

Intercultural Encounters

Summary

Name of Discipline:	Intercultural Encounters
Teacher(s):	Székesdi Levente PhD (lecture), Gál Katalin (lecture), Varga Lilla-Zsuzsanna (seminar)
Contact(s):	szekedi.levente@partium.ro katalin.gal@partium.ro varga-lilla@partium.ro
Weekly Hours (course + seminar/lab/practice):	Lecture (2) + Seminar (2)
Credits:	10
Language of Instruction:	English
Year of Study (recommended):	At least year 2 BA, or any year in MA

Prerequisites

The course can be taken by the students of any specialisation, as it offers a wide range of general competences and knowledge, which can be useful in several fields. As the discipline includes various practical activities, discussions and assignments, students should have good communication skills in English.

Course Content

Abstract

The course explores the complex dynamics of interaction among diverse cultural groups, focusing on the development of intercultural competence essential for navigating today's globalised world. Through a multidisciplinary approach, students will examine key concepts such as interculturalism, multiculturalism, cultural heritage, and diversity, while learning effective communication strategies. The course will analyse the aspects and the role of cultural heritage in shaping identities, as well as the ways in which cultural backgrounds influence worldviews, behaviours, and values. By engaging in both theoretical studies and practical exercises, students will gain insight into their own cultural biases and develop empathy and respect for others' perspectives. Students will apply their knowledge through case studies, group discussions, and projects that promote awareness, understanding, and skills essential for meaningful intercultural interactions in professional and personal contexts.

Topics

Week	Topic
Week 1	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is culture, keywords and key concepts around culture and intercultural encounter • the role of culture and intercultural encounter in the life of the individual and the community • debate: the origins of culture is biological or learned?
Week 2	What is interculturalism? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key concepts on interculturalism: what does sociology, social politics, demography, social psychology, communication sciences and other disciplines have to say about it? • situational and role-playing games
Week 3	Presentation week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students' presentations about one dimension of their cultural heritage • discussion, experience and knowledge exchange based on the presentations
Week 4	Navigating the (inter)cultural space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key concepts and theories on stereotypes and stigmatisation • the cultural melting pot and global village • social identity theory
Week 5	Diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • life as minority and majority • subcultures • cultural hegemony
Week 6	Multiple religions in a secular Europe
Week 7	Multicultural heritage in Romania, Transylvania, Oradea
Week 8	Thematic city tour: Oradea's built heritage
Week 9	Intercultural communication 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbal and non-verbal communication • the relation between language and culture, how language can shape one's worldview
Week 10	Intercultural communication 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multilingualism, bilingualism and role of English • the challenges of communicating in an intercultural space
Week 11	Living (and learning) abroad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural shock, phases and consequences • adaptation and cultural identity • discussion: sharing personal experiences, e.g. accommodating to a new place, meeting new people, using another language instead of one's mother tongue etc.
Week 12	Intercultural competences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Intercultural Interaction Competence (ICIC) • the concept of cultural intelligence

Week	Topic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> situational and role-playing games
Week 13	Exam presentations
Week 14	Exam presentations

Learning Outcomes

During the completion of the course, the students will develop numerous interpersonal skills that will help them in various situations in their personal and professional life, such as:

- Intercultural communication skills
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity
- Critical thinking skills
- Collaborative skills
- Adaptability, open-mindedness and so on.

Bibliography

1. Nakayama, T. K., & Halualani, R. T. (2023). *The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
2. Supheert, R., Cascio, G., & ten Thije, J. D. (Eds.). (2022a). *The Riches of Intercultural Communication: Volume 1: Interactive, Contrastive, and Cultural Representational Approaches* (Vol. 37). Brill.
3. Supheert, R., Cascio, G., & ten Thije, J. D. (Eds.). (2022b). *The Riches of Intercultural Communication. Volume 2: Multilingual and Intercultural Competences Approaches* (Vol. 38). Brill.
4. Kowalski, S. (2023). *Cultural Sensitivity Training: Developing the Basis for Effective Intercultural Communication*. Econcise Publishing.

Videos:

5. Klien, S. (University of Missouri) (2020). *Intercultural Communication*. Youtube, link: <https://youtu.be/RXwxg-6dUbE>
6. Lewinski, D. (MacEwan University) (2021). *Intercultural Communication Skills*. Youtube, link: https://youtu.be/QJoXyo_eX44
7. Riccardi, P. (TEDx Talks) (2014). *Cross cultural communication*. Youtube, link: <https://youtu.be/YMyofREc5Jk>
8. Merschdorf, H. (TEDx Talks) (2022). *The surprising paradox of intercultural communication*. Youtube, link: <https://youtu.be/JzJNA-3b6NA>.

Assessment

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

- 20% active class participation: debating, asking questions, sharing ideas and experiences during the semester.
- 30% presentation about cultural heritage (Week 3): each student will present shortly one dimension of their own cultural heritage.

- 50% exam presentation (Week 13-14): each student will present a national minority living in the student's home country. The criteria is based on the topics discussed during the semester.

Requirements to Pass

- Minimum 50% class attendance
- All assignments must be completed, and should get at least a 5/10.