

COMM 263 Proposal
For the
Connections Category of the Colonnade Plan

A. Social and Cultural (3 hours)

Students will investigate ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures within which they live. Courses will consider the ethical questions and shared cultural values that shape societal norms and behaviors, the independent and collective or collaborative artistic expression of those values, and/or the role of social and cultural institutions in developing and sustaining norms, values, and beliefs.

Students will demonstrate the ability to

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

1. A sample syllabus for this course. This should contain course description, student learning outcomes, goals of the course, and types of assignments. You do not need to send us a course schedule of topics, exams, etc. **[Attached]**

2. Statement of how your course meets the Colonnade Plan's learning objectives.

COMM 263: Fundamentals of Culture and Communication (3 hours) meets the three objectives included in the Social and Cultural section of the Colonnade Plan. As documented in this section, COMM 263 provides an introduction to 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. By exploring various cultural traditions, especially the influence of history, philosophy, religion, and social institutions on communicative practices and self-concepts, students will develop cultural sensitivity and come to value diverse modes of communication and ethos. Students will analyze and evaluate a variety of intercultural encounters in diverse contexts to develop intercultural communication skills and competence critical for exercising social responsibility as an effective global citizen. Below, specific details help to illustrate how COMM 263 meets each of the three 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.

Students in COMM 263 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. First, with respect to knowledge of concepts and principles for understanding the challenges and opportunities of intercultural encounter, students will learn

about key psychological, social, linguistic and nonverbal factors that hinder and enhance effective communication and interaction across cultures and traditions. Course readings and discussions focusing on intercultural communication assist students in acquiring knowledge and theoretical understanding about how divergent cultural values, social norms and evaluation can lead to miscommunication, misunderstanding and even serious dissonance. At the same time, students will learn how cultural knowledge, awareness and sensitivity can mitigate dissonance and miscommunication. Students will view such encounters as an opportunity to innovate and improvise existing cultural and social practices to foster meaningful collaboration and mutual understanding.

Second, with respect to knowledge about people from different backgrounds in today's increasingly interdependent world, course readings and discussions will assist them to acquire an understanding about racial, ethnic, national, and co-cultural diversity and their encounters in various domestic and international contexts.

Third, students will acquire skills to communicate with those who are culturally distant, especially through discussions and assignments that take students out of their comfort zone to observe and interact with such people. Also, students have the opportunity to integrate knowledge and experience in their paper assignment. Students who take COMM 263 should be able to demonstrate understanding about cultural diversity and be able to identify the basic concepts and principles of intercultural communication and interaction.

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.

Students in COMM 263 will demonstrate the ability to understand and analyze how culture shapes the development of self and others through communication while examining diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society. This builds on what students will have initially explored on culture and self. Students will learn to examine and analyze the influence of history, philosophy, religion, and social institutions in shaping cultural values, social norms and communication practices. Course readings and discussion focusing on various communication practices and ethos will equip students to understand and appreciate diverse values within and across societies and to develop sensitivity towards, and tolerance for wide variety of cultural diversity and its forms.

At the same time, through comparisons, students are taught to apply critical thinking skills to understand their own self-concept, values and social relationships as well as those of others. Assignments, such as country/culture reports and intercultural investigation, provide opportunity for students not only to investigate real-world issues and problems, but also analyze their underlying patterns using evidence to critically make a case for their possible solutions.

Learning Objective 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to examine intercultural encounters in diverse contexts and develop cultural competence and communication skills crucial for exercising their social responsibility as an effective member of society and global community.

Students in COMM 263 will demonstrate intercultural communication competence by applying basic knowledge to analyze differing message skills, behavioral flexibility, interaction management, and social skills arising out of cultural diversity and dissonance from real-life

examples as in current events. Students will write a critical evaluation of a real-life example and provide suggestions for possible resolution.

3. Brief description of how your department will assess this course's effectiveness.

To assess the course objective related to learning objective 1 and 2, we will use standardized testing. Two exams, each comprised of 20 questions (some combination of multiple choice, true-false, short answer and open-ended), will be conducted across the sections of COMM 263. The country report paper will be assessed to measure learning objective 2 and 3. Ten student papers from each section of COMM 263 will be randomly collected to assess by an assessment team using a rubric to evaluate 1) organization, 2) understanding of intercultural contexts (communication concepts, theories and cultural typologies), 3) research (incorporation of supporting materials), 4) writing (grammar, clarity, and effectiveness) and 5) ethics (cultural sensitivity and perspective-taking). Each area will be scored on a 5 point scale (5 -Excellent; 4 - Good; 3 - Satisfactory; 2 - Poor; 1- Fail). The scores will be assessed on the following scale (all five areas assessed on 5 point scale): 25-22.5 Excellent, 22.4-20 Good, 19.9-17.5 Satisfactory, 17.4-15 Poor, 14.9 or less Fail. The goals will be as follows:

70% of students will score at the satisfactory level or better.

50% of students will score at the "good" level or better.

These two forms of assessment represent a comprehensive approach to evaluating the effectiveness of COMM 263 across the learning objectives.

4. If necessary, a list of any proposed revisions needed to bring your course in line with the Colonnade Plan.

Overall, very little needs to be done in terms of revisions for the course to bring the course in line with the Colonnade Plan as this course exists in the current general education program and is still in line with the objectives in the Colonnade.

1. In addition to meeting the posted learning outcomes, how does this course contribute uniquely to the Connections category (i.e., why should this course be in Colonnade)? Discuss in detail.

COMM 263: Fundamentals of Culture and Communication makes a unique contribution to the *Connections* category because communication extends over all disciplines and areas of life, the experiences in COMM 263 offer more ubiquitous experiences than most courses. The course examines in three ways how individuals are shaped by and shape societies and cultures within which they live. First, by exploring cultural traditions and their social institutions across the world, it helps students develop a framework to help contextualize and evaluate the development of individuals and their behaviors and attitudes, especially those who are culturally different. Second, by focusing on encounters between people from different ethnic/racial, national and co-cultural backgrounds, the course challenges the students to critically examine the nature and characteristics of frustration, misunderstanding and dissonance that often entail communicative encounters. Students not only are challenged to exercise critical thinking in

analyzing and evaluating the divergent communicative practices and ethos of the interactants, but in the process, they must also reflect on their own social and cultural conditioning to develop a full comprehension of their responsibility, behavior and attitude in shaping their social interactions. Third, students will study real-life examples outside of the classroom (such as current events or observation assignments) and apply what they have learned to analyze its complexity, propose possible interventions, and evaluate their potential impact for social and cultural transformation. Together, COMM 263 makes a unique contribution to the *Connections* category in Colonnade by equipping students with a culturally sensitive global framework to keep ethnocentrism at bay and with the intercultural communication competence to foster trust-building across a variety of differences so they will be equipped to operate and succeed in today's world as engaged and informed members of an interconnected and interdependent world.

2. Please identify any prerequisites for this course.

No prerequisites for COMM 263.

3. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

The Department will offer 3-5 sections of this course each semester.

7. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.

One of the primary ways that students develop awareness and understanding how individuals are shaped by societies and cultures within which he/she lives is through critical thinking. This builds on the culture-self assignment students undertook in COMM 145, which is part of the Foundations category in the Colonnade. Though students are not required to take COMM 145, many students who take COMM 263 will likely have taken COMM 145 allowing students to expand on that experience. In COMM 263, students are taught how to identify and evaluate evidence, to differentiate between fact and opinion, to use credible sources, and to exercise self-reflexivity to examine assumptions and overcome the pitfall of ethnocentrism. Students learn to construct evidence-based interpretation and assessment of why particular set of influences give rise to behaviors and assumptions that make miscommunication or dissonance inevitable in intercultural encounter. Throughout their coursework, students are asked to construct an evidence-based description, interpretation and argument for how they analyze a cultural or social issue or problem to come up with solutions or make suggestions that fosters civically engaged and informed members of the global society.

Sample Syllabus

COMM 263 – Fundamentals of Culture & Communication

Required Materials:

1. Jandt, Fred E. (2013). *An introduction to intercultural communication: Identities in a global community* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
2. Frequent access to Blackboard
 - ✓ Assignment submissions and returns, discussions, detailed assignment instructions (including any additional reading materials), online exams and grades will occur via BB.

Overview of the Course:

This course provides an introduction to concepts and principles for understanding the challenges and opportunities of encounters between people from different ethnic/racial, national and co-cultural backgrounds in today's increasingly interdependent world. By exploring various societies and cultural traditions - especially the influence of history, philosophy, religion, and social institutions on communicative practices and self-concepts - students will develop cultural sensitivity and value diverse modes of communication and ethos. By examining a variety of intercultural encounters in diverse contexts and diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society, students will develop cultural competence and communication skills crucial for exercising their social responsibility to be an effective member of society and global community.

Course Outcomes:

Upon successfully completing this course students should be able to:

- Comprehend and apply course material.
- Investigate intercultural communication.
- Understand the diverse values and self-concepts that inform members of society and cultures.
- Cultivate skills to become an effective and competent communicator in a plural world.
- Recognize the complexity of ethical responsibility in intercultural interaction.
- Develop an appreciation for and an understanding of diverse cultures and traditions.
- Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
- Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
- Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

Course Assignments:

All written assignments must conform either to the APA or MLA style depending on student major.

Exams (70 points each):

There will be TWO exams over the course of the semester. The exams will be a combination of short-answer, multiple-choice, true/false, and matching type questions. The exam is based primarily on course readings and in-class lectures and discussions.

Country Report (60 points):

Students will submit a 4~5 page country/culture research paper for which they have no known family background or intimate knowledge. One of the components of intercultural communication competence is cultural knowledge and awareness. This assignment involves 1) desk research and researcher reflexivity to increase student knowledge of other culture/country as well as of self culture/country, and 2) in-class presentation to share with class what each has learned from this research. Students will compile information describing a) the physical and demographic features of the country/culture, b) major historical and contemporary events of the country/culture of choice explained from the eyes of the members, c) the food culture, d) values that are highly sought after and behaviors considered as taboos, e) common communication practices exhibited by the country's and/or culture's citizens, f) the popular culture scene, and g) the similarities and differences between the country/culture of report and one's own.

Interviewing a non-US citizen (50 points):

Each of the students will interview a non-US citizen who is currently living (either temporarily or permanently) in the United States. The purpose of this assignment is to have students go beyond their comfort zone to engage in a dialogue with a “stranger” to explore his/her background and experience, intercultural experience in the US, his or her perception of the US and Americans. At the end, students are asked to write a 4~5 page thoughtful summary of the encounter and reflection that demonstrates perspective-taking and reflexivity.

Intercultural Investigation (50 points):

Students will investigate a social/cultural practice or problem near them – in the workplace, school, community, or home - where getting along and working together results in practices that either hinder some of the members from participating as equals or deprive them of due recognition and appropriate treatment which prevents them from participating on their own terms. Students will submit a 5~6 page observation notes from the “field”/“site” that serves as preliminary evidence for identify the problematic pattern of interaction. The purpose of this assignment is to develop student skill as an intercultural detective to see beyond the obvious and question the status quo.

Intercultural Intervention (60 points):

One of the components of intercultural communication competence is becoming aware that the self is an agent for both harmony and change. Communication defined broadly offers a wide range of tools that we can use to regulate interaction and relationships for better or worse. This is a follow-up of the earlier intercultural investigation where students will submit a 5~6 page proposal for intervening in the interaction pattern using what they have learned in the course. They will analyze the nature of the problem/issue, identify its possible causes and costs when the pattern persists, propose an intervention, as well as consider some of the possible consequences from the new changes.

Online Discussion (70 points in total):

Each week, students are asked to post a 100~200 word response to a discussion prompt based on their textbook chapter reading in the coming week. They will be asked not just to summarize but to integrate thoughtfully what they have read. The purpose of the assignment is to sensitize them to key issues and terms in advance of the lecture and discussion.

Participation (70 points):

Student will also be evaluated for their level and quality of participation. Participation starts as a function of attendance, but participation is more than just being in class. Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. Making thoughtful contributions, asking questions that expand the thinking of the class and communicating respectfully with thoughts/opinions different from one's own are an integral part of learning mutual respect and intercultural competence.

Grading Scale

A	= 90% and up	= 450 – 500 points
B	= 80-89.9%	= 400 – 449.5 points
C	= 70-79.9%	= 350 – 399.5 points
D	= 60-69.9%	= 300 - 349.5 points
E	= 0-59.9%	= 299.5 points and below

Country Report (60 points) points earned_____

Interview (50 points) points earned_____

Intercultural Investigation (50 points) points earned_____

Intercultural Intervention (60 points) points earned_____

Online Discussion (70 points) points earned_____
(5 points per post, 14 posts)

Online Exams (140 points)
Exam #1 (70 points) points earned_____
Exam #2 (70 points) points earned_____

Participation (70 points) points earned_____

TOTAL (500 points) points earned _____