UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Cross-Cultural Management and Communication

2627-2-F6303M016

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding
The main objective of the Cross Cultural management and communication course is to allow students to deeply understand what it takes to “take perspective” of a different cultural viewpoint.
applying knowledge and understanding
Another objective of the course is to have students analyze communication situations with the provided tools of observation, allowing them to exercise intercultural competence within an operational context.
Making Judgements
The student will be able to develop critical and informed autonomy in understanding and managing intercultural communication dynamics, evaluating situations of cultural complexity and conflict. They will apply theoretical and practical models of intercultural analysis to formulate effective ethical and strategic decisions in multicultural organizational contexts, taking into account values, communication styles, and ethical implications.
Communication Skills
The student will acquire advanced communication skills to effectively interact in multicultural contexts within organizations, adopting strategies that facilitate inclusion, intercultural negotiation, and conflict resolution. They will be able to adjust their communication style according to the cultural specificities of interlocutors, presenting ideas and projects with clarity and cultural sensitivity.
Learning skills
The tools provided during the course provide an excellent foundation for building a thoughtful experience of intercultural encounters and diversity management in organizations throughout a professional career.

Contents

The Intercultural Communication course will provide students with basic concepts of intercultural communication and some tools of communication analysis in order to make people aware of their cultural context, a necessary step to positively relate to other cultures with intercultural competence. Discussion and application of the tools through case studies and exercises will offer a deeper knowledge of intercultural communication theories, practices and

problems relative to the specificity of intercultural research within the domain of profit and not for profit organization, health and educational contexts. In the second part of the course attention will be given to some essential themes of negotiation dealing both with face to face interactions and with remote working of teams. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging will be a transversal theme of the entire course.

Detailed program

The course will tackle most well known models and theories of intercultural communication developed by scholars from different backgrounds and nationalities who have consolidated their careers mostly in Northern Europe and in North America. The adopted epistemological perspective of the course is a constructivist one. In order to become aware of one's own culture/s, students will learn to recognize communication styles, assumptions and values, conflict and perceptual styles. Individuals will learn to learn about and from other cultures through a subjective perspective highlighted by this approach. Different models of analysis and problem solving in complex multicultural situations will be presented and discussed with students. Particular attention will be given to communication in the context of health behaviors in local development contexts, the role of change agents, of private/public dynamics, and the ethical implications of decision-making in intercultural situations. An important topic of the course is also the history and current perspectives on diversity, equity and inclusion actions and programs, aiming to prepare Mages professionals to add competence in managing cultural diversity to their profile. Management applications in multicultural contexts will be examined through expert guest lectures and classroom case study discussions.

Prerequisites

Students are expected to be familiar with basic sociological concepts about culture and to speak International English.

Teaching methods

Teaching methods are very interactive and see the direct involvement of students in exercises and group discussions completing theoretical presentations. For this reason, participation and attdance to classes is very important and encouraged.
Teaching consists of a lecture part consisting of lectures and seminar activities on specific topics to the extent of 50%; the remaining 50% is developed as interactive teaching.
Around 10% of the classes will involve remote lessons and individual readings with sessions of Q/A and tests.

Class exercises include:

- facilitations on how to create third virtual cultures (i.e. team buidling processes)
- intentional creation of sensitivity experience for individuals and organizations (with examples from corporate training)
- Ideation of new interventions for inclusion (project work)as long as there's a minimum of work experience in the class
- re-engineering of services for the promotion of diversity (exercises of organizational development)

Assessment methods

The exam will be an oral interview. Attending students will have the opportunity to have intermediate assessments. The course slides are to be considered as additional material to support the work done in the classroom with the lecturer.
The reading of the texts is essential for taking the exam.
Class participation is considered to be a positive and important factor for a successul result. Classes are usually highly international thus providing the perfect intercultural lab.
Ongoing Assessment
The course includes a number of short individual and group assignments completed throughout the semester. These assignments are not individually graded but contribute to the student's learning portfolio and provide opportunities for discussion and feedback during class.
The examination consists of an oral interview, which provides an opportunity to interact with the student in order to assess their critical understanding of the course topics and their ability to connect theoretical concepts with practical applications.
The final grade is based on the overall performance across the different assessment components and is awarded according to the following scale:
18: Barely sufficient knowledge; minimal application and interpretation skills.
19–22: Satisfactory knowledge of the fundamental concepts, with some uncertainty in their application.
23–26: Good knowledge of the subject matter; sound application skills with minor inaccuracies.
27–30: Strong knowledge of the subject; good command of the content and well-developed critical thinking skills.
30 cum laude: Excellent and comprehensive knowledge; complete mastery of the subject matter and outstanding use of academic and professional language.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Bennett, M. (2013) Basic concepts of intercultural communication: Paradigms, principles, & practices. Intercultural Press, Boston USA.

Dumetz J. at Al. (2012) Cross-cultural management textbook: Lessons from the world leading experts in cross-cultural management (English edition) eBook ISBN 978-1-62346-247-5
Castiglioni I., Grossi A. A., (2025). Is there a space for diversity in the Italian Welfare System? The case of DEI in organ donation and transplantation and minority communities in Genkova, P. et Al. (eds.), Handbook of Diversity Competence: European perspectives, (pp. 445-458) Springer, Cham, Switzerland, OPEN ACCESS.

Bennett, M. (2024). Constructing the capacity for viable multicultural organizations. In J. Wieland, S. Linder, J. Geraldo Schwengber, & A. Zicari (Eds.), Cooperation in value-creating networks: Relational perspectives on governing social and economic value creation in the 21stcentury (pp 147-164). Springer.

Further readings will be provided during the course for attending students.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES