

Case Studies in Intercultural Communication

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Spring Semester 2026: Monday afternoons; 3:15~4:45 pm; Rm 514, Bldg. 2

Course Description:

This course is designed for international students to explore the dynamics of intercultural communication through real-world case studies and analytical lenses. It is grounded in a profound understanding of Chinese culture and a heightened awareness of students' own cultural perspectives. Focusing on interactions with Chinese people across diverse settings, the course will examine how culture shapes communication, relationship-building, and conflict resolution and analyze cultural values and norms and communication styles, highlighting challenges arising from differences in language, culture, perceptions, and behaviors. With a strong emphasis on practical application, this course seeks to strengthen students' cultural competence, particularly in engaging with Chinese culture. By the end of the course, students will have developed both a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and the practical skills needed for effective intercultural communication. Through group discussions, analytical exercises, and reflective activities, students will cultivate empathy, cultural adaptability, and the ability to build meaningful relationships across cultural boundaries.

Key Topics:

- Basics of case studies in intercultural communication
- Chinese cultural norms and communication styles
- The influence of Confucianism, social orientation, and social hierarchies on relationship dynamics
- The role of language and non-verbal communication in intercultural interactions
- Intergroup perceptions and intercultural relations
- Strategies for resolving cross-cultural conflicts and building trust
- Intercultural dynamics in diverse settings
- The unique challenges faced by international students and professionals in China and strategies to overcome them

Learning Outcomes:

- A comprehensive understanding of Chinese culture and its impact on communication
- Improved self-awareness of one's own cultural background and its influence on communication
- Enhanced ability to navigate intercultural interactions in academic, social, and professional contexts
- Practical strategies for resolving cultural misunderstandings and fostering positive relationships
- Development of empathy and adaptability in diverse cultural environments

Course Format:

- **Required readings** (e.g., case studies, book chapters, journal articles) are posted to the WeChat group roughly one week prior to each class session.
- **Assigned films and documentaries** will also be announced in advance for viewing before class.
- **Class sessions involve:**
 - Discussion of the assigned readings, films, and documentaries;

- In-class analysis of short case studies;
- A summary of key cultural insights.

Assessment Components:

- Class participation and discussion: 20%*
- Case study analysis and exam: 50%
- Paper critique: 30%

Note: You will receive no grade if you miss more than one-third of the classes.