



## Syllabus: COM 263 - Intercultural Communication

### Course Information:

Course Title: Intercultural Communication

Course Prefix/Number: COM 263-1

Semester: Fall 2025 (8 Weeks)

Class Days/Times: MW 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Arizona Time)

Dates: 10/13/2025 – 12/12/2025

Credit Hours: 3

Room: Virtual via Zoom platform (link will be provided before the first day of class)

### Instructor Information:

Name: Kelli Ling

(847) 309-3592 (please leave a message)

Phone/Voice Mail: (847) 309-3592 (message)

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Office location: Kelli Ling's Zoom Meeting Room ID 759 236 0925 via Zoom

Office Hours: By appointment

### Course Description:

This course examines issues related to intercultural communication (ICC), including theoretical and practical aspects of how culture influences communication. It examines culture from three pillars: awareness/sensitivity, language/discourse, and history/politics. Students will learn about the important role of context (social, cultural, and historical) in ICC exchanges and have an opportunity to examine their own personal identity and attitudes by completing two self-assessments on cultural intelligence (CQ) and implicit bias. This course also explores the various meaning of words, nonverbal gestures, and symbols across cultures and the impact of history and politics on cultural groups, specifically as related to intercultural communication.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Define intercultural communication. Understand the key theories and models of effective intercultural communication.
2. Learn about the importance of context and power in intercultural communication exchanges.
3. Examine ways to be more aware of and sensitive to the complexities of intercultural communication interactions and the influence of culture and cultural values on communication exchanges.
4. Recognize the influence of one's own cultural identity on intercultural interactions. Develop self-reflective, adaptable, and open communication skills with others in personal and professional contexts.
5. Integrate and apply intercultural communication concepts, research, and skills to enhance relational skills and address intercultural communication conflict and miscommunications.
6. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication proficiency.

**Course Structure:**

This is a remote class that meets weekly via Zoom. Remember that online courses have deadlines, assignments, and participation requirements just like on-campus, in person courses. Budget your time carefully and keep an open line of communication with your instructor. If you are having technical or other problems interfering with your progress in the course, be sure to let your instructor know right away. Synchronous ('live') class sessions will discuss weekly topics and provide ample time for small group work, discussions, and final presentations. Online students are expected to participate in live classes with cameras on. Remember that Canvas can sometimes glitch or contain broken links. If this happens, don't panic – just reach out to your instructor. These guidelines are in place to ensure all students learning remotely will derive the full benefit of live, dynamic classroom participation.

**Course Learning Materials and Textbook Information:**

No textbook is required, as we draw from more than one communication scholar for our work and understanding of intercultural communication. Course materials will be available in your Canvas modules your instructor will provide additional reading and speech-related materials throughout the semester.

**Cultural Component:**

We are all on the life transformation journey together as we seek out the harmony and balance that Apache elders long ago called *shíł gozhq̄q̄*. Though life can be hard, there is a strength and beauty that comes when we have focus and live in proper relationships with everything. Over the course of this

semester's journey, we will respect all people and ideas as we seek to have clear sight about the world in which we want to live. We will tolerate differences of opinion, values, and lifestyles and also encourage students to compare and contrast the differences in traditional native culture from contemporary cultures we will encounter in the course of our learning. While exploring those differences, we encourage each student to authentically and critically draw their own lines and find the balance that feels best beneath their feet.

## **COURSE TIMELINE: Tentative and Subject to Change If Needed**

### **Week 1 Course Overview and Syllabus Review**

(10/13/25)

*Topics:* What is Intercultural Communication? High vs. low-context cultures. Indigenous cultures. Key issues, urgencies, and challenges. Intercultural Apprehension. Ethnocentrism. Cultural differences and stereotypes. Influence of technology.

*Activity:* During our live session, students will take the two online assessments (CQ and Implicit Bias) and share their thoughts. What did you learn about yourself? (You are not required to share specific scores or any personal details.)

### **Week 2 Understanding the Cultural Context**

(10/20/2025)

*Topics:* What is culture? Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Schwartz's theory of basic values. Benefits for better intercultural communication. View YouTube video on collectivist vs. individualist worldviews.

*Activity:* In small groups, students will consider an ethical question that takes into account Hofstede's theory. We'll share our perspectives in the larger group, too.

### **Week 3 The Microcultural Context**

(10/27/2025)

*Topics:* Message framing theory - and how this influences our views, attitudes, and behaviors. Hsu's basic American values. Cultural comparison with China's 40 dominant values. Microculture groups. Minority groups. View YouTube video on vanishing languages? Review article on language preservation.

*Activity:* Students will consider what microculture group/s they belong to and how microcultural group members in a community may be treated differently than other members. Also, we'll discuss the role of cultural values and dialect in meaning-making (i.e., Rap language and Ebonics).

### **Week 4 The Environmental Context**

(11/03/2025)

*Topics:* Culture and the natural environment. Information rate/load theory. Worldviews of the natural environment. 'We are the land' - Indigenous

perspectives. The built environment. Cross-cultural comparisons (housing, privacy, time orientations). View TedTalk on 3,000 year old solutions to modern problems.

*Activity:* Students will discuss two case studies and examine the role of place when navigating two or more cultures: Sherman Alexie, a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian and Julia Alvarez, an immigrant to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic.

### **Week 5      The Perceptual Context**

(11/10/2025)

*Topics:* How our brains process information (5 senses). What is Intercultural Communication? Culture and cognition. Cross-cultural differences in perceptions. Enculturation. Categorization. Dangers of stereotypes. Ethnocentrism.

*Activity:* Students will take the VIA character survey in the live class session and discuss their results. How does understanding you better influence your communication with others?

### **Week 6      The Sociorelational Context**

(11/17/2025)

*Topics:* Role relationships. Social identity. 4 dimensions of roles. Intercultural compared to cross-cultural communication. Family groups. Sex and gender roles across cultures.

*Activity:* During our live class, we'll watch Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TedTalk on the danger of a single story/narrative. Students will break into small groups and discuss her main points (what is she saying and why is it important?) and whether or not they agree with the speaker/author.

### **Week 7      Verbal and Nonverbal Codes**

(11/25/2025)

*Topics:* The relationship between language and culture. The structure of human language. Cross-cultural communication. The relationship between verbal and nonverbal codes. Channels of nonverbal communication (kinesics, paralanguage, proxemics, physical appearance). Nonverbal communication and dimensions of cultural variability (applying Hofstede's theory).

*Activity:* Students will take a fun in-class exercise where they identify specific nonverbal gestures and their cultural origins.

### **Week 8      Acculturation, Culture Shock, and IC Competence**

12/01/2025)

*Topics:* What is acculturation and acculturative stress? Understanding culture shock and strategies for managing. Investigating intercultural communication competence (ICC). A model of intercultural competence.

*Activity:* Students will complete and turn in their final Cultural Field Audit (PowerPoint slides) presentation and short written Reflection.

**Policies and Expectations:** organized around SCAC's ARROW framework – accountability, respect, resilience, openness, and wisdom)

**Accountability (defines grade expectations and accountability for coursework; emphasizes students' responsibility for original work and proper citation; stresses punctuality, participation, and consequences of absences).**

### Evaluations and Grading & Assignments:

90 and above is an A  
 80 - 89 is a B  
 70 - 79 is a C  
 60 - 69 is a D  
 Under 60 is Failing

**Your grade will be determined by the following:**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>
Virtual Class Participation & Discussion	40
Three [3] Assignments: Microcultures and Cultural Dimensions (written), Cultural Stereotypes and Films (written), Final Cultural Field Audit (video – oral) <i>*worth 70 points each</i>	210
Reflection paper (short)	50
<b>Total points possible</b>	<b>300</b>

269-300 pts = A  
 239-268 pts = B  
 209-238 pts = C  
 179-208 pts = D  
 Under 179 = F

**Your grade will be determined by the following:**

**Attendance Policy**

You are expected to arrive to class on time and be prepared to participate in each class period. Four unexcused absences may result in withdrawal, and a "W" or "Y" will be recorded. You may request to be excused from class for religious observances and practices, for illness, for school or work-related travel or for personal or family emergency. If you will be absent, please notify the instructor as soon as possible.

**Academic Integrity:**

Violations of scholastic ethics are considered serious offenses by San Carlos Apache College. Students may consult the SCAC Student Handbook sections on student code of conduct, on scholastic ethics and on the grade appeal procedure.

All work done for this class must be your own, or the original work of your group. While you may discuss assignments with other class members, the final written project must clearly be original. You may use work from books and other materials if it is properly cited.

**Instructor Withdrawals**

Students who have missed four consecutive classes (or the equivalent), or have not submitted any assignments nor taken any quizzes by the 45th day census report, due on [date of 45th day found in Academic Calendar on SCAC website], are assumed NOT to be participating in the class and may be withdrawn at the faculty member's discretion.

**Student Withdrawals**

Students may withdraw from class at any time during the first 2/3 of the semester without instructor permission and without incurring any grade penalty. Please be sure to withdraw yourself by [withdrawal deadline date found in Academic Calendar on SCAC website] if you do not expect to complete the class; otherwise, you may receive an "F" grade.

**RESPECT (Establishes a respectful learning environment free from discrimination; promotes a safe and inclusive campus).****Equal Access Statement/Disability Accommodations**

San Carlos Apache College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. The College will comply with all applicable regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to ensure an equal educational opportunity. This process includes self-identifying as a student with a disability, providing supporting documentation of their disability, and being approved for services through the Disability Resources Office (DRO). It is the student's responsibility to make known to their instructor(s) the student's specific needs within the context of each class in order to receive appropriate accommodations. We will work together in order to develop an accommodation plan specifically designed to meet the individual student's requirements.

For more information or to request academic accommodations, please contact: Anthony Osborn, TOCC Disabilities Resource Coordinator, aosborn@tocc.edu, or 520-383-0033 for additional information and assistance.

### ***Title IX***

San Carlos Apache College encourages each student to have the knowledge and skills to be an active bystander who intervenes when anyone is observed or being harassed or endangered by sexual violence. Sexual discrimination and sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and quality of life on campus and beyond. We encourage students who have experienced or witnessed any form of sexual misconduct to talk about their experience and seek the support they need.

### ***Conduct: Bias, Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment***

San Carlos Apache College faculty and staff are dedicated to creating a safe and supportive campus environment as a core value. Harassment based on age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status will not be tolerated.

## **RESILIENCE (Supports students facing unavoidable circumstances and recognizes hardships, while setting academic expectations).**

### ***Incomplete Policy***

Incomplete (I) grades are not awarded automatically. The student must request an "I" from the instructor who can choose to award an Incomplete only if all three of the following conditions are met:

1. The student must be in compliance with the attendance policy.
2. The student must have unavoidable circumstance that would prohibit the student from completing the course.
3. The student must have completed over 75% of the course requirements with at least a "C" grade.

Incompletes are not a substitute for incomplete work due to frequent absences or poor academic performance. Incomplete grades that are not made up by the end of the ninth week of the following semester will be automatically changed to an F if the agreed upon work, as stipulated on the written form signed by the instructor and the student when the I grade is awarded, is not completed.

### ***Special Withdrawals (Y) Grade***

The "Y" grade is an administrative withdrawal given at the instructor's option when no other grade is deemed appropriate. Your instructor must file a form stating the specific rationale,

with documentation, for awarding this grade. "Y" grades are discouraged since they often affect students negatively. Your instructor will not award a "Y" grade without a strong reason.

## **OPENNESS (Encourages open discussions between students and faculty and provides transparency about expectations and learning methods).**

### **Courses Outline and Important Dates:**

#### **Course Outline:**

- I. What is Intercultural Communication (Hall)
  - A. High and low-context cultures
  - B. Indigenous cultures
  - C. Issues, urgencies, and challenges
  - D. Intercultural apprehension
  - E. Ethnocentrism
  - F. Cultural differences and stereotypes -introduction
  - G. Influence of technology
  
- II. What is Culture
  - A. Hofstede's cultural dimensions (6)
  - B. Schwartz's theory of basic values
  - C. Benefits to intercultural communication
  
- III. Microculture Context
  - A. Message framing theory
  - B. Cultural comparisons (Hsu's work)
  - C. Microculture groups
  - D. Minority groups
  - E. Language preservation (vanishing voices)
  
- IV. Environmental Context
  - A. Culture and the natural environment
  - B. Information rate/load theory
  - C. Worldviews of the natural environment
  - D. Indigenous perspectives
  - E. Built environment
  - F. Cross-cultural comparisons
  
- V. Perceptual Context
  - A. Human brain and information processing (5 senses)

- B. Culture and cognition
- C. Intercultural communication
- D. Cross-cultural differences in perception
- E. Enculturation
- F. Categorization
- G. Dangers of stereotyping
- H. Ethnocentrism – continued

#### VI. Sociorelational Context

- A. Role relationships
- B. Social identity
- C. Dimensions of roles (4)
- D. Sex and gender roles across cultures

#### VII. Verbal and Nonverbal Codes

- A. Relationship between language and culture
- B. Structure of the human language
- C. Cross-cultural communication
- D. Verbal and nonverbal codes – relationship
- E. Channels of nonverbal communication
- F. Nonverbal communication and cultural variability

#### VIII. Acculturation, Culture Shock, and IC Competence

- A. What is acculturation
- B. What is acculturation stress
- C. What is culture shock
- D. How to manage culture shock
- E. Model of Intercultural Communication Competence
- F. Applying ICC model

**Course Requirements/Due Dates:** Microcultures & Cultural Dimensions – worth 70 total points (11/07), Cultural Stereotypes & Films - worth 70 total points (11/21), Final Cultural Field audit – worth 70 total points (12/05). Final Reflection Papers – worth 50 points (12/08). \*Note: Makeup work for partial credit only (12/01 & 12/03).

#### **Additional Course Policies:**

- Class participation and preparation are essential to student success. Students must read textual material, prepare for projects, complete required research as stated on the course schedule.
- Students are expected to come to class prepared for class and having done any preliminary work required as per the course schedule.

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**DISCLAIMER:** This syllabus is designed to evolve and change throughout the semester based on class progress and interests. You will be notified of any changes as they occur.

- Late work is marked down 10 points for each day of tardiness. Please get your assignments turned in on time. The instructor is always available via email to help with any questions or issues students may be experiencing.

### ***Faculty/Student Communication***

A faculty member will respond to a student's communication within 24 hours of receiving the communication excluding weekends and college closures. If a course is online a faculty will login their Canvas classroom a minimum of three times per week spread evenly throughout the week and respond to any discussion posts and check on student progress in the course.

### ***Course Feedback:***

All assignments will be graded and returned to the students promptly, typically within a week after the assignment is closed for handing in. Email and phone messages will be returned within 24 hours. A student or the instructor may request a student conference at any time during the semester. Quarterly grade reports will be provided to each student, either in person, by email or via the Canvas learning platform.

**WISDOM (Encourages evaluation, reasoning, and diverse perspectives; emphasizes organized and audience-aware expression, and promotes learning from elders and cultural teachings for personal and academic growth).**

### **SCAC General Education Learning Outcomes:**

#### ***Apache Wisdom***

Learning from the teachings carried on from Apache elders and other community leaders, students will appreciate their unique history, language, and culture as a source of strength for their personal, family, academic, and career aspirations.

#### ***Critical Thinking***

Approach critical issues, problems, or questions using creativity and deductive reasoning, evaluating evidence, acknowledging diverse perspectives and contexts, and synthesizing one's own viewpoint into ongoing conversations and debates.

#### ***Communication***

Effectively express ideas orally and in writing. Good communication includes understanding one's audience, organizing one's thoughts, acknowledging, and integrating outside sources, using the most recent technology, and following the accepted writing and citation conventions of the particular discipline.

#### ***Environmental Literacy***

Students will understand their connection to social, cultural, physical, and global environments. Students will consider and evaluate strategies for cultural, community and global sustainability.

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