time of the funeral and the relationship to you. The death of non-dependent cousins, aunts, uncles, etc. are not considered acceptable excuses. It would be impossible for me to judge the depth of

relationships/trauma across all the students for such relatives. If you become a primary caregiver for a dependent after the term begins, (e.g., a sibling dies and you take on their child) notify me before the week of the exam to add them to your list. Again, some type of documentation is important, e.g., I am primary caregiver to an aunt and two elderly friends and am the only relative of a sister. Those are the people for whom I would have to take emergency leave.

Once upon a time in small communities everyone knew everyone else and could judge the impact of a loss. Today I have students all over the country and thus need separate confirmation to be at peace with the other students. I regret the inconvenience for those truly experiencing such a loss, but I've heard students boasting about using a fake death as an excuse and I've become cautious to fulfill my obligation to other students to provide as level a playing field as possible.

3. The university may approve certain types of absences campus-wide, such as severe weather events.

Academic Honesty – Cheating and Plagiarism Policy

All work should be a reflection of your own efforts. A student who cheats or plagiarizes will earn zero points for that assignment and/or a failing grade for the course, and may be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. To avoid any impropriety, protect yourself: In written assignments, (1) provide the names of the authors of all ideas that are not your own, and (2) provide proper citations when you summarize or paraphrase another person's ideas in your own words.

Student work may be checked by plagiarism detection software (such as TurnItIn.com). I regularly run student papers and other contributions through online search engines. Finding that students have copied part of what should be their own work is a big disappointment for me and creates a lot of trouble for the student. Please save me the disappointment and yourself the trouble by submitting work that is all your own! If in doubt about how to use sources appropriately, please ask!

Intellectual Property.

It is a common misconception that material on the Internet is free. However, even if a copyright notice is absent, work is the property of the creator. I expect you will post only material that is yours by right of creation unless you give proper credit (author, title, location) and indications (e.g., quotation marks). The plagiarism policy applies on the Internet too.

Privacy Matters.

- The Internet may change or challenge notions of what is private and what is not. I prefer to provide disclosure up front so you know what the possibilities are. Although the course is protected by a password, such tools are not perfect as human beings are using them. You are relatively protected by the password but no one can guarantee privacy online. **Privacy for every student depends on the actions of each individual**

student--sharing your password with a friend or spouse is violating the privacy of your classmates. Maintain trust with your classmates, do not share your password. You may trust your spouse with your life, but your classmates do not know this person.

- Disclosure: The course software I use enables me to know which students have logged in and where in the course site they have visited. The technology support people have access to information posted at the site.
- Course Security: In the event you use a public terminal (e.g., at work in a computer lab or at a hotel or library) you need to **completely close the browser software** when you are finished. This will prevent another person from accessing the course using your identification, doing mischief in your name, and violating the privacy of other students. For extra security and to prevent the next person at the terminal from seeing what you looked at, empty the cache on the browser.

In Internet Explorer: Tools...Internet Options...General...middle section of Temporary Internet Files...Delete Files. It may take a while if no one has done it before.

In Mozilla/Firefox....Edit...Preferences....Advanced....Cache....Clear Cache

- Guard your password and change it regularly.

Student Disability Services

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center A-200. The phone number is 270-745-5004; TTY is 270-745-3030.

Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the instructor without a letter of accommodation from the OFSDS.

References

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Academic and Student Affairs

(2011). Getting started online. Retrieved from

<http://www.vfc.project.mnscu.edu/>

Kuhlenschmidt, S. (2011). Psychological Tests and Measurements – Psy 361: Web Site

Syllabus. Retrieved January 8th, 2007, from

<http://www.wku.edu/~sally.kuhlenschmidt/psy361/p361syl.htm>

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Intercultural Communication (COMM 463)

Tentative Course Schedule

Sabine Chai

Spring 2012

Note: Readings, Worksheets and Quizzes are always due *Wednesday* of each week.

Week	Dates	Topics	Readings	Assignments and Due Dates
Week 1	1/23 M to 1/29 S	Syllabus, Blackboard Ch1: Why study intercultural communication?	Ch1	Wednesday: Blackboard Quiz Friday: 1. Syllabus Quiz 2. Doodle Responses Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions
Week 2	1/30 M to 2/5 S	Ch2: Intercultural Communication as a Discipline	Ch2 Classmate Introductions	Monday: 1. Your Introduction posted to Blackboard 2. If Mailing: Your Student Information Sheet Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 1 2. Quiz 1 (lecture + Ch1 and Ch2) Friday, 12pm: If handing in in person: Your Student Information Sheet Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions (incl. reactions to classmate introductions)

Week 3	2/6 M to 2/12 S	Ch3: Defining Culture and Communication; Cultural Value Dimensions	Ch3 Reflection Paper Explained	Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 2 2. Quiz 2 (lecture + Ch3) Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions
Week 4	2/13 M to 2/19 S	Ch4: History and Histories Discussion Board Guest	Ch4	Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 3 2. Quiz 3 (lecture + Ch4) Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions
Week 5	2/20 M to 2/26 S	Ch5: Identity	Ch5	Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 4 2. Quiz 4 (lecture + Ch5) Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions
Week 6	2/27 M to 3/4 S	Review Chs 1-5, Case Study	Case Study	M-F: Case Study Discussion Friday: Reflection Papers Due

Week 7	3/5 M to 3/11 S	Spring Break		Enjoy the break!
Week 8	3/12 M to 3/18 S	Topic Papers Interviewing	Topic Paper Explained	M – F: Midterm Exam (Chs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) <i>[Remember to <u>schedule in advance!</u>]</i> Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions
Week 9	3/19 M to 3/25 S	Ch6: Language Discussion Board Guest	Ch6	Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 5 2. Quiz 5 (lecture + Ch6) Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions
Week 10	3/26 M to 4/1 S	Ch7: Nonverbal Codes and Cultural Space	Ch7	Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 6 2. Quiz 6 (lecture + Ch7) Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions

Week 11	4/2 M to 4/8 S	Ch8: Intercultural Adaptation Discussion Board Guest	Ch8	Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 7 2. Quiz 7 (lecture + Ch8) Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions
Week 12	4/9 M to 4/15 S	Ch9: Popular Culture	Ch9	Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 8 2. Quiz 8 (lecture + Ch9) Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions
Week 13	4/16 M to 4/22 S	Ch10: Intercultural Relationships	Ch10 2 Topic Papers	Monday: Topic Papers Due to Peer Reviewers Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 9 2. Quiz 9 (lecture + Ch10) Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions Friday: Topic Paper Peer Reviews Due to Peers and Instructor
Week 14	4/23 M to 4/29 S	Ch11: Conflict across Cultures	Ch11	Wednesday: 1. Worksheet 10 2. Quiz 10 (lecture + Ch11) Thursday-Sunday: Discussion Board Contributions Friday: Topic Papers Due

Week 15	4/30 M to 5/6 S	Intercultural Competence Topic Papers Exam Review	Classmates' Topic Paper Highlights	Monday: Post Highlights of your Topic Paper to Blackboard Monday – Friday: Discussion Board: Feedback/Comments on Culture Projects
Week 16	5/7 M to 5/11 F	Final Exam Week		M-F: Final Exam (Chs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 + reflection on discussion board guest discussions) <i>[Remember to <u>schedule in advance!</u>]</i>

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Appendix

Discussion Board Policies and Procedures

As discussed above: The purpose of the discussion board is to create opportunities to exchange ideas between classmates, to get help answering questions from classmates or the instructor, and to create a learning community. Unless otherwise specified, two postings per week are required and will be graded both on quantity and quality. In weeks when, for example, feedback on other students' presentations is needed, more postings will be required, but they will also receive more points. If you submit more than the required number of postings in any given week, the best ones will be graded.

A good posting should:

- be professional and meaningful
- avoid bad language and inappropriate content
- be your own work! If you use another source, use quotation marks and reference your source.
- reflect your understanding of the reading/lecture, i.e., contributions that directly relate the discussion to course concepts and theories are strongly encouraged!
- stimulate deeper discussion

Watercooler-type questions and course content related questions that do not also include a discussion of related issues by you are encouraged but do **not** count toward your required contributions.

For example, "Can somebody please tell me where the instructions for signing up for exams are posted?" is a legitimate watercooler-type question but does not further the discussion of course content. Also, "Can somebody please explain the difference between high and low uncertainty avoidance?" is a useful question (and **please do ask** if material is unclear after you have done the readings and listened to the lecture!), but does not include a specific content contribution by you.

What counts as contribution?

1. Answering other students' content related questions.
2. Asking content related questions that include a discussion of the topic by you.

For example: "According to our textbook, the U.S. is the most individualistic country in the world. In lecture, we heard, though, that individualism is a culture level variable that does not tell us much about individual people in the U.S. The U.S. population is very diverse and many groups are rather collectivistic. How does it help us to have a culture level evaluation of a country?"

3. Bringing up examples, stories, specific cases, or news items that relate to course content and stimulate in-depth discussion in the forum.

Examples of contributions of varying quality:

Contribution Quality	Example	Explanation
Poor Contribution [0 points]	"I agree with J. Doe"	No explanation; no own discussion of course content
	"This issue is really complicated and needs to be explored further"	No actual content
Fair contributions [0.5-1 points]	"I agree with J. Doe's comment on individualism and how many people in the U.S. are collectivistic. I personally know some collectivistic people."	Refers to course concepts but does not reflect understanding of the concepts.
	"The issue of cultural patterns changing over time seems rather difficult to keep track of. What use is studying patterns if they change?"	Refers to course content but does not include discussion to show understanding.
Good contribution [1.5-2 points]	"I think that the issue of cultural patterns changing over time could make studying culture much more confusing. I read, for example, that since China introduced the One Child Policy, children grow up with a lot more individualistic values. So, how much do we really know about Chinese culture now?"	Refers to course content and brings in interesting example. Does not cite source and could discuss background and implications of example for course content more thoroughly.

<p>Excellent contribution [2.5 points]</p>	<p>J. Doe brought up the issue of culture level variables (like individualism) not allowing predictions about individual members of any given culture. According to our textbook, we are indeed “more than our culture” (p. 190), meaning that cultural patterns do not predict the values of each specific member. However, that is not their purpose. Rather, they provide an aggregate measure of a nation that helps us compare nations with each other. So, for example, in an individualistic nation, people are just more likely to value freedom of expression and in collectivistic nations, people are more likely to value harmony and consensus.</p>	<p>Refers to course content, cites source, clearly show understanding of course concepts and builds on prior contribution to further the discussion.</p>
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