COMM 263: Fundamentals of Communication & Culture
Spring 2015 Syllabus

Instructor: Patricia Witcher  
Office hours: Tuesdays: 8:00 – 8:45 a.m., 10:30 – 12:00
Office: 213 Glasgow Regional Center  
Wednesdays: 8:00 - 8:45 a.m., 12:00 – 1:30
Phone: 659-6946  
Thursdays: 8:00 – 8:45 a.m., 10:30 – 12:00
E-mail: patricia.witcher@wku.edu  
Fridays: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to prepare students to adapt to a contemporary diverse society in an effective way. It provides an overview of intercultural communication – communication with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. We will examine different verbal and nonverbal communication patterns influenced by different cultural values as well as other important factors in a variety of contexts. COMM 263 fulfills the Category E requirement of the General Education curriculum, as well as the K-SC category of Colonnade.

Colonnade Learning Objectives:

Learning Objective 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of concepts and principles for understanding the challenges and opportunities of intercultural encounter between people from different ethnic/racial, national and co-cultural backgrounds in today's increasingly interdependent world.

Learning Objective 2: Students will examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society and demonstrate the ability to understand and analyze how culture shapes the development of self and others through various modes of communication and ethos.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Students will be able to:
- Understand the role and impact of culture on the communication process
- Apply major intercultural theories and concepts to every day communication situations/environments
- Become competent intercultural communicators

REQUIRED MATERIALS
- Stapler/mini-stapler (all work turned in during class must be stapled)

COURSE ASSISTANCE
During the semester, you may find certain materials or assignments difficult. I have scheduled office hours, during which time I will be happy to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have. However, if your schedule conflicts with my office hours, I will be happy to schedule an appointment
convenient for both of us during which time I will be available to help you with course questions or problems. You may also contact me by e-mail.

Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Accessibility Resource Center in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC telephone number is (270) 745-5004 V/ (270) 745-3030/TDD. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from me without a letter of accommodation from the Office for SARC.

ATTENDANCE
In order to be successful in this course, you must come to class. I will distribute a sign-in sheet each week during class, which each student should be sure to sign. If your name is not on the sheet, you will be counted absent for that class meeting.

EXCUSED ABSENCE POLICY
If you miss class on the day a paper or exam is due in this course, it can only be made up if the absence is excused. In order for an absence to be excused, it must meet one of the criteria listed below and you must provide proper documentation of this absence the next time the class meets-NO EXCEPTIONS. If you miss and do not provide the required documentation, your absence will be unexcused and you will receive a zero on any work that was due the class you missed.

***An excused absence is defined as:
1. Illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student’s family with proper documentation
2. The death of a member of the student’s immediate family with proper documentation
3. Trips for members of student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for University classes, and trips for participation in intercollegiate academic or athletic events with proper documentation
4. Major religious holidays

***Showing up to class unprepared on your scheduled assignment completion date is not an acceptable excuse and will not change the assignment due date. It is your responsibility to examine the syllabus and daily schedule before each class and to be prepared for assignments and exams upon arrival to class.

TARDINESS POLICY
Tardiness is both disruptive and disrespectful. I expect you to be in the classroom by the time class begins. You are allowed two tardies over the course of the semester. For each tardy over two, five points will be deducted from your final course grade.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY
In the case of inclement weather, you should either visit WKU’s website, watch WBKO, or listen to one of the local radio stations to see if classes at the Glasgow Campus are cancelled. If the Glasgow Campus is open, our class will meet. I encourage you to use your own discretion when making the decision about whether to attend COMM 263 during times of inclement weather.

PLAGIARISM & CHEATING
I expect each student in this course to work to the best of his/her potential and maintain high ethical
standards at all times. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism can be prevented by citing your sources in your work. We will spend time during the semester discussing how to properly cite a source, including whether you are providing a direct quote, paraphrasing another’s words, or using another’s ideas. If you ever have any questions or concerns about plagiarism, please don’t hesitate to talk to me about it.

**Plagiarism Detection**
In this course, I will be using an electronic plagiarism detection tool, Safe Assign, to confirm that you have used sources accurately in your class projects. All assignments are subject to submission for text similarity review to this plagiarism detection site. You are expected to upload each paper onto Safe Assign by 7:00 a.m. on the day your paper is due.

**Penalty for Academic Dishonesty**
If you are found guilty of plagiarizing, buying papers, falsifying medical excuses, or cheating, you will receive a zero on the assignment and potentially an F in the course, as well as possibly being reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs for further disciplinary action.

**COURSE BREAKDOWN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam One</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>A = 90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Two</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>B = 80-89.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>C = 70-79.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>D = 60-69.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Culture Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>F = Below 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Project</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**COURSE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

**Co-Culture Project**
For this assignment, you should choose some co-culture that exists in the United States and type a 3-6 page paper detailing that co-culture, including some of its values, norms, practices, as well as a comparison and contrast to the dominant culture. You will be expected to use a minimum of two scholarly sources (besides your textbook) from the WKU Library Databases in the paper. You should use APA style and include a references page. I will provide more details about this assignment during the semester. The class will have an informal discussion of each paper on the assignment due date. If you are unable to attend class on the due date, you must e-mail your paper to me by 11:59 p.m. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

**Interview Project**
For this project, you will interview an ESLI student and write a paper about the things you’ve learned during the interview. You should focus on topics such as: similarities and differences between the student’s home culture and the U.S., benefits and challenges the student has experienced of interacting with people from a different culture, as well as any other valuable pieces of information the student has learned during his/her time abroad. The paper should be 3-5 pages, typed, double spaced, with 12 point font, and 1-inch margins, and a title page. You should use APA style. You will
be expected to provide a brief, informal discussion of the paper with the class. If you are unable to attend class on the due date, you must e-mail your paper to me by 11:59 p.m. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Culture Project
The culture project is designed to give you experience with understanding the specific intercultural aspects of a culture of your choice. This project will consist of completion of a 6-10 page paper, as well as a 6-10 minute in-class presentation on that culture. You may choose to focus on any culture which does not use English as its official/native language and is outside of the United States. In the paper, you should apply some of the principles and major themes we have discussed in the class over the course of the semester (for example, how does the culture communicate nonverbally, how is the culture classified within Hofstede’s value dimensions, how does it conduct business, etc.) to your chosen culture. The paper should be typed in APA style, which means that you should also include a title page and an abstract page, as well. You should also cite a minimum of three scholarly sources (beyond your textbook) from the WKU Library Databases in the paper and include a references page. This project will be due at the end of the semester and I will provide more information on this project during the semester. Students will also be required to visit the Writing Center with a rough draft of their paper at least 24 hours before the due date. Students will also be expected to submit their rough draft, their final draft, and a verification form from the Writing Center. For the presentation, you will be required to use PowerPoint and cover the key areas you’ve focused on in your paper. If you are unable to attend class on the due date, you must e-mail your paper to me by 11:59 p.m. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Exams
There will be three exams given in this class. Each exam will consist of a variety of question types including true/false, matching, multiple choice, short answer and essay. The exams will cover material from the textbook, lectures, and our class discussions. Make-up exams will only be given if the student has an excused absence for the class period in which the exam was given.

In-class Participation/Discussion
You are expected to come to class having read the assigned chapter and ready to discuss it. This ensures that the class is more beneficial to you, not to mention less boring than listening to all lecture every week. During each class this semester, each student will receive a daily oral participation score with 0 points for absent, 1 point for minimal to no input, all the way up to 5 for excellent participation. Your in-class participation will constitute 10% of your final course grade in the class. In-class participation scores cannot be made up.

CLASSROOM DECORUM/RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR

I expect each student to:
1. **Display respect** for all members of the classroom community, both myself and fellow students.
2. **Pay attention to and participate** in lectures, group activities, presentations, and other exercises.
3. **Turn off your cell phone before class begins.** Texting during class is not allowed! Any student with a cell phone in hand or on his or her desk during class time will be asked to leave class and will be counted absent for that day. This policy applies during student presentations as well as during lecture and discussion. Any student using a cell phone during an exam will
receive a zero on that exam and may be subject to other university discipline.

4. **Avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language** that may unnecessarily exclude or affect members of our campus and classroom community.

5. **Maintain an ethical code of conduct** at all times by doing your own work and behaving appropriately.

6. **Keep an open mind during class.**

7. Be in class on time and stay in class from the time it starts until the time it is completed.
   Tardiness is disruptive.

8. Sit on the front row if you bring a laptop to class.

9. Don’t pack up while I am still talking.

**WITHDRAWING FROM CLASS**
The last day to withdraw from this course is March 20\textsuperscript{th}. I do not grant W’s after this date, unless the student develops a serious medical illness after this date that will prevent him/her from completing the semester. In this case, the student must provide proper medical documentation as verification.

**FINAL GRADE POLICY**
At the end of the semester, I will add up the total percentage you have accumulated. I will use the grading scale above to assign final grades. I do not curve final grades; you will receive the grade you have earned in the course. Please do not contact me and ask me to bump you up to the next letter grade, no matter how close you are to it; your grade is final.

**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:**
- February 2\textsuperscript{nd} – Last day to drop a class without a grade
- March 9\textsuperscript{th} – 13\textsuperscript{th} – Spring Break
- March 20\textsuperscript{th} – Last day to drop a class with a “W”
- May 11\textsuperscript{th} – 15\textsuperscript{th} – Final Exams
***This syllabus is subject to change***