



## CMST 203 • Intercultural Communication

Department of Communication Studies      Summer 2019  
Room: N/A (online)      Section: 01  
Dates & Times: Arranged (online)      Course ID: 002450

**Instructor:** Justin J. Rudnick, Ph.D. (“Dr. J”) (pronouns: he/him or they/them)  
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**Office Hours:** \*I am available by appointment. Please email me to set up a meeting.

### Required Texts:

This course has one **required** textbook. It is **necessary** for the successful completion of this course (so yes, you need to buy it):

Sorrells, K. (2016). *Intercultural communication: Globalization and social justice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. (ISBN: 978-1-4522-9275-5)

Additional required readings will be made available on the Desire-2-Learn (D2L) system (<https://mnsu.ims.mnscu.edu/>).

### Course Description and Objectives:

In this course, we will explore communication with people from other cultures, why misunderstandings occur, and how to build clearer, more productive, and more appreciative cross-cultural relationships.

Your successful completion of this course will fulfill the following learning objectives:

1. Explore how cultural identity shapes, and is shaped by, communication;
2. Compare / contrast patterns of thought, value, belief, and behavior (verbal and nonverbal) exhibited in different cultures;
3. Define the role of perception and bias in intercultural communication interactions;
4. Articulate the skills needed to manage various intercultural communication contexts;
5. Assess and reflect on one’s own personal intercultural communication competency;
6. Explain the need for intercultural communication competency in our global and ever-changing world.

### General Education Information:

Minnesota State, Mankato stipulates requirements in General Education, and CMST 203 fulfills Goal Area 7 and Goal Area 8. In keeping with these requirements, successful completion of this course will ensure that you meet the following General Education outcomes:

#### *Goal Area 7: Human Diversity*

1. Understand the development of and the changing meanings of group identities in the United States’ history and culture;
2. Demonstrate an awareness of the individual and institutional dynamics of unequal power relations between groups in contemporary society;

3. Analyze your own attitudes, behaviors, concepts, and beliefs regarding diversity, racism, and bigotry;
4. Describe and discuss the experience and contributions (political, social, economic, etc.) of the many groups that shape American society and culture, in particular those groups that have suffered discrimination and exclusion;
5. Demonstrate communication skills necessary for living and working effectively in a society with great population diversity.

#### *Goal Area 8: Global Perspective*

1. Describe and analyze political, economic, and cultural elements which influence relations of states and societies in their historical and contemporary dimensions;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of cultural, social, religious, and linguistic differences;
3. Analyze specific international problems, illustrating the cultural, economic, and political differences that affect their solution;
4. Understand the role of a world citizen and the responsibility world citizens share for their common global future.

#### **Technology Requirements:**

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Our class will be run entirely through the Desire2Learn (D2L) system. Course materials are available to you on D2L, and assignments should be submitted to D2L as well. To successfully complete this class, **you will need a computer with access to both a microphone and a webcam.** It is your responsibility to ensure you can properly access and use the technology required for this class—I **will not troubleshoot technology issues for you.** As a note, D2L is designed to work best with the Firefox browser—with Adobe Flash enabled. You can download Firefox for free at <https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/>. If you have additional trouble accessing course technology, you are encouraged to contact the IT office (<http://www.mnsu.edu/its/help/servicedesk/>).

#### **Nondiscrimination and Classroom Etiquette:**

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We live in a multicultural world that is diverse, distinct, evolving, and complex—this is a basic assumption of the class, and one I hope you find readily apparent. In this course, we will critically examine how we communicate *with and about* different groups of people; this is inherently a problematic endeavor. **We must not be silent or shy away from our perspectives—but we do not have free license to say whatever we want.** To that end, I expect us all to **discuss ideas, positions, and perspectives—but not people.** For example, it is fine for you to express your opinions about *the process of abortion*. It is not acceptable for you to express your opinion about *people who have an abortion*. As your instructor, you can expect me to facilitate an amicable environment where conversations about ideas and thoughts can flow freely, creatively, and comfortably. As students, I expect you to engage our class with a similar commitment. We will entertain many ideas, hear conflicting perspectives, and remain open to challenging others and being challenged in turn. As a final note, all Minnesota State, Mankato nondiscrimination policies will be upheld and enforced in our class.

#### **Rigor and Academic Honesty:**

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In keeping with MNSU's Academic Honesty policy, all work that engages in such inappropriate activities as plagiarism, cheating, or collusion will be subjected to the appropriate academic

sanctions. These sanctions may include anything ranging from re-doing the assignment to receiving an automatic failing grade in the course. For more information on your rights and responsibilities as they relate to academic honesty, consult the university's policy at <https://www.mnsu.edu/policies/approved/academichonesty.pdf>.

### **Attendance Policy and Online Work:**

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One of the most imposing challenges of online courses is their insistence that students be accountable and proactive. In order to succeed in this class, you *MUST* visit our D2L site **often and regularly**. This offering of CMST 203 is a condensed section (5 weeks), which means you will complete a substantial amount of work in a very short amount of time. I expect you to stay on top of the progression of our online class, and to contact me if you have questions about what is expected of you. Similarly, you can expect me to check in with you if, at any point, I feel you are not “present” enough in our course.

### **Work Policies:**

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Any late work will be subjected to an automatic 50% grade deduction. I will not accept ANY late work more than a week after the due date. You should also note that, because of the constraints of meeting for only five weeks, turning in late assignments will make it incredibly difficult for you to stay on track in this class.

I also have stylistic expectations for all written work in this class. Any written work, unless specified otherwise, should comply with the following expectations:

- All work must be submitted electronically through the appropriate dropbox on D2L;
- All work **MUST** be in a Word document or a format I can open with Microsoft Word;
- Work should be typed and double-spaced evenly throughout;
- Use a serif font (either Times New Roman or Cambria) in size 12;
- Margins should be 1” all around;
- All assignments must include a cover page with the paper title, your name, and the course number (e.g., CMST 203);
- Anything written by someone else and referenced in your assignment **in any way** should be cited in-text and included in a reference section according to the American Psychological Association (APA) style guide, 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

If the above requirements are not met, I will return the work to you—ungraded—and you will have the ability to make corrections. Your work will be subjected to the late work penalty.

### **Accessibility and Academic Accommodations:**

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Minnesota State, Mankato provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities, and/or services. Students with documented disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with Accessibility Resources (Memorial Library 132, ph: 507-389-2825, TDD 711, or email [Julie.Snow@mnsu.edu](mailto:Julie.Snow@mnsu.edu)) to establish an accommodation plan and then contact me as soon as possible. Through our Partnership Center, Minnesota State, Mankato will cooperate with Normandale Community College to set up any accommodations you need to succeed in this class if you are a registered student in our metro program. Additionally, if you need an academic accommodation, I encourage you to contact me about your needs. I will gladly

incorporate any reasonable accommodations you might need in order to successfully complete this course.

### Course Assignments and Grades:

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The following grading scale will be used in this course:

A- = 90—92.9%	A = 93—96.9%	A+ = 97—100%
B- = 80—82.9%	B = 83—86.9%	B+ = 87—89.9%
C- = 70—72.9%	C = 73—76.9%	C+ = 77—79.9%
D- = 60—62.9%	D = 63—66.9%	D+ = 67—69.9%
	F = 0—59.9%	

Please note the definition of each letter grade; simply completing the work does not guarantee you a passing grade:

“**A**” is reserved for work that is **exceptional**;

“**B**” is reserved for work that is **above average**;

“**C**” is reserved for work that is **average** (i.e., meets the minimum expectations);

“**D**” is reserved for work that is **below average**;

“**F**” is reserved for work that is **failing**, late, or not submitted for evaluation.

**A note about contesting your grade:** If you have questions about your grade, I encourage you to come discuss your grade with me, with these exceptions: (1) you may not ask me about your grade before you have received my feedback; and (2) I will not discuss specific assignment grades more than 2 weeks after they are distributed.

**A note about final grades:** At the conclusion of the course, I will assign letter grades based on the above percentage scale. As indicated by the scale, *I will round grades to the nearest tenth decimal (0.x)*. I will not round beyond this, so do not ask me to. ☺

The following assignments will be completed by each student in the class. You can determine your percentage (and grade) by totaling the points you have accumulated and dividing those points by the number of points possible.

Assessment:

Points Earned / Points Possible

1. Reading Quizzes (5 @ 15 pts each)	_____ / 75
2. Immersion Assignment 1	_____ / 30
3. Immersion Assignment 2	_____ / 30
4. Immersion Assignment 3	_____ / 30
5. Immersion Assignment 4	_____ / 30
6. Immersion Assignment 5	_____ / 30
Total:	_____ / 225

1. **Reading Quizzes (15 points each):** Each week you have an assigned reading from the textbook, and you will complete a short online (D2L) quiz to assess your comprehension of the material. These quizzes are always 15 questions, and 1 point per question. They are always open-book, so you may consult your readings as you complete the quiz. It is also helpful to watch the video lecture prior to completing the quiz. **Note: reading quizzes amount to 33% of your overall course grade—do not treat them lightly.**
2. **Immersion Assignment 1: Cultural Artifacts Presentation (30 points):** Your first immersion assignment will ask you to create a 5-minute presentation where you explain your understanding of culture, showcase 2-3 items that are meaningful to you and represent part of your own culture, and discuss what you want to learn in the rest of the class.
3. **Immersion Assignment 2: Cultural Communication Observation Paper (30 points):** For your second immersion assignment, you will need to locate a site / place / space that attracts people from multiple cultures (think about some kind of cultural hub, like the Mall of America or the Midtown Global Market). You will spend 2 hours merely observing people interact, and write a 3-page essay reflecting on the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns and differences you observed at the site.
4. **Immersion Assignment 3: Cultural Space Experience (30 points):** Your third immersion assignment requires you to visit a space that primarily serves a cultural group that is *different from your own*. You will visit the site for approximately 1-2 hours (if the site hosts an event, attend the event) and write a 3-page essay reflecting on how the space is structured and how you experienced this different culture.
5. **Immersion Assignment 4: Cross-Cultural Interview (30 points):** In your fourth immersion assignment, you will need to identify a person who is part of a culture that is meaningfully different from your own (think along the lines of race, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, primary language, migration history, etc.). You will conduct a short 20-minute interview with them to hear stories about their culture and how they understand their social and cultural positioning. You will then create a 6-minute presentation showcasing what you learned from the experience.
6. **Immersion Assignment 5: Cultural Self-Assessment & Reflection (30 points):** Your final immersion assignment will require you to write a 5-page essay reflecting on your own social and cultural positioning and what you've learned from the course. You will reflect on your experiences and connect them to course concepts.  
**Note: CMST majors are encouraged to save this essay for possible inclusion in your senior seminar portfolio in CMST 485.**

## Tentative Course Schedule

*Note: This schedule is subject to change at my discretion. I will attempt to give you fair warning and make reasonable accommodations if I need to adjust the schedule.*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Assigned Module:</b>	<b>Due by 11:59pm Thursday:</b>	<b>Due by 11:59pm Sunday:</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>May 20—26</b>	Course Overview & Intro to Intercultural Communication	Read: Chapter 1 Watch: Video Lecture <b>Reading Quiz 1</b>	<b>Immersion Assignment 1:</b> Cultural Artifacts
<b>2</b>	<b>May 27—2</b>	Intercultural Communication Practices	Read: Chapter 3 Watch: Video Lecture <b>Reading Quiz 2</b>	<b>Immersion Assignment 2:</b> Cultural Communication Observations
<b>3</b>	<b>June 3—9</b>	Sharing & Occupying Cultural Space	Read: Chapter 4 Watch: Video Lecture <b>Reading Quiz 3</b>	<b>Immersion Assignment 3:</b> Cultural Space Experience
<b>4</b>	<b>June 10—16</b>	The Influence of Culture in Relationships	Read: Chapter 5 Watch: Video Lecture <b>Reading Quiz 4</b>	<b>Immersion Assignment #4:</b> Cross-Cultural Interview
<b>5</b>	<b>June 17—23</b>	Conflict & Intercultural Communication Strategies	Read: Chapter 9 Watch: Video Lecture <b>Reading Quiz 5</b>	<b>Immersion Assignment #5:</b> Cultural Self-Assessment & Reflection