



OGLETHORPE

UNIVERSITY

COM 220: Intercultural Communication

Course Information

Semester: Summer 2026, GO Rome

Meeting Times: 9:00-11:00 am

Meeting Dates: Week 1: Friday only; Weeks 2-5: Monday-Thursday

Instructor Information

Professor: Dr. Victoria Ledford (she/her)

Email: vledford@oglethorpe.edu

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. Rome—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 Rome. 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.
 - a. You can purchase a print or e-book.
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*

Course Communication

Contact Information

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

Canvas

All announcements, course changes, additional readings, assignments, grades, etc. will be posted to Canvas, 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 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. 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.

Email

It is good practice to begin constructing your emails clearly and professionally to support your life at and beyond college. Here are some email communication practices I expect from you.

- 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 and section number in your email (e.g., COM 220).
- Provide a greeting (Dr. Ledford) 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.

Course Policies

Attendance and Absences

1. 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.

2. 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

1. Respect for Civil Discourse

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.**
- We will express constructive disagreement by acknowledging opposing viewpoints and disagreeing with arguments *not* people.
- We will speak from experience and evidence and avoid overgeneralizing our experiences to the represent the experiences of all others from a social group.

2. Classroom Norms

To ensure a supportive learning environment, we will abide by the following policies in our course:

- You can use your laptop only for notetaking, but keep in mind how any distracted behavior on your laptop could affect your peers.
- Using your laptop to engage in other behaviors will result in reduced participation grades.
- You cannot use your cellphone during class unless otherwise noted or in case of emergency.

3. Recording and Using Class Materials

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 permission from your instructor.

Academic Policies

1. Academic Honesty, Plagiarism, and Other Oglethorpe Policies

Please see the end of this syllabus section titled “**Academic Policies**” and review all Oglethorpe academic policies you are obligated to uphold as a student in this course.

2. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

GenAI includes (but is not limited to) tools that are trained on large language models to create/perform tasks on your behalf (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft CoPilot). You are responsible for knowing whether a tool uses GenAI. There are situations in this course where you are either prohibited or permitted to use GenAI.

Prohibited Uses of GenAI: The use of GenAI for any form of actual writing or completion of in-class activities in this course is expressly prohibited.

- GenAI is prohibited for writing: You may not use GenAI to generate or edit an outline, write words in any class activities or assignments, or edit your writing. Writing is a critical part of the thinking and research process. It is also an important skill you will use the rest of your life. If you use GenAI for writing now, you may find yourself underprepared for the type of writing you need to do in your future career.
- GenAI is prohibited for in-class activities: You cannot use GenAI to support in the completion of any in-class activities. The purpose of in-class activities is for you to wrestle with ideas, learn the material on your own, and engage with your classmates and instructor to create deep and involved learning. Using GenAI would remove this

learning opportunity and waste the valuable opportunity we have as a classroom community.

Permitted Uses of GenAI: Should you wish to do so, you may use GenAI for the following purposes. **If you do use GenAI in these ways, you must disclose your use in your assignments or activities and provide a brief explanation** of (1) how your use of GenAI was ethical (2) how you evaluated the accuracy of the tool's output, and (3) why GenAI was a better resource than other resources (e.g., talking with your instructor, reading the textbook). It is also your responsibility to check the accuracy of any information provided by GenAI, as GenAI is prone to producing inaccurate and/or incomplete information. You are responsible for any inaccurate, incomplete, or plagiarized information you rely on when generated by GenAI.

Permitted uses of GenAI in this course:

- GenAI as a study tool: You may use GenAI to help you create notecards for this course or remind you of key concepts as you prepare for the course quizzes or exams. However, you may *not* upload any of my course materials (e.g., PPT Slides, etc.) to GenAI for this purpose. You are also responsible for verifying the accuracy of any information you find.
- GenAI as a search engine: You may use GenAI to help you *find* sources for your project in this course. However, you must still justify your use of this tool as outlined above, articulating why GenAI was a more effective search tool compared to Google Scholar or the Library databases, for example. You are also responsible for verifying the accuracy of any information you find.

Instructor Disclosure: I will not use GenAI to evaluate your assignments or create course materials for this course. Given that AI detectors are unreliable and have data privacy concerns, I will not submit any of your work to AI detectors. In addition, I will not use GenAI to generate original material in this course, including PPT slides, assignments, lecture material, etc. I may use GenAI in my own brainstorming process, but any use of GenAI will align with the standards and expectations I have outlined for you. I will also disclose any use of GenAI.

Course 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 Rome 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 five-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.

Course Grading

Assignment Distribution

Cultural Field Experience Narratives	300 points
Personal Cultural Narrative	200 points
Chapter Quizzes	150 points
Final Exam	250 points
Participation/Daily Activity Points	100 points
Total Points	1,000 points

Grading Scale

Semester Evaluation and Final Letter Grades: Grading will be on a 1,000-point system, so the following grades will be given for the following total points at end of the semester. Please note that there is no “rounding” of final scores since this is a point-based system, and rounding can lead to biased decision-making. For example, if you receive 899.99 points, that grade will remain at an 89.9% (B+) and will not round up to a 90.00%.

A	930.00—1000.00
A-	900.00-929.99
B+	870.00-899.999
B	830.00—869.99
B-	800.00-829.99
C+	770.00-799.99
C	730.00—769.99
C-	700.00-729.99
D+	670.00-699.99
D	600.00—669.99
F	0—599.99

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.

Course Readings

Prior to each class period, you will be asked to read various materials to support your work in class. You are expected to read these materials prior to class.

Late Assignments

Assignments will be penalized 5% if they are submitted late and an additional 5% 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 an approved 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, August 2, 2024.

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).

*The course schedule begins on the following page.

COM 220 Summer 2026 GO Rome Course Schedule

All readings due prior to class, and all assignments due at 11:59 pm on the date listed unless otherwise specified. This schedule is subject to minor revisions.

For Off Site Excursions, check Canvas the day prior for meet up instructions.

Week 1: Arrival (Discover Your Place)

Sunday (7/5) – Asynchronous Class Assignment 1 Due

Readings & Asynchronous Assignments Due:

- Watch Course Introduction Video
- Participation Assignment Due: Reflecting on Intercultural Communication 1

Monday (7/6) – Asynchronous Class Assignment 2 Due

Readings & Asynchronous Assignments Due:

- Watch TedX Talk
- Participation Assignment Due: Reflecting on Intercultural Communication 2

Thursday (7/9) – Lead Abroad Orientation (No Class)

Friday (7/10) – Welcome (First In-Person Class), Why Study Intercultural Communication, & Intercultural Communication Flexibility

Readings Due:

- Chapters 1–2

Week 2: Discover your Place

Monday (7/13) – Essential Cultural Value Patterns & Culture Shock

Readings Due:

- Chapters 3 & 5

Assignment Due: Quiz 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5)

Tuesday (7/14) – Off Site Lesson @ Mercato Trionfale

Assignments Due: Cultural Field Narrative 1

Wednesday (7/15) – Understanding Cultural & Ethnic Identities

Readings Due:

- Chapter 4

Thursday (7/16) – Verbal Communication and Culture

Readings Due:

- Chapter 6

Assignment Due: Quiz 2 (Chapters 4 & 6)

Week 3: Find Your People

Monday (7/20) – Nonverbal Communication across Cultures

Readings Due:

- Chapter 7

Tuesday (7/21) – Off Site Lesson @ Jewish Quarter

Assignments Due: Cultural Field Narrative 2

Wednesday (7/22) – Managing Challenges: Baises against Outgroups

Readings Due:

- Chapter 8

Assignment Due: Quiz 3 (Chapters 7-8)

Thursday (7/23) – Managing Challenges: Intercultural Conflict

Readings Due:

- Chapter 9

Week 4: Explore Your Purpose

Monday (7/27) – Managing Challenges: Intercultural-Intimate Relationships

Readings Due:

- Chapter 10

Assignment Due: Quiz 4 (Chapters 9-10)

Tuesday (7/28) – Off Site Lesson @ San Lorenzo Murals

Assignment Due: Cultural Field Narrative 3

Wednesday (7/29) – Global Identity

Readings Due:

- Chapter 11

Thursday (7/30) – Ethical Intercultural Communication

Readings Due:

- Chapter 12

Assignment Due: Quiz 5 (Chapters 11-12)

Week 5: Application is Everything

Monday (8/3) – Personal Cultural Narrative Reflection & Community-Based Learning

Readings Due:

- TBD

Tuesday (8/4) – Off Site Lesson @ Retake Roma

Wednesday (8/5) – Final Exam Review & Personal Cultural Narrative Workshop

Assignment Due: Personal Cultural Narrative

Thursday (8/6) – Final Exam (In-Class)

Academic Policies

Honor Code

Persons who come to Oglethorpe University for work and study join a community that is committed to high standards of academic honesty. The honor code contains the responsibilities we accept by becoming members of the community and the procedures we will follow should our commitment to honesty be questioned.

The students, faculty and staff of Oglethorpe University expect each other to act with integrity in the academic endeavor they share. Members of the faculty expect that students complete work honestly and act toward them in ways consistent with that expectation. Students are expected to behave honorably in their academic work and are expected to insist on honest behavior from their peers. Oglethorpe welcomes all who accept our principles of honest behavior. We believe that this code will enrich our years at the University and allow us to practice living in earnest the honorable, self-governed lives required of society's respected leaders.

Our honor code is an academic one. The code proscribes cheating in general terms and also in any of its several specialized sub-forms (including but not limited to plagiarism, lying, stealing and interacting fraudulently or disingenuously with the honor council). The Code defines cheating as "the umbrella under which all academic malfeasance falls. Cheating is any willful activity involving the use of deceit or fraud in order to attempt to secure an unfair academic advantage for oneself or others or to attempt to cause an unfair academic disadvantage to others. Cheating deprives persons of the opportunity for a fair and reasonable assessment of their own work and/or a fair comparative assessment between and among the work produced by members of a group. More broadly, cheating undermines our community's confidence in the honorable state to which we aspire."

The honor code applies to all behavior related to the academic enterprise. Thus, it extends beyond the boundaries of particular courses and classrooms per se, and yet it does not extend out of the academic realm into the purely social one.

Examples of cheating include but are not limited to:

- 1.1 The unauthorized possession or use of notes, texts, electronic devices (including, for example, computers and mobile phones), online materials or other such unauthorized materials/devices in fulfillment of course requirements.
- 1.2 Copying another person's work or participation in such an effort.

- 1.3 An attempt or participation in an attempt to fulfill the requirements of a course with work other than one's original work for that course.
- 1.4 Forging or deliberately misrepresenting data or results.
- 1.5 Obtaining or offering either for profit or free of charge materials one might submit (or has submitted) for academic credit. This includes uploading course materials to online sites devoted, in whole or in part, to aiding and abetting cheating under the guise of providing "study aids." There is no prohibition concerning uploading exemplars of one's work to one's personal website or to departmental, divisional, University or professional society websites for purposes of publicity, praise, examination or review by potential employers, graduate school admissions committees, etc.
- 1.6 Violating the specific directions concerning the operation of the honor code in relation to a particular assignment.
- 1.7 Making unauthorized copies of graded work for future distribution.
- 1.8 Claiming credit for a group project to which one did not contribute.
- 1.9 Plagiarism, which includes representing someone else's words, ideas, data or original research as one's own and in general failing to footnote or otherwise acknowledge the source of such work. One has the responsibility of avoiding plagiarism by taking adequate notes on reference materials (including material taken off the internet or other electronic sources) used in the preparation of reports, papers and other coursework.
- 1.10 Lying, such as: Lying about the reason for an absence to avoid a punitive attendance penalty or to receive an extension on an exam or on a paper's due date; fraudulently obtaining Petrel Points by leaving an event soon after registering one's attendance and without offering to surrender the associated Petrel Point, or by claiming fictitious attendance for oneself or another; forging or willfully being untruthful on documents related to the academic enterprise, such as on an application for an independent study or on a registration form.
- 1.11 Stealing, such as: Stealing another's work so that he/she may not submit it or so that work can be illicitly shared; stealing reserve or other materials from the library; stealing devices and materials (such as computers, calculators, textbooks, notebooks and software) used in whole or in part to support the academic enterprise.
- 1.12 Fraudulent interaction on the part of students with the honor council, such as: Willfully refusing to testify after having been duly summoned; failing to appear to

testify (barring a bona fide last-minute emergency) after having been duly summoned; testifying untruthfully.

Students pledge that they have completed assignments honestly by attaching the following statement to each piece of work submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a course taken for academic credit:

“I pledge that I have acted honorably.” (Followed by the student’s signature)

The honor code is in force for every student who is enrolled (either full- or part-time) in any of the academic programs of Oglethorpe University at any given time. All cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the provisions established in this code. The honor council has sole jurisdiction in matters of suspected academic dishonesty. Alternative ways of dealing with cases of suspected academic fraud are prohibited. In cases of alleged academic dishonesty on the part of students, the honor council is the final arbiter.

The full Honor Code is Section 11 of the current University Bulletin.

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 at info@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**](mailto: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 student's home university in order to ensure that the student has access to all resources and support needed.