Intercultural Business Communication

Course Objective
The course is designed to help students understand the main cultural issues that must be taken into account when doing business in a multicultural setting. To this end, the course provides students with a basic understanding of the invisible cultural differences in values and norms, communication patterns, way of thinking, negotiation strategies and management styles. Besides this, this course prepares students to be ready for cultural differences or cultural conflicts they will encounter when working with people from different cultures in their future so that students will learn how to communicate with people from different countries, how to adapt to different cultural environments, how to do business in a new culture, how to avoid, diagnose and resolve cultural conflicts in the workplace. Therefore the major objective of this course is to develop students’ intercultural communication competence, which is a required skill for all professionals in the 21st century.

This is a case and interaction - oriented course with examples and cases primarily from the instructor’s hands-on experience as an intercultural researcher, trainer and consultant for global companies, like Media Markt failure in China, Best Buy failure in China, Geely-Volvo acquisition, Shanghai Auto acquisition of Korea Ssangyong motors, Lenovo- IBMPC acquisition, TCL acquisition failure, Daimler Chrysler acquisition, etc.

Required Course books
Intercultural Business Communication
Suggested Books:
Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace by Iris Varner and Linda Beamer
Dynamics of Intercultural Communication: Carley Dodd
Intercultural Competence: Myron Lustig

Class Instruction and Requirements:
Students are expected to complete required readings, participate in discussion, and complete projects. Different views, comparative study or personal experience is highly valued.
For each class meeting, lectures only serve as an introduction to students’ discussion and therefore students are expected to apply their understanding and learning into case study and role play.

Grading Scale:
Attendance 20
Participation 20
Project presentation 20
Final project 40

Schedule

Week 1
Introduction to the course
Learning how to adapt to a new culture
Understanding how cultural conflicts occur
Different Communication Style and different way of thinking
Hall’s high cultural context and low cultural context

Week 2
Geely-Volvo acquisition: problems and solution
Discussion: What is the main problem Geely-Volvo is facing
Solution: What to be done right now

Week 3
Global Merger and Acquisition
Why most global mergers fail
Analyse pre-merger and post-merger
Cultural synergy in post-merger
Cross-border management

Discussion: What’s wrong with them?
   What is the solution?

Week 4
Understanding Cultural Differences (1)
Four Culture Dimensions

Week 5
Understanding Cultural Differences (2)
Monochromic / Polychronic Time Orientation
Different Ways of Thinking

Week 6
Chinese Culture: Face and People’s behaviors
Guanxi and its business culture
Understand Chinese communication style in the workplace
Intercultural Conflicts Management
How intercultural conflicts occur
How to avoid and resolve them
Week 7
Verbal and Nonverbal Communication
Body Language/ Gestures
Conversational Distance

Week 8
Building global teamwork
Understand team and group and their cultures
Intercultural team and cultural differences
Intercultural negotiation and cultural differences

Week 9 Team project presentation

Week 10 Team project presentation