

Mgt 216-10
CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT
Fall 2008

DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the variety of issues and opportunities that arise when we take action (i.e., leading, managing, being a member, following) outside our own culture. Our credibility and effectiveness are always to some extent "culture-bound." Outside our native culture, our attitudes and actions do not necessarily mean the same thing that they do inside our native culture. Emphasis in this course will be on personal experiences and interpretations. However, we shall also discuss the culture of organizations and academic disciplines. Extensive use will be made of student experiences and research.

OBJECTIVES

1. To consider the nature of intercultural communication
2. To learn to think across cultural differences
3. To experiment with different ways of acting in cross-cultural situations
4. To reflect on the cultural foundations of economic systems and of organizational practices

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The principal requirements for the course are three individual papers, a group project, and class participation.

- A. The individual papers will be about three double-spaced type-written pages and will be turned in during the early and middle part of the semester. The papers can be on any topic related to cross-cultural management. Each paper should contain your name, the course number, the date,

and a title for the paper. Papers should make use of your personal experiences, should refer to the text or other reference material, and should discuss several levels of analysis (not just observations, but also explanations, and basic assumptions). Each paper is 10 percent of the grade. A good structure for the papers is problem-solving. That is, identify a cultural problem such as miscommunication or misunderstanding. Find the source of the problem in different conceptions, values, or assumptions. Speculate on the origin of the different conceptions in history, religion, geography, etc. Indicate how misunderstanding was or could be overcome or diminished.

Here are two examples of possible paper topics:

1. An anecdote from your personal experience involving increased cultural awareness. If you are from another country, what were your impressions upon arriving in the U.S.? Have you had an experience of miscommunication with a person from another country? Describe how an activity is performed differently in two countries or corporations. How would people explain why they do what they do?

2. A cultural conflict or a cultural change in a corporation or agency. How did different groups perceive the change and/or act to sustain their view of what is appropriate? Describe a problem of advertising in a foreign country, of managing in a foreign country, or of change in your work place.

B. Groups of three or four students will agree on a project, one that will improve the functioning of some organization. At the end of the semester the group will submit a final report consisting of two parts -- one part describing what was done and one part describing cultural differences that were encountered during the process of working on the project. The cultural differences may be observed within the client group, between the client group and the student group, within the student group, or some or all of these. The group will describe both parts of the project to the class at the end of the semester. Both a written report and an evaluation form will be submitted to the client. The project is 50 percent of the grade.

C. Class participation is encouraged. Participating in class discussions will raise your grade but not lower it. The instructor understands that some students are hesitant to talk in class, sometimes because they feel that their English is not good enough. However, "management" is among other things the ability to express oneself, and "cross-cultural management" often involves expressing oneself under conditions where one feels very unsure of one's ability to communicate effectively.

In teams of two, students will lead a discussion of the readings for that week during part of the class. These presentations offer students an opportunity to lead a discussion of cross-cultural issues related to management. Presentations are 10 percent of the grade.

D. Participation in email discussions with members of the class. Participation in Blackboard discussions is 10 percent of the grade. Email can also be helpful in conducting the group project.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Moran, R., P. Harris, and S. Moran. *Managing Cultural Differences*. Gulf Publishing Co., Seventh Edition, 2007.

Trompenaars, Fons and C. H. Turner. *Riding the Waves of Culture*. McGraw-Hill, Second Edition, 1998.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Harrison, Lawrence E. and Samuel P. Huntington (eds.). *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. Basic Books, 2000.

Tannen, Deborah. *You Just Don't Understand*. Ballantine, 1986.

Class notes are available at www.gwu.edu/~umpleby/mgt216

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Introduction and course overview
Syllabus and course requirements
What is culture and why is it important? How do people react to cultural differences?
Going International, Part 2
Lawrence Harrison, "Why Culture Matters," in *Culture Matters*
2. Trompenaars, Ch. 1-4
Umpleby, "Comparing Conceptual Systems"
Ways of describing cultural differences
The historical origins of beliefs and values
Come to class with a project idea, form into groups
3. Trompenaars, Ch. 5-8
Umpleby, "Policy Implications of Lefebvre's Two Systems of Ethical Cognition"
Umpleby, "The Language of Negotiating: East and West"
Action chains
First paper due, a personal cross-cultural experience
4. Trompenaars, Ch. 9-12
Woodward and Lord, "Moral Education: Kohlberg's Theory"
Measuring cultural development
5. Trompenaars, Ch. 13-15 and Appendices
Robert Edgerton, "Traditional Beliefs and Practices – Are Some Better than Others?"
Culture Matters
Kohlberg, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr.

- Are some societies better than others?
Relativism vs. development
Respect cultural differences vs. stages of development
One page description of group project is due
6. Tannen, whole book
Gender differences
The possibility of an international subculture
Second paper due, an example of cultural differences
 7. Moran, Harris and Moran, Chapters 1-2
Hofstede's dimensions
Body language
The culture of poverty
Umpleby and Oyler, "A Global Strategy for Human Development: The Work of the Institute of Cultural Affairs"
 8. Moran, Harris and Moran, Chapters 3-4
Negotiation
Knowledge culture
Participatory Strategic Planning and the Technology of Participation
Change in corporate culture: the example of quality improvement
Third paper due
 9. Moran, Harris and Moran, Chapters 5-6
Organizational cultures, mergers and acquisitions
Women as leaders
Managing for cross-cultural effectiveness
Umpleby, "The Scientific Revolution in Demography"
Reconciling differences among professional subcultures
Interim oral reports of group projects
 10. Moran, Harris and Moran, Chapters 7-8
Globalization and diversity
Ethics and culture
Managing diversity in the global work culture
Ronald Inglehart, "Culture and Democracy" in *Culture Matters*
Lawrence Harrison, Progress-prone and progress resistant cultures (table)
Lawrence Harrison, "Promoting Progressive Cultural Change" in *Culture Matters*
 11. Moran, Harris and Moran, Chapters 9-10
Conflict and synergy
Protocol abroad
Measuring cultural differences: the Associated Group Analysis Method
 12. Moran, Harris and Moran, Chapters 11-13

Doing business in the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia
Belief systems as regulators of society
Umpleby, "Religion and Ideology"

13. Moran, Harris and Moran, Chapters 14-16
Doing business in Europe, Africa and North America
When to challenge perceived error and when not to
Why some cultures challenge more than others
Two strategies for social change: Europe and the US
Umpleby, "The Design of Intellectual Movements"

14. Student project reports

15. Student project reports

SAMPLE