



COM 220: Intercultural Communication

Instructor Information

Dr. Fawad Shah

sshah1@oglethorpe.edu

Class GroupMe: https://groupme.com/join_group/106914057/Mbi6V3XU

Course Information

Meets: M, T, W, TH unless otherwise noted.
*Note that we **will** meet on Friday, July 31.*
12:00 pm – 02:00 pm

Course Description

Every day we interact with people from different cultures in our classes, in the workplace and in social settings. This course will help you learn how to communicate more effectively in a multicultural world by exploring the ways people from different cultural backgrounds think, communicate, and behave based on the value systems, worldviews, and narratives that shape them. Barcelona, as a city that is home to many different ethnicities and nationalities, offers an excellent opportunity to apply the theories introduced to real world settings.

Overall Structure of Course and Methods of Instruction

This course includes some instructor presented material, hands on activities, multimedia presentations and real-world experience involving engaging with communities in Barcelona. Students will be expected to read the background material from their text prior to attending class. In class, we will synthesize and discuss the reading as a group, then apply what we have learned via projects, discussion and hands-on experiences.

Course Objectives

Students will develop an understanding of the factors that shape culture, examine key theoretical frameworks that explain cultural differences, and apply this knowledge to real world situations. Learning outcomes include:

- Learning key theories that facilitate how to understand cultural differences.
- Understanding how culture impacts verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Developing strategies to communicate with individuals from different cultures.
- Moving from an ethno-centric to an ethno-relative understanding of different cultures.

Required Course Materials

1. [*Understanding Intercultural Communication*](#) by Stella Ting-Toomey and Leeva Chung (3rd edition). Oxford University Press, 2022.
2. Canvas. Additional materials and readings may be posted on Canvas when relevant. Ensure you have notifications set up to get notifications about course announcements,

deadlines, and other information. You can do so by selecting your “Account” icon and editing your “Notifications.”

LeadAbroad Mission & Values

LeadAbroad is committed to leveraging the international experience for a student’s personal growth and development. Each course is specifically designed to challenge students, expose them to the local culture and help them become more globally minded citizens. During class and throughout the program, our expectation is that students will be gracious guests in the host country, which means:

- Being polite to the locals
- Providing a kind salutation when entering a building with a guard or front desk attendant
- Attempting to use the local language for requests, salutations and thanks
- Being patient with different customs and traditions

During the program, we will also touch on these three core values of LeadAbroad:

- *Discover your Place*
- *Find your People*
- *Explore your Purpose*

SYLLABUS NAVIGATION

Click the buttons below for quick access to relevant pages.

**COURSE
COMMUNICATION**

ASSIGNMENTS

ACADEMIC POLICIES

COURSE POLICIES

ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

SCHEDULE

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Contact Information

You can contact me through the Canvas Inbox feature or directly via email at sshah1@oglethorpe.edu. On weekdays, I will typically respond to your email within 24 hours, and on weekends within 48 hours. If I have not responded within that time frame, you are welcome to send me a reminder.

Email

It is good practice to begin constructing your emails clearly and professionally. This will support your communication skills within and across cultures. As such, let's all agree to these communication norms for our email practice:

- Check the syllabus, Canvas, and your course resources for the answer to your question before sending an email. This can help you find relevant information and ensure efficiency on both our parts.
- Include your course number in your email (e.g., COM 220)
- Provide a greeting (Dr. Shah) and sign off (Thank you/Sincerely/Best) in your message.
- Clearly detail your question in the body of the email. Include any information about the help you are seeking, the resources or help you've already sought out, and how I can offer support.

Canvas

All announcements, course changes, additional readings, assignments, grades, etc. will be posted to Canvas over the course of the semester, so please **be sure to check it regularly**. In addition, Canvas will be used to communicate any emergency protocol procedures. Failure to check email and Canvas, errors in forwarding, and returned messages are the responsibility of the student, and do not constitute an excuse for missing announcements or deadlines.

Questions about Grades

At times, you may have questions about or wish to discuss your grades. I am more than happy to have these discussions, and my policy on how to have them is a 24-7 policy that can make our time most productive. When you have a question about a grade, wait until 24 hours after you have received your grade and then email me to schedule time where we can discuss the grade face-to-face (in person or via Zoom). These conversations should also be initiated within 7 days of that grade being posted. I am

more than happy to meet with you and talk about my feedback and have found these conversations work better face-to-face rather than via email.

COURSE POLICIES

Class Participation/Activity Points

Points will be assigned to each class's discussion and/or activity component during all our classes, and you may only make up these points with a university-excused absence. In the instance of a university-excused absence, students will be given the opportunity and time to make up the previous class's activity.

To succeed and get the most from this class, you are expected to be a regular and active participant in lecture, large class discussions, and small group work and activities and to contribute to these areas of the course in meaningful ways. Not all participation is equal: to say something just to say something is not a meaningful contribution.

I recognize that every student may participate in class differently, and I value your different types of participation. Here are some, but not, all examples of how I may assess your active class participation:

- Making a substantive oral contribution during class lecture or large-class discussion at least once a class (e.g., answering questions posed by the instructor, bringing up related and relevant information, linking classroom discussions to assigned readings).
- Staying on task in dyads, small groups, and activities. When given a task or question to discuss, work to make meaningful and course content-driven contributions, ask group-mates questions, and brain-storm additional ideas. Do not shortchange discussions or activities by trying to finish quickly or early.

Attendance and Absences

LeadAbroad is committed to the academic integrity of our programs. All students participating in a for credit program (LEAD and GO) will be subject to academic and programmatic consequences for missing class. Excused absences are approved only if the student has:

- a doctor's note that includes the diagnosis and confirmation that the student needed to be seen immediately or
- a note from the program staff verifying a medical or personal emergency with the student

Unexcused absences will impact a student's participation grade as well as their final grade in the course. Academically, if a student misses a class, there will be a loss in

participation points with each absence as well as consequences to the overall grade. For a traditional class (2 hours/4 days a week):

- 1st absence 2.5% deduction from overall grade
- 2nd absence 2.5% deduction from overall grade
- 3rd absence additional 2.5% deduction from overall grade
- 4th absence additional 5% deduction from overall grade
- 5th absence student fails the course

Programmatically, if a student misses 15% of their classes (3 courses in a traditional course) a notification will be sent to them and their emergency contact letting them know that they are on probation. More than 4 absences from a traditional class (20% of program) will result in dismissal and an automatic failing grade.

Personal travel is not an excused absence. Students should review their course syllabi and reach out to LeadAbroad to confirm their class schedule before booking any personal travel.

Classroom Behavior

In the classroom, it is important that we all respect one another and behave in ways that support one another's learning. The classroom should be a space where everyone feels free to express their thoughts, feels respected by one another, and feels comfortable making mistakes, asking questions, and expressing respectful disagreement.

To help create this type of inclusive learning environment, we will abide by the following policies in this course:

- We will agree to respect one another through our communication and behavior, upholding the values set forth in [Oglethorpe's Code of Conduct](#): *Integrity, Respect, and Development*.
- You can use your laptop for notetaking, but keep in mind how any distracted behavior on your laptop could affect your peers. If you use your laptop in class for tasks other than the class task at hand, your instructor may ask you to put your laptop away and avoid using it in future class sessions.
- You cannot use your cellphone during class unless otherwise noted or in case of emergency.

No Tape Recording or Using Class Materials Without Permission

Unless you have accommodations or have asked the instructor prior to doing so, you are not permitted to record class lectures or discussions. You are also not permitted to share any written materials (e.g., PowerPoints, assignments, etc.) with anyone outside of this class without written permissions from your instructor.

ASSIGNMENTS

Below is an overview of your major assignments in this course. More details and information can be found on Canvas.

Cultural Field Experience Narratives (300 points): Each week, we will visit a Location in Barcelona to deepen our understanding of the course material through real personal experiences in a multicultural environment. After each week's visit, you will be given a prompt and asked to write a field experience narrative reflecting on that experience and integrating ideas and topics from class to make sense of your experience. You will complete three of these narratives throughout the course, each worth 100 points.

Personal Cultural Narrative (200 points): Toward the end of the course, you will be asked to write a reflective personal narrative in which you reflect on your intercultural learning experience. You will integrate readings, ideas, and experiences from the course in discussing how your intercultural communication practices have changed as a result of taking this course.

Chapter Quizzes (150 points): There will be 5 online, multiple-choice quizzes (30 points each) across the course of the semester. You should read the course material prior to taking the quiz. All quiz due dates are listed in the course schedule. Each of these quizzes will have 15 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each. Quizzes will be based on information in the designated course readings for the week, and you will have 45 minutes to complete each quiz.

Final Exam (250 points): The final exam will cover all the key concepts from the four-week course. The exam may include a mix of short answer and multiple-choice questions. Students must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of terms, theories, and the best practices for successful intercultural communication in order to be successful on the exam.

Daily Activity Points/Participation (100 points): Per the class participation policy outlined in the Course Policies section, you must attend class (barring a university-excused absence) and effectively participate in each class period to receive daily activity points. Most class periods are worth approximately 5-7 points each.

Grading Distribution

Below is a summary of the major projects and assignments for the course.

Assignments	Total	Letter Grade	Point Scale
Cultural Field Experience Narratives	300	A	100-90%
Personal Cultural Narrative	200	B	89-80%
Chapter Quizzes	150	C	79-70%
Final Exam	250	D	69-60%
Participation/Daily Activity Points	100	F	60 and Below %
Total Points	1000	Total	100%

Semester Evaluation and Final Letter Grades: Grading will be on a 1000-point system. Please note that there is no “rounding” of final scores, as rounding can lead to biased decision-making.

ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

Canvas

Unless otherwise noted, you must submit all assignments to Canvas by the stated due date and time. Barring a campus-wide power outage, submission issues will not serve as an excuse for a late assignment. You are responsible for checking your submission on Canvas and verifying that you uploaded the correct document.

Late Assignments

Assignments will be penalized 10% if they are submitted late and an additional 10% each calendar day that they are missing. I will only accept late submissions within the same week of the assignment due date (e.g., any assignments due M-TH can only be submitted late up until Sunday of that same week) unless otherwise negotiated based on a university-excused absence.

Please note that no late submissions will be accepted for your quizzes or final exam.

The last day to submit any assignment for points will be Friday, July 31, 2026.

Written Assignment Guidelines

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents using Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman 12-point font unless otherwise specified. Always rely on the assignment instructions on Canvas for detailed assignment instructions. Remember to proofread your assignment before submitting it! You must cite your sources by correctly using the citation style of your choice (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago).



COM 220 Schedule Summer 2026

This schedule is subject to minor revisions. For Off Site Excursions, check Canvas the day prior for meet up instructions. (Four Weeks)

Day	Date	Topic	Readings Due (prior to class)	Assignments Due All assignments due at 11:59 pm.
		Pre arrival Lessons Reflecting on Intercultural Communication Complete Asynchronous Participation Assignments	Watch TedX Talk	Intercultural Reflection Activity due 11:59 pm (7/7)
Week 1: Arrival				
M	7/6	<i>Arrival</i>		
T	7/7	<i>Orientation/City Tour</i>		
W	7/8	<i>Course Introduction</i> <i>Why Study Intercultural Communication?</i> <i>Intercultural Communication Flexibility</i>	Ch.1-2	

TH	7/9	<i>Essential Cultural Value Patterns</i> <i>Culture Shock</i>	Ch. 3 & 5	Quiz 1 (Ch. 1-2, 3 & 5)
-----------	-----	--	-----------	------------------------------------

Week 2: Discover your Place

M	7/13	<i>Understanding Cultural and Ethnic Identities</i>	Ch. 4	
M	7/14	<i>Verbal Communication and Culture</i>	Ch. 6	Quiz 2 (Ch. 4&6)
W	7/15	<i>Site-based learning activity (01)</i>		Cultural Field Narrative
TH	7/16	<i>Nonverbal Communication across Cultures</i>	Ch. 7	

Week 3: Find your People

M	7/20	<i>Verbal Communication and Culture</i>	Ch. 6	Quiz 2 (Ch. 4&6)
T	7/21	<i>Managing Challenges: Biases against Outgroups</i>	Ch. 8	Quiz 3 (Ch. 7-8)
W	7/22	<i>Site-based learning activity (02)</i>		Cultural Field Narrative
TH	7/23	<i>Managing Challenges: Intercultural Conflict</i>	Ch. 9	

Week 4: Explore your Purpose

M	7/27	Site-based learning activity (03)		Cultural Field Narrative
T	7/28	Site-based learning activity (04)	Ch. 10	Cultural Field Narrative
W	7/29	<i>Managing Challenges: Intercultural-Intimate Relationships</i>		Quiz 4 (Ch. 9-10)
TH	7/30	<i>Personal Cultural Narrative Reflection & Workshop</i>		
F	7/31	Final Exam (In-Class)		

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Integrity and the Oglethorpe Honor Code

Our Oglethorpe community thrives on high standards of academic integrity. The Honor Code serves as a guiding document to develop our fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

By embracing these principles, everyone at Oglethorpe supports equitable access to academic success, as well as personal and professional growth. Oglethorpe welcomes all who accept and affirm these principles of academic integrity.

Affirmation

Students sign the following affirmation at the start of their Oglethorpe career during Convocation.

“I affirm that I am acting with academic integrity.” (followed by the student’s signature)

Additionally, students are asked to sign this affirmation at least once in every course.

By regularly signing this affirmation, students are reminded of the Oglethorpe community standards of academic integrity. We encourage students to maintain a commitment to integrity beyond their time at Oglethorpe.

Scope of the Honor Code

Our honor code is an academic one, based in our learning community. The Oglethorpe Honor Code applies to all students enrolled in any academic activities at the University.

This code is to serve as a guiding framework for all educational pursuits at Oglethorpe University. The primary purpose of this code is to maintain and sustain the academic community, by promoting community members to act honestly and with integrity. The goal of this code is to help community members stay within a community of academic honesty. The code also contains the pathway for reintegration for students who diverge from our academic honesty standards, ensuring that these students are aided by tools and strategies to succeed academically.

The preamble to the Honor Code describes the concept of academic integrity, but the Honor Code also describes academic dishonesty as any actions that are aimed at gaining unfair academic advantage. Academically dishonest practices can be further partitioned into subcategories (plagiarism, misrepresentation, unauthorized aid, facilitation, and interpersonal academic misconduct). Examples of academic misconduct listed below fall within one of those categories, but these categories and examples are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive.

Categories (and examples) of academic misconduct are:

Plagiarism

Plagiarism at its core is the failure to give credit for the use of another's legitimate work, and/or to have the work perceived as your own.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Direct plagiarism, or copying word-for-word from a source without using quotations and proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing plagiarism, or the act of paraphrasing someone's work without acknowledging that the ideas are not your own.
- Self-plagiarism, or using work that you previously submitted for another course without acknowledgement or permission.

Misrepresentation

Academic misrepresentation is an attempt to fulfill the requirements of a course with work other than one's own work. We distinguish misrepresentation from plagiarism by the fact that one could not reasonably give credit to a source in a case of misrepresentation.

Examples of misrepresentation include:

- Contracting with a person, website, or tool (either for free or via payment) to write an assignment for you (either in whole or in part) and submitting the paper as if it was your own.
- Contracting with a person, website, or tool (either for free or via payment) to solve problems for you (either in whole or in part) and submitting the solutions as if they were your own.
- Falsifying data, figures or sources in a laboratory report.
- Providing a report of attending an event, visiting a site, participating in an extra-credit activity and the like when you were not actually present at the event/site/activity.

Unauthorized Aid

This category refers to any possession or use of unauthorized materials or assistance in an effort to fulfill course requirements. It is the student's responsibility to ask the professor for specific guidance on what materials or assistance are in fact authorized and to communicate that information to any tutors or other providers of authorized aid.

Examples of unauthorized aid include:

- Possession or use of unauthorized notes during an assessment.
- Possession or use of unauthorized electronic devices during an assessment.
- Unauthorized use of external source material.
- Unauthorized use of "homework helper" sites.
- Unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence.
- Unauthorized collaboration with other students.

Facilitation

In this category, a student is facilitating another student's ability to commit academic misconduct.

While we do work and study in a collaborative space, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that other students do not misuse their work.

Examples of facilitation include:

- Knowingly permitting another student to copy your work.

- Uploading assignments and/or solutions to a shared test bank, “homework helper” site, or group chat.
- Signing in for a student at an event where attendance is a required part of a course.
- Claiming that another student completed work for a group project that they did not do.

Interpersonal Academic Misconduct

In this category, we consider the unfair academic advantage that may result student-faculty and student-student interactions.

Examples of interpersonal academic misconduct include:

- Lying (to a professor or to another student) for academic advantage. This could include lying to earn a particular grade or lying to avoid an academic penalty.
- Colluding with other students in a collective effort to engage in academic misconduct.
- Claiming credit for a group project to which one did not contribute.
- Obtaining someone else’s work (with or without their knowledge) and submitting as one’s own.
- Pressuring or coercing another student to aid in one’s engagement in academic misconduct.
- Falsely accusing another student of academic misconduct.
- Deliberately damaging the work of another student or otherwise putting another student in a position of academic disadvantage.
- Lying to the Honor Council regarding one’s role or someone else’s role in suspected academic misconduct.

More Information

The full text of the Honor Code can be found at <https://bulletin.oglethorpe.edu/11-honor-code/>. It contains the responsibilities we accept by becoming members of the community and the procedures we will follow should our commitment to academic integrity ever come into question. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Honor Council Director, Dr. Lynn Gieger (lgieger@oglethorpe.edu)

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all LeadAbroad programs promote non-discrimination of disabled individuals and provide reasonable academic accommodations when appropriate. An academic accommodation is a modification that enables students to participate in a program of study by incorporating adjustments to ensure their rights,

access, and privileges are equal to those without disabilities. Some examples of academic accommodations may include extended time on tests and quizzes, testing in a distraction free environment, the ability to tape-record lectures, or note-taking assistance in the classroom.

Any participant who needs academic accommodations in a program of study must contact LeadAbroad at least 90 days prior to the program start date. Please note, LeadAbroad cannot guarantee that late requests will be honored. To initiate the accommodation process, please contact the director of international programming atinfo@LeadAbroad.com

In order to be approved for accommodations, students will be asked to complete the disabilities form in their student portal and provide documentation that supports registration with the disability services office at their home institution. Once documentation has been received, Oglethorpe's Disability Services and LeadAbroad will work together to identify accommodation possibilities. Please keep in mind that LeadAbroad will not approve any accommodations that alter the fundamental nature of our curricula. If an accommodation request cannot be fulfilled, LeadAbroad will work with the student to identify other program opportunities.

Once approved, the student will receive a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) prior to his or her program start date. From there, it is the student's responsibility to self-advocate by delivering the LOA directly to his or her instructors. LeadAbroad instructors are accustomed to accommodating students in the classroom. By delivering the LOA personally, this will alert the student's instructor to initiate a conversation about his or her classroom needs. Finally, the instructor will be responsible for implementing any classroom accommodations, such as recruiting another student in the class to take notes or proctoring an exam for a student that requires extended time.

A student is responsible for providing documentation that supports his or her request for academic adjustments. LeadAbroad requires that the documentation demonstrates the student's current enrollment in a disability services program at his or her home institution, specifies a list of the student's approved accommodations, and has been signed by the school's disability services professional. Please note, the documentation does not need to specify the student's diagnosis given that this type of paperwork has already been supplied to his or her current disability services professional.

Participants should be aware that some LeadAbroad programs involve voluntary activities that require moderate exercise, such as hiking and biking; these activities are voluntary. In addition, some of the site locations may not be compliant with ADA

standards of accessibility given their geographic location and different governing systems. Last, accommodations cannot be applied retroactively, accommodations begin in the classroom once the LOA is received by the instructor.

If any program participant feels that he or she is being treated unfairly in any way, please notify the supervising faculty member or LeadAbroad office immediately at info@LeadAbroad.com.

Title IX

LeadAbroad faculty and staff are not confidential resources. In accordance with Title IX, any report of sexual misconduct that has occurred during a student's time at a university will be reported back to Oglethorpe University and a students' home university in order to ensure that the student has access to all resources and support needed.