

IL143-15 Intercultural Communication in Theory and Practice

24/25

Department

Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Thomas Greenaway

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module approaches the theory and practice of intercultural communication in an accessible and interdisciplinary way by drawing on your diverse perspectives and experiences to unpack the complex relationship between communication and culture. It will encourage you to think critically about the ways culture has been conceptualised in research and in society, and understand how the shift from 'culture-as-given' to 'culture-as-construct' is driving the direction of research (e.g. analysing the more subtle ways we use language to negotiate our cultural identities). You'll draw on your disciplinary knowledge to explore the role of language at different levels of culture (e.g. occupational culture, departmental culture), as these intersect in a range of professional disciplines (e.g. engineering, medicine, education). The module is delivered in a blended format, with weekly workshops that provide the opportunity to explore how theory operates in practice through the design of experiential learning activities centered around communication at group level and pair level. Reflecting on the patterns of communication you observed in these activities and in project meetings will generate critical insights that will consolidate your learning, which you will be able to demonstrate in the reflective assessment piece. Ultimately, this module gives you the conceptual toolkit to develop an advanced level of intercultural awareness that will support your personal development, academic practice, and future career.

'Intercultural Communication in Theory and Practice' builds on Warwick's long-standing expertise in the theoretical development of intercultural education within the field of applied linguistics, including interactional sociolinguistics and intercultural pragmatics.

Module aims

This module aims to:

1. Introduce students to emerging and established trends in the radically interdisciplinary field of intercultural communication and the concepts and models that underpin them
2. Encourage students to think critically about essentialist approaches to intercultural communication in light of the complex relationships between identity, language use and cultural norms
3. Give students a conceptual toolkit to explore communication at different levels of culture in diverse settings
4. Facilitate students' personal growth through experiential learning techniques and critical reflective practice
5. Provide opportunities for students to generate interdisciplinary insights through analysing and reflecting on their intercultural interactions
6. Help students develop an advanced level of intercultural awareness based on the interdisciplinary insights gained through practice and research, and articulate its relevance to their future work

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1: Introduction

This week will introduce students to the module: content, teaching, and assessment. Students will draw on their existing knowledge and disciplinary insights to begin reflecting on their learning journey by exploring a relevant theme, such as stereotypes.

Week 2: Conceptualising culture across disciplines

This week will introduce students to conceptualisations of culture as theorised and operationalised in different disciplines (from STEM, Social Sciences and Arts) and illustrate some of the practical applications of interdisciplinary research.

Week 3: Unpacking intercultural communication

This week will focus on putting together a conceptual toolkit for approaching intercultural communication and explore ways it can be used to unpack key issues.

Week 4: Language and professional culture

This week will focus on the use of language in different cultures and explore the ways they intersect with other levels of culture.

Week 5: Communication practices in teamwork (with guest contribution on teamwork)

This week will focus on intercultural interaction in the context of team meetings, exploring different patterns of communication at the micro level in relation to diversity and inclusion.

Week 6: The critical issue of feedback

This week will put feedback under the microscope and explore it theoretically and practically (in different contexts) as a critical issue in intercultural communication.

Week 7: Intercultural communication and leadership

This week will explore disciplinary differences in conceptualising the relationship between culture and leadership, and reconsider patterns and styles of communication through the lens of discursive leadership.

Week 8: The role of reflective practice in personal development and intercultural training (with guest contribution on personal development)

This week will focus on reflection in personal development by exploring reflective practices in different traditions of intercultural coaching and training.

Week 9: Researching intercultural communication in different disciplines

This week will focus on research methods used in different disciplines for analysing intercultural communication and critically explore popular methods of evaluating intercultural competence with guest contributions from from intercultural researchers in Arts, STEM and Social Sciences.

Week 10: SDA Showcase & Peer Review

This week will be an opportunity for students to present their preliminary SDA work, receive formative feedback from their peers, and reflect on their learning journey over the course of the module as an activity to help develop their ideas for the reflective assessment piece.

Each week students will be encouraged to share reflections on their personal development based on the theories and concepts they have been introduced to.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- 1) Understand and explain key concepts, models and interdisciplinary research on intercultural communication and discuss their transdisciplinary relevance
- 2) Engage critically with disciplinary differences in the way culture, identity and communication are conceptualised and relate this to their own experiences
- 3) Apply a conceptual toolkit to explore diverse patterns of interaction and understand their impact on group processes
- 4) Critically reflect on their experiences of working in an interdisciplinary team
- 5) Generate and apply detailed, coherent insights from participating in experiential learning activities to intercultural interaction, and understand their transdisciplinary relevance
- 6) Develop an advanced level of intercultural awareness and articulate its relevance to their future work

Indicative reading list

- Fitzgerald, H. (2003). How different are we? Spoken discourse in intercultural communication: The significance of the situational context. *Multilingual matters*.
- Hall, E.T. (1989). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Books.
- Handford, M. 2020. Training “international engineers” in Japan: discourse, Discourse and stereotypes. In L. Mullany (Ed.), *Professional communication, consultancy, advocacy, activism* (pp. 29-46). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Handford, M. (2016). Cultural identities in international, interorganisational meetings: A corpus-informed discourse analysis of indexical “we”. In P. Holmes, M. Dooly, & J. O'Regan (Eds.), *Intercultural dialogue: Questions of research, theory, and practice* (pp. 53-70). Routledge.
- Hinton, P.R. (2019). *Stereotypes and the construction of the social world*. Routledge.
- McConachy, T., & Hinton, P. (Eds.). (2023). *Negotiating intercultural relations: Insights from linguistics, psychology, and intercultural education*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- McSweeney, B. (2002). Hofstede’s model of national cultural differences and the consequences: A triumph of faith - a failure of analysis. *Human Relations*, 55, 89-118.
- Molinsky, A. (2013). *Global dexterity: How to adapt your behaviour across cultures without losing yourself in the process*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Reissner-Roubicek, S., & Spencer-Oatey, H. (2020). Positive interaction in intercultural groupwork: Resources to foster success. In Z. Zhang, T. Grimshaw, & X. Shi (Eds.), *International student education in tertiary settings: Interrogating programs and processes in diverse contexts* (pp. 82-103). Routledge.
- Scollon, R., Scollon, S.B.K., & Jones, R.H. (2012). *Intercultural communication: A discourse approach* (3rd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Spencer-Oatey, H., & Franklin, P. (2009). *Intercultural interaction: A multidisciplinary approach to intercultural communication*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schwartz, S. (2012). An overview of the Schwartz theory of basic values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1).
- Shaules, R. (2007). *Deep culture: The hidden challenges of global living*. *Multilingual Matters*.
- Trompenaars, F. & Hampden-Turner, C. (2012). *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding cultural diversity in business* (3rd ed.). Nicholas Brealey.
- Van Maele, J, & Messelink, A. (2019). Mobilizing essentialist frameworks in non-essentialist intercultural training. In P. Romanowski & E. Bandura (Eds.), *Intercultural foreign language teaching and learning in higher education contexts* (pp. 41–61). IGI Global.

Research element

Each of the assessments has a research element. After firstly collaborating on the concept and design of their group’s interdisciplinary Student-Devised Assessment (SDA), students will research the theme of culture and inclusion as it applies to their respective disciplines and subsequently work together to synthesise their findings in any format of their choosing that satisfies the learning outcomes for this module. The collaborative work they do for this assessment will generate research data (examples of naturally-occurring communication) that they will make use of in the reflective assessment piece, which requires them to analyse and then reflect on their

interpretations of this data

Interdisciplinary

Intercultural communication is an interdisciplinary field, and it will be explored in this module in interdisciplinary ways. The module will draw on students' experience and knowledge of their own disciplinary areas, and they will be assigned to multidisciplinary working groups to participate in experiential learning activities during the weekly workshops, which will help them to generate interdisciplinary insights from these activities. They will be assigned to multidisciplinary teams for the student-devised assessment project, which will encourage them to explore the project theme in an interdisciplinary manner. The individual assessment is a reflective piece and reflective thinking is a key component of interdisciplinary work. The module content will include the ways different disciplines conceptualise, analyse, and discuss culture, the practical applications of interdisciplinary research in intercultural communication, the role of language in different professional disciplines, the ways that intercultural communication is made relevant in different disciplines (such as engineering, computer science, maths, medicine, education, law, and business), disciplinary differences in conceptualising the relationship between culture and communication in contexts such as teamwork and leadership, and so on. This module uses inductive, experiential learning techniques that draw on a range of practitioner disciplines in a transdisciplinary way.

Disciplines contributing to intercultural communication theory and research include cross-cultural psychology, cultural and linguistic anthropology, global literatures, business studies, leadership psychology, international management, organisational behaviour, sociolinguistics, and intercultural pragmatics. However, intercultural communication research has taken place in many more disciplinary contexts, including Engineering, Medicine, Education, Drama, Music, and International Business.

International

Readings and other learning resources across the module cover diverse international and intercultural contexts that reflect the diversity of the student cohort and are integrated with teamwork activities that provide students with opportunities to reflect on the implications for communication in the global workplace and beyond. Students will also reflect on the different meanings of intercultural and international when critically engaging with approaches to culture that foreground nationality, as well as the meaning of 'internationalisation on campus' in terms of inclusive communication practices.

Subject specific skills

Students will acquire a vocabulary for culture to explain concepts and issues related to intercultural communication in a nuanced way; they will learn to use appropriate terminology to describe communication, identify micro-level features of communication and analyse patterns of interaction, observe and critically evaluate communication processes, apply models for professional intercultural development, and debrief experiential learning activities.

Transferable skills

Students will develop their reflection skills and understand the significance of reflection in consolidating their learning; they will develop their communication skills through reflecting on their own communication in experiential learning activities and articulating what they learned from analysing communication, enhanced teamwork skills through reflecting on the impact of their own communication style on e.g. decision making processes, problem-solving skills through addressing the challenges inherent in teamwork, analytical skills through analysing communication, critical thinking skills through interpreting their analytical observations, professional skills through working inclusively and giving feedback equitably, all of which will contribute to an advanced level of intercultural awareness.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (13%)
Tutorials	2 sessions of 15 minutes (0%)
Online learning (independent)	10 sessions of 45 minutes (5%)
Private study	22 hours (15%)
Assessment	100 hours (67%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Independent learning will involve watching a 45 minute video lecture each week. This must be done before the seminar.

Private study hours include background reading, completing reading/other tasks in preparation for timetabled teaching sessions and follow-up reading work.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Interdisciplinary group project	30%	30 hours	No
Interdisciplinary group project on the theme of culture and inclusion. Each group will devise the format of their own project and critically explore the theme through their diverse perspectives.			
Individual reflective narrative	70%	70 hours	Yes (extension)
Reflective narrative on participation in experiential learning activities during the module, focusing on communication behaviours in teamwork, reflecting specifically on what it felt like to experiment with adjusting their own communication behaviours. This narrative will be illustrated with analytical observations on an extract of interactional data collected from a team discussion.			

Feedback on assessment

Formative oral feedback will be provided at relevant points within seminars and also via an individual tutorial during the first half of the module. Students will receive online written feedback/feedforward via Tabula for each assessment. They can request a meeting with module tutors to discuss specific points of feedback if required. The marking criteria for each assessment will be explained in the seminars with opportunities to ask questions and students will be encouraged to ask follow-up questions via Teams chat as needed while they are thinking about and/or working on the assessments. This will promote assessment literacy and ensure transparency in assessment expectations and feedback.

Availability

There is currently no information about the courses for which this module is core or optional.