Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of Languages, Cultures and Communication
Communication Studies Program
Intercultural Communication
Com 435.001, Spring 2015
T/R | 2.00-3.15 pm | F 375

Instructor: Sudeshna Roy, Ph.D.
Phone: (936) 468 1033

Office: LAN 414
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Office Hours: T/R – 11.00-12.30, W – 10.30-11.30 (virtual), 1.30-2.30 (in office) & by appointment

Course Description (from the SFA General Bulletin):
COM 435 - Application of communication theory to the interactions between individuals of different cultures.

Course Objectives:
Welcome to Intercultural Communication! In this course, we will increase our understanding of our own cultural position and basic concepts, principles, and skills regarding communication between persons from different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. This class explores issues currently being debated in the U.S. society.

Required textbooks:

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)
Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate oral and written competence in logical and critical thinking.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
1. Become familiar with the study of intercultural communication from the traditional social psychological perspective, the interpretive perspective, and the more recent critical perspective.
2. Discover the importance of the roles of context and power in studying intercultural communication.
3. Become more sensitive to the complexity of intercultural interactions.
4. Recognize the influence of their own cultural groups on intercultural communication interactions.
5. Become more willing, self-reflective, flexible, and open communicators in intercultural communication interactions.

Learning Assumptions and Expectations:
I have a number of assumptions about your participation in this course.
- It is my belief that what you as a student get out of this course depends upon what you put in it as well as the extent to which you are willing to critically assess your own beliefs and assumptions.
- Respect is one of the foundations of an environment conducive to learning. In this class, I have a commitment to creating a positive and respectful learning environment. I expect all of us to contribute to a safe, productive and fun classroom environment, valuing each of our strengths and differences. In class-discussions, everyone should be courteous and respectful of others; no rude, sexist, racist, or other disrespectful or offensive comments or behavior will be acceptable.
- I have high standards for excellent work. To earn good grades you will need to work hard and do excellent work. Hard work is necessary, but not sufficient to receive good grades.
- The assignments in this course are designed to challenge you and help you learn.
- Class discussion will build from the reading so it is necessary that you complete the reading before the assigned date. We will not be able to discuss everything covered in the readings. However you will be responsible for the content.
- I am committed to helping you to learn. Please ask questions and let me know how I can support you. However, also recognize that there is some inherent ambiguity in education - there is no one right way to do most things! I may not always give you a concrete definitive answer to your questions.

**Policies:**

- **Attendance:** Attendance is expected and will be checked daily. You are expected not only to be present, but also to contribute to class discussions and participate in all class activities. Each student will be allowed one unexcused absence. After that absence, every absence will result in a lowering of your grade at the rate of 2 points per day. You are expected to know the material covered even if you are absent on the day it was covered. If you miss class assignments without prior notification you will not be allowed to make up for that assignment. If you anticipate an absence in advance please inform me as soon as possible. You are responsible for obtaining lecture notes and announcements presented in the class session you missed. Please ask your classmates to obtain any missed information. Obtain contact information from your classmate in advance.
  *** NOTE: If you have University Sanctioned Events during this course that will require you to be absent, set up a meeting with me during the first/second week. Bring your calendar.

- **Participation:**
  - Class participation is important for the success of the class. You all have communication experience and sharing that with the rest of the class improves the quality of class discussion and student learning.
  - You are expected to arrive at class every day, on time, and prepared to discuss the assigned reading.
  - You should remain for the entire class.
  - Your active participation is highly desirable. I recognize that different people contribute in different ways. You will lose points for participation if you are absent, choose not to participate, or are not prepared.

- **Late work:** Late work will not be accepted unless there are absolute, extenuating circumstances beyond the students’ control. The student is to provide necessary paperwork (eg. doctor’s note, newspaper announcements, etc.) to the Instructor in order to seek any extension of deadlines. Any decision on extension of deadline, from case to case basis, will be at the Instructor's discretion. Late work will automatically receive a major reduction in the grade earned (10% per day late). If you are turning in work and cannot give it directly to me, take it to the Communication Studies office. Be sure to write down the names and phone numbers of two of your classmates in case you want someone to submit your work when you are absent or have a question about class and can’t reach me.

- **Cell Phones and Digital Devices:** Turn your cell phones to silent and use other digital devices only for purposes of classwork. Remove ear pieces before class begins. Do not use your cell phones for text messaging or checking messages during class. If you are misusing your smart devices, you will be asked to leave the classroom. If you are using a smart device or cell phone during a quiz or test, you will receive a zero.

- **Computer usage:** Computers are to be used only for educational purposes – note taking, and work on
projects. Any other use is unacceptable and will result in loss of privilege of use of computer in this class.

- **Your chance to earn your grade ends when the semester ends. No office hours during finals week.**

- **Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**
  Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

  **Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
  Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

  Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

- **Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**
  Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

- **Students with Disabilities**
  To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/). Once this has been completed, please schedule an appointment with me so we can work out specifics about the accommodations needed.

- **Acceptable Student Behavior**
  Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

- **Food & drinks in the classroom:** Please note that the University policy does not allow food or drinks in the classroom. Water is permissible though.
Assignments
*All assignments are subject to revision, deletion, change as per the instructor's discretion and when needed.

General Assignment Guidelines for all major assignments prepared outside of class:
- Page guidelines listed are based on 1” margins, double-spaced with a 10 to 12 point font in Times New Roman unless otherwise specified. All hand-written work (unless otherwise specified) will receive a reduced grade.
- All work should utilize APA style (6th edition) unless otherwise indicated. This includes format for references and headings.
- All assignments are due on the due dates listed. You are responsible for planning ahead and balancing the requirements of this class with your other classes and outside responsibilities. Late work will be accepted (unless otherwise indicated), but with a reduction in the grade (usually 10 percent per day).
- All papers should be submitted through D2L.

The assignments have been designed to help you maximize your learning. They are also a means to assess your mastery of the material and apply your learning to practical situations. More details will be given about these assignments during class. The total number of possible points is 200. Grading will be based on traditional percentages.

Reading discussion (Paper and class presentation) - 15 points
Students shall write a 2-3 page critical discussion of one selected reading assigned to them from the Samovar Text during the course. The paper must include:
- a most compelling aspect of the reading,
- a class concept/theory that explains this aspect of the reading, and
- an example from outside sources with an explanation as to how the example expands on the points made in the reading and how it can help us better understand the class concept/theory.
This paper should be about 2-pages excluding the attached example. In class you will orally present your paper. The paper is due on the day of your presentation.

Film review (Paper) - 15 points
Students will be watching movies during the semester. Each student will be assigned a movie that they will then write a 2-3 page paper discussing aspects of intercultural relations and their connection to intercultural theories from their class lectures and texts. The selection of movies will be conveyed later during the semester.

In your paper, please refer to particular instances from the film that provide the cultural context from a critical standpoint. Guiding questions for the review are the following:
1. Describe the context in which the action takes place. Which elements of the film give us information about the context? How does the context affect communication patterns between the main characters?
2. Describe different identities that emerge in the course of the film. How are these identities constructed (ascription, avowal, interpellation)? How can the communication perspective help us understand the identities of the main characters? How can we use the critical perspective to understand these identities? What is the relationship between identities and context?
3. Does the identity of any of the main characters change in the course of the film? Do any of the characters undergo a process of identity development? What influenced this process?
3. How does history affect the standpoints of the main characters? What do we learn about history from the film? What is the relationship between history and identities of the main characters?
4. What can you say about communication styles and language use in the film? What did you learn about the characters from the way they use language? Identify social structures that affect how the language is used (discourse).

5. Analyze nonverbal codes and cultural space. How do the main characters use nonverbal communication? How are cultural spaces constructed in the film? Identify different elements that are used to construct these cultural spaces.

6. Identify cultural position(s) the film represents. How are the cultural positions represented in the film related to our present cultural and political contexts? To which cultural positions does the film appeal? Whose social interests (in terms of social positions) are represented in the film? Why are those and not other interests represented? How is power implicated in social positions that the film represents?

My cultural identity paper - 20 points

The purpose of this assignment is for you to examine your social identity in the larger social context and in relationship to others. Your analysis should be based on three class theoretical concepts such as contested zone, values, ethnicity, race, communities of meaning, ascribed/avowed identity, etc. In your paper, make sure to include

a) explanation of the intercultural concept/theory,

b) examination of the intercultural concept/theory in the larger social context,

c) examination of the intercultural concept/theory in relationship to theories proposed by other scholars,

d) review of the concept/theory’s contributions and limitations to the field of intercultural communication, and

e) practical application.

Use the following questions as a guide:

- What cultural patterns and values inform your family structure and rituals or your community and neighborhood, or your school and/or work environment, music you listen to, groups you belong to, etc. How do these patterns and values connect you or distinguish you from others in or around your community?

- Do you have a sense of belonging to a distinct cultural group that is different from other groups? Why or why not? How do you know this? How is this group defined? What does it mean to you?

- What “other” people live in your community and how do you and/or “your” group relate to “them”? How have you become aware of the differences? What do they mean to you? What type of interactions do you have with the different people in your area or other places?

- What experiences have you had with people from other cultural groups? What lasting impressions have these experiences left on you? How might they influence future interactions?

- What aspects of intercultural communication are present in your life? What aspects have you not thought about before? Why?

- How is your ethnicity defined? Is it an important identity to you? In what way? What do you know about your ethnic heritage? Is it important to you? Do you think that various others see you as having an ethnicity? How has this shaped your identity?

- Do you ever think of your racial identity? What, when, and why? Or why not? What comes to your mind when you think “race”? What do you think other people perceive your “race” to be? What does it mean to you? How has this awareness or lack of it shaped your identity? How does it influence your relationships with others?

- What are the particular labels you chose to designate your identity and what do they mean to you (e.g., “white,” “person of color,” “American,” “Southerner,” etc)? How do you identify with groups designated by this label, what characteristics do members of this group share in your mind? How do you communicate this identity to others?

- What implications, obstacles, and challenges does your social identity present to communication with people from different cultures, in and outside the U.S?
Use a few of these questions as a guide and write your essay as a coherent piece. **Do not simply answer the questions.** BE COMPLEX. Your analysis should provide insight about issues you discuss as well as about the concepts/theses you learned in class (e.g., you can challenge a concept or expand its meaning). In your conclusions, explain what implications, obstacles, and challenges your social identity poses to communication with people from different cultures, in and outside the U.S. Your paper should be about 4-5 pages. Write clearly and succinctly.

**Intercultural Awareness Convention**

*Activities/Presentations (25 points), Report (10 points) = 35 points*

During the semester, students will learn about different intercultural communication skills that they will then present to the nurses of a local hospital during a day of Intercultural Awareness Convention. This will take place at the hospital and official paperwork will be provided to excuse students from any other classes or work during this day. Students will work in teams to make various presentations and activities to the participating nurses. More information will be presented during the course.

After the convention is over, students will write a short 1-2 page report about their unique experience in organizing, participating and conducting this convention with specific focus on what intercultural elements they engaged in throughout the experience.

**Term project - Other-Culture Interaction**

The Intercultural Project is your opportunity to apply what you have learned in class. You will choose a nation (e.g., Turkey, Japan) or distinct cultural group (e.g., Native Americans, Hmong). You will then pose the following questions: 1) If you (as an American), lived among these people, how would their communication be similar or different from your own? How would they accept or perceived you? 2) If these people came to the US, and East Texas, how would their communication be perceived here? How would it be similar? How different? How would they be accepted?

Once identified, you will be asked to design and implement a plan to build knowledge and understanding of the identified cultural group or nation. This is an assignment that is meant to be comprehensive in nature and requires several weeks of self-reflection, research, planning, and implementation. **This is NOT something that can be left until the last minute.** Your paper will be evaluated based on your level of insight, your demonstrated understanding of course concepts, and the quality of your writing.

Your knowledge and understanding of the identified cultural group or nation will be revealed in a careful, systematic investigation that includes the following:

A) **Literature Review (50)** Find a minimum of 5 scholarly sources (journal articles, books not more than 5 years old) about your project, and write an annotated bibliography of 3-4 pages (typed, double-spaced) summarizing and analyzing the information from these sources. In addition, you are to come up with a list of 15 questions, based upon your readings, for interviewing a person from this nation or culture. A hard copy must be turned in class, and an electronic copy posted to Desire2Learn. **Due 2/26**

B) **Face-to-face (physical or virtual) interview and transcript (100)** Conduct one (or more) face-to-face interview with a person who is from, or has lived a substantial period of time—5 years or more—in the nation or culture you are studying. This interview must be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. It is expected the interview will take at least 20 minutes, and the verbatim transcript must be 10 or more pages, double-spaced. Be diligent in obtaining an opportunity to directly involve yourself in interviewing, interacting with, and actively hearing and understanding the experiences of at least one member of the identified group. This will require you to truly listen and hear those perspectives and engaging in a positive dialogue and interaction. Further information will be given in class. **Due 4/9**

C) **In-Class Report (100)** Prepare a 5-8 minute presentation of your findings.
D) Final Paper (150) Write an 8-10 page paper that presents findings from this project. The paper must be structured in the form of an argument that includes the following: 1) pose a research question or questions, 2) discuss the relevant literature, 3) explain the method or methods used to answer the question or questions, 4) present findings, 5) summarize important issues found through the project, and 6) look forward by posing issues for future study. A hard copy of the paper must be turned in class, and an electronic copy posted to Desire2Learn. Due Tuesday, 5/5.

Guiding questions for the interview are the following:
1. Describe the context in which the interaction takes place. How does the context affect communication patterns between the two of you?
2. Describe different identities that emerge during the conversation. How are these identities constructed (ascription, avowal, interpellation)? How can we use the critical perspective to understand these identities? What is the relationship between identities and context?
3. How does history affect the standpoint of the cultural background of the person you are interviewing? What do we learn about history from this conversation? What is the relationship between history and identities of the “friend” being interviewed?
4. What can you say about communication styles and language use in the conversation? What did you learn about the “friend” from the way he/she uses language? Identify social structures that affect how the language is used (discourse).
5. Analyze nonverbal codes and cultural space. How does the “friend” use nonverbal communication? How are cultural spaces constructed during the contact hours? Identify different elements that are used to construct these cultural spaces.
6. Identify cultural position(s) constructed during the contact hours. How are these cultural positions related to our present cultural and political contexts?

Exams - 30 points each = 60 points
There are two exams consisting of short answer and essay questions.

Course Evaluation:
The final grade will be based on the following:

- Reading discussion
  - o Paper 10 points
  - o Class presentation 05 points
- Film review 15 points
- My identity 20 points
- Exam # 1 30 points
- Term project
  - o Lit. Rev. 15 points
  - o Face-to-face Interview 20 points
  - o In-Class Report 20 points
  - o Final Paper 35 points
- Final Exam 30 points

Total points 200 points

How to calculate your grade:
Please keep a record of your grades. Use the formula below to assess your work and grade. Please keep all graded assignments until after you have received your final grade.
Formula: Your grade % = (all the points you have earned) / (maximum points possible)
A = 90% and above - 200 - 180, B = 80 - 89.99% - 179 - 160, C = 70 - 79.99% - 159 - 140, D = 60 - 69.99% - 149 - 120, F = Below 60% - 119 or less

Tentative* Schedule
*The instructor reserves the right to make any changes in this schedule as needed.
*Additional readings will be given as and when the instructor decides.

Dates for film review will be assigned by instructor to students during semester.
Please Note: The chapters indicated should be read by the date listed on the syllabus. We will not cover all material in class, but you are responsible for reading them and asking questions from them as you feel necessary.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/ Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T - Jan 20</td>
<td>Course overview, Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>R - Jan 22</td>
<td>The Necessity of Intercultural Communication</td>
<td>Ch 1</td>
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<td>T – Jan 27</td>
<td>The Cultural Context:</td>
<td>Ch 2</td>
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<td>R - Jan 29</td>
<td>The Cultural Context:</td>
<td>Ch 2</td>
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<td>T – Feb 03</td>
<td>The Cultural Context:</td>
<td>Ch 2 Additional readings, Samovar</td>
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<td>R – Feb 05</td>
<td>Communicating across cultures film, online</td>
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<td>T - Feb 10</td>
<td>The Microcultural Context</td>
<td>Ch 3 Additional readings, Samovar</td>
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<td>Student presentation</td>
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<td>R - Feb 12</td>
<td>The Microcultural Context</td>
<td>Ch 3</td>
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<td>Film – Crossing Lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>T - Feb 17</td>
<td>The Environmental Context</td>
<td>Ch 4 Additional readings, Samovar</td>
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<td>My cultural identity paper due</td>
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<td>R - Feb 19</td>
<td>The Environmental Context</td>
<td>Ch 4</td>
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<td>Student presentation</td>
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<td>T - Feb 24</td>
<td>The Perceptual Context</td>
<td>Ch 5</td>
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<td>Film – Outsourced</td>
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<td>R - Feb 26</td>
<td>The Perceptual Context</td>
<td>Ch 5</td>
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<td>Film – Outsourced</td>
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<td>Lit. Rev. Due</td>
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<td>T - Mar 03</td>
<td>Exam # 1 review</td>
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<td>R – Mar 05</td>
<td><strong>Exam # 1</strong></td>
<td>Ch 6</td>
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<td>T - Mar 10</td>
<td>The Sociorelational Context</td>
<td>Student Presentation</td>
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<td>R - Mar 12</td>
<td>The Sociorelational Context</td>
<td>Ch 6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Film - Outsources</td>
<td>Additional readings, Samovar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 16-20</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>T - Mar 24</td>
<td>The Verbal Code</td>
<td>Ch 7</td>
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<td>Student presentation</td>
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<td>Film – Arranged</td>
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<td>R - Mar 26</td>
<td>The Verbal Code</td>
<td>Ch 7</td>
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<td>Film – Arranged</td>
<td>Additional readings, Samovar</td>
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<td>T - Mar 31</td>
<td>The Nonverbal Code</td>
<td>Ch 8</td>
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<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<td>R – Apr 02</td>
<td><strong>Easter Break</strong></td>
<td>Ch 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>T - Apr 07</td>
<td>The Nonverbal Code</td>
<td>Ch 8</td>
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<td>Film – A World of Gestures</td>
<td>Additional readings</td>
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<td>R - Apr 09</td>
<td>Developing Intercultural Relationships</td>
<td>Ch 09</td>
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<td>Additional readings</td>
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<td><strong>Interview Transcript Due</strong></td>
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<td>T - Apr 14</td>
<td>Developing Intercultural Relationships</td>
<td>Ch 09</td>
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<td>Student Presentation</td>
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<td>R - Apr 16</td>
<td>Intercultural Conflict</td>
<td>Ch 10</td>
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<td>Lecture on Chap 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>T - Apr 21</td>
<td>Intercultural Communication in Organization</td>
<td>Ch 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>R - Apr 23</td>
<td>Intercultural Communication in Organization</td>
<td>Ch 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T - Apr 28</td>
<td>Acculturation &amp; Culture Shock</td>
<td>Ch 12</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Transitions: Simulation Barnga</td>
<td>Simulation activity</td>
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<td>R - Apr 30</td>
<td>Intercultural Competence</td>
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| T – May 05 | Final Presentations
               Final paper Due |
| R - May 07 | Final Presentations           |

**May 12, Thursday, Final Exam, 1-3 pm, in this classroom**