COMILLAS
UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA
CIHS

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

COURSE DATA	
Degree	Diploma in Humanities and Global Challenges
Academic Year	2026-27
Credits	6
Course type	Elective
Department	Departamento de Traducción e Interpretación y Comunicación Multilingüe
Language of instruction	English
Name and email of instructor	Birgit Strotmann (birgit.strotmann@comillas.edu) Patricia Martín Matas (patricia.martin@comillas.edu)

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This subject aims to develop intercultural communication skills, using a critical approach. Course content is provided from a descriptive, comparative and eminently practical point of view to introduce students to intercultural communication by means of simulations, critical incidents, and student research. Activities will be contextualized with reference to recent literature in the field and critical discussion will be invited.

Expected learning outcomes:

1. Students will be able to identify, analyse and participate in intercultural communication processes in a variety of contexts.
2. Students will become familiar with major concepts and theories of intercultural communication.
3. Students will compare the role of historical, political, economic and religious factors in creating cultural stereotypes and conflicts.
4. Students will reflect on power hierarchies and their effect on individuals and communities.
5. Students will improve their ability to work in intercultural teams.

6. Students will develop an attitude of open-mindedness and self-critical reflection.

CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE

TOPIC 0: PRESENTATION AND WELCOME

TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

TOPIC 2: CULTURE, COGNITION AND IDENTITY

TOPIC 3: VALUE ORIENTATIONS AND BEHAVIOURS

TOPIC 4: CULTURE AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION

TOPIC 5: CULTURE AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

TOPIC 6: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXT

TOPIC 7: INTERCULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT

TOPIC 8: THE ETHICS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

* This syllabus may be subject to changes based on class size, student performance or unforeseen circumstances during the course.

METHODOLOGY

The subject Intercultural Communication consists of 6 ECTS that are divided into face-to-face sessions and diverse autonomous learning activities. In the weekly sessions the student is required to participate actively to develop the different competences of the subject and ensure comprehension of theories and concepts from a practical and applied perspective.

In-class learning activities may include:

- Lectures
- Pair and group work: problem-solving, experiential learning, jigsaw activities, case studies, simulations, role plays, learning walks
- Full class activities: Discussion, gamified activities, presentations

Independent learning activities may include:

- Autonomous study
- Individual assignments (Online tests, forum posts, tasks)
- Collaborative assignments (presentations, research tasks, case studies, field work, critical incidents)

The course includes a project that may have an interdisciplinary and/or international component. Participation in any project-related activities held outside regular class hours is entirely voluntary, and choosing not to participate will not affect a student's final grade. However, students who participate in these optional activities may be eligible to receive additional credit.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Percentage
EXAMS	Online test 1 Online test 2 Final examination	5% 5% 40%
PROJECT WORK	Research; oral work, written work	30%
PARTICIPATION	Quality and quantity of completed task submissions, active participation in class activities	20%

- Committing any serious academic misconduct, such as **plagiarism** of previously published material, or **copying** in the exam or any other graded activity, **will imply not being able to pass the course in the ordinary assessment period.**
- The **use of generative AI tools** to produce complete assignments or substantial portions of an assignment without proper disclosure and citation, or where such use has not been explicitly authorized in the assignment instructions, will be considered a breach of academic integrity and may be treated as plagiarism in accordance with the University's General Regulations. Students must **comply with the AI-use requirements specified for each assessment activity** and provide appropriate acknowledgment of any AI tools used in the preparation of their work.

- At the beginning of the term the professor will announce the **office hours** for the course. Tutorials are an essential part of the development of the course, and students may attend tutorials during the course within those office times but are required to give prior notice.
- Any non-face-to-face learning activity that requires the **submission of an assignment/document**, etc. will be submitted by the student through Moodle, in Word or pdf format, as instructed. **Late submissions** will be penalized or rejected.
- Please note that **attendance is compulsory.** To be able to take the final exam, **students must not have missed more than one third of the classes without justification**. If this requirement is not met, the student may lose the right to be assessed both in the ordinary and extraordinary assessment period (art. 93-1 of the General Regulations). Failure to attend the first hour of a two-hour lecture will be recorded as absence from the entire session for attendance purposes, regardless of whether the student attends the second hour.
- Please note **if you fail this course** you have the right to resit your exam and/or resubmit failed assignments (except for the 10% participation tasks) in the official resit period, which tends to be June. If you wish to do so, you must request this in writing.

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)		
CONTACT HOURS	OUTSIDE CLASSROOM	OVERALL
60	90	150

READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

Arasaratnam, L. A., & Doefel, M. L. (2005). Intercultural Communication Competence: Identifying key components from multicultural perspectives. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29, 137–163.

Bennett, M.J. (1998). *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communications*. Intercultural Press.

Byram, M. (2021). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence – Revisited.* Multingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/BYRAM0244

Evanoff, R. (2020). Introducing intercultural ethics. In: *The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Communication*, Rings, G., & Rasinger, S. (eds.). Cambridge University Press.

Frischherz, B. et al. (2023). *Intercultural Business Ethics (IBE): A teaching handbook*. Globalethics.net.

Handbook of Intercultural Discourse and Communication, The. (2014). Bratt Paulson, C., Kiesling, & S. F., Rangel, E.S. (eds.). Wiley Blackwell.

Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, 2*(1). https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014

Hogg, M.A., & Vaughan, G.M. (2018, 8th ed.). *Social Psychology*. Pearson.

Holliday, A., Hyde, M., & Kullman, J. (2010*). Intercultural Communication: An advanced resource book for students*.

Jandt, F.E. (2010). *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a global community*. Sage.

Liu, S.; Volcic, Z. & Gallois, C. (2015). *Introducing intercultural communication: Global cultures and contexts.* Sage.

Meyer, Erin (2015). *The Culture Map: Decoding how people think, lead, and get things done across cultures.* US Public Affairs TM.

Neuliep, J. W. (2015). *Intercultural Communication: A contextual approach* (6th ed.). Sage.

Piller, I. (2011). *Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction.* Edinburgh University Press.

Rings, G., & Rasinger, S. M (2023). *The Cambridge Introduction to Intercultural Communication (English Edition)*. Cambridge University Press. Edición de Kindle.

Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication, The (2020, 2nd ed.). Jackson, J. (ed.). Routledge.

Shaules, J. (2015). *The Intercultural Mind: Connecting culture, cognition and global living*. Intercultural Press.

Shu, H. (2011, ed.). *The Language and Intercultural Communication Reader*. Routledge.

Sorrells, K. (2022). *Intercultural Communication: Globalization and social justice*. Sage.

Ting-Toomey, S., & Dorjee, T. (2018) *Communicating Across Cultures.* Guildford Press.

Utley, D. (2004). Intercultural Resource Pack. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zhu, H. (2016; ed.). *Research Methods in Intercultural Communication: A practical guide*. Wiley Blackwell.

OTHER RESOURCES

Moodle campus of the subject

Hofstede Insights at https://www.hofstede-insights.com/

Liu et al. (2019) online materials: https://study.sagepub.com/liu3e

Neuliep (2015) online materials: http://edge.sagepub.com/neuliep7e and https://edge.sagepub.com/neuliep8e

Clearly Cultural: http://clearlycultural.com/geert-hofstede-cultural-dimensions/individualism/

APPENDIX: DETAILED COMPETENCES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Competences – Learning Outcomes		
General skills		
CG1	**Ability to think analytically, synthetically and critically in the context of international communication.**	
	RA1	*Describes, relates and interprets situations and approaches.*
	RA2	*Selects the most significant elements and their relationships in complex texts.*
	RA3	*Identify information gaps and establish relationships with external factors.*
CG2	**Ability to apply the knowledge of communication in international environments.**	
	RA1	*Can determine the scope and practical utility of theoretical notions.*
	RA2	*Can correctly identify the knowledge applicable in a given context.*
	RA3	*Can relate factual knowledge with different professional practices.*
	RA4	*Can solve real-life practical cases.*
CG4	**Ability to communicate in writing and speaking in four languages.**	
	RA1	*Can express ideas in a structured, intelligible and convincing way.*
	RA2	*Can present ideas in front of groups with ease and assurance.*
CG6	**Ability to think and strategically manage in the context of international communication.**	
	RA1	*Reflects on the best strategies applicable to each situation.*
	RA2	*Manages diverse situations dynamically and identifies the knowledge and skills applicable in each case.*
	RA3	*Identifies and adequately defines the problem and its possible causes, before its effect becomes evident.*
	RA4	*Suggests possible solutions and designs an action plan for their application.*
CG8	**Information management skills.**	
	RA1	*Can retrieve and analyse information from various sources.*
	RA2	*Displays documentary search strategies.*
	RA3	*Quotes ad references sources correctly.*
	RA4	*Incorporates source information into own speech.*
	RA5	*Handles relevant databases.*
CG9	**Critical and self-critical capacity.**	
	RA1	*Can analyse own behaviour looking to improve.*
	RA2	*Accepts constructive criticism of own actions.*
	RA3	*Identifies incoherence, missing information and problems inherent in a given situation.*
CG14	**Ability to apply interpersonal skills in professional communication.**	
	RA4	Is capable of depersonalizing ideas in group work to achieve goal.
CG20	**Capacity for ethical commitment in professional development.**	

	RA5	*Considers the consequences that a given activity or behaviour may have for others.*
Specific skills		
CE3	**Understands and analyzes facts and problems related to communication from a "global" perspective (multicultural, multilingual and transnational).**	
	RA3	*Is aware of cultural differences in the world.*
	RA4	*Is aware of and analyzes different cultural conventions, social norms and is able to interact in intercultural contexts.*
	RA5	*Detects and analyzes different forms of idiomatic expression related to different ways of thinking and organizing ideas related to the world languages studied.*
	RA6	*Can understand and analyze the extent to which cultural and social globalization structurally affect his/her profession.*
CE16	**Understands and values the importance of communication for interpersonal relationships (verbal and non-verbal communication).**	
	RA1	*Can distinguish between verbal and non-verbal communication and is aware of its impact on interpersonal relations.*
	RA2	*Can use verbal and non-verbal resources to maintain adequate and effective interpersonal communication.*
	RA3	*Can interpret nonverbal language and react and respond appropriately in interpersonal relationships.*
	RA4	*Can adequately adapt language, gestures, posture, movements and voice to different communicative situations in interpersonal relationships.*
CE17	**Knows and applies the basic parameters of intercultural communication in professional practice.**	
	RA1	*Knows and applies the basic parameters of intercultural communication.*
	RA2	*Has developed strategies to relate and communicate effectively in intercultural environments.*
	RA3	*Recognizes different cultural contexts and uses appropriate language.*
	RA4	*Detects and analyzes different forms of idiomatic expression related to different ways of thinking and organizing ideas.*

Students will be able to:

- Understand and analyze facts and problems related to communication from a "global" perspective (multicultural, multilingual and transnational).
- Understand and value the importance of communication for interpersonal relationships (verbal and non-verbal communication).
- Know and apply the basic parameters of intercultural communication in professional practice.