

# Course Syllabus and Reading List

Instructor: Ee Lin Lee  
COMM 325

Western Washington University

**COMM 325 Intercultural Communication Syllabus**

Spring 2014

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**Instructor:** Dr. Ee Lin Lee

## Course Description and Objectives

This course focuses on the dynamics of culture and communication. Specifically, this course is designed to explore the inextricably link between the dominant power system and everyday communication. The course is what may be called culture general in nature, meaning that most of the major concepts and ideas discussed have relevance regardless of the cultures involved in the interaction. You will be challenged to move beyond your comfort zone and to learn to understand multiple perspectives of controversial issues that may involve difficult moral choices. The general goal of this course is to help you increase your understanding of how culture influences the communication process within and between different cultural groups. The specific course objectives are:

1. To introduce major “sensitizing concepts” in the field of intercultural communication.
2. To examine the relationship between communication and culture.
3. To gain a better understanding of how culture influences your own life.
4. To identify and understand various challenges inherent in intercultural communication and explore ways to productively meet these challenges.
5. To explore characteristics of communication among specific cultural communities.
6. To develop your awareness and critical thinking of issues encompassing human communicative similarities and differences, including racial justice issues.
7. To promote inclusive communication where members of traditionally oppressed groups can engage in an open dialogue without feeling afraid, hurt, resentful, ashamed, angry, and/or defensive.

An underlying theme of this class is reflected in this quote written by the founding father of intercultural communication, Edward T. Hall (1998, p. 59): *Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants . . . the ultimate purpose of the study of culture is not so much the understanding of foreign cultures as much as the light that the study sheds on our own.*

Detailed objectives of this course that support the Communication Department mission, programmatic goals, and programmatic learning objectives are entailed in Appendix A of this syllabus.

## Course Resources

Hall, B. ‘J’ (2005). *Among cultures: The challenge of communication*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. ISBN: 0534642489

Praso, S. (2006). *The Asian mystique: Dragon ladies, geisha girls, and our fantasies of the exotic*. NY: Public Affairs. ISBN: 1586483946

Additional readings and course materials are available on the course Canvas.

## Course Policies

**Attendance and Participation.** I suggest that you only miss class if you absolutely have to. Discussion, individual work, in-class exercises, out-of-class applications, lectures, and small group collaboration constitute a major portion of the learning experience in this course. Your experiences and contributions create your course accomplishments. Therefore, missed classes cannot fully be *recovered* by reading the text or borrowing class notes. Because of the collaborative emphasis, any absence interferes with your own and others’ performance. Poor attendance, tardiness, and/or early departures impact your final course grade (see the participation and professionalism evaluation rubric on the course Canvas). Please arrive on time to class and stay for the entire class period. Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive. I will revise the policies for all class members when absences and tardiness adversely affect class atmosphere. If you register late, whether or not you were on the Registrar’s waitlist, any classes missed will be counted as absences. In cases where assignments were due before you were registered, I will not be able to give you exceptional treatment by extending deadlines or let you do make-up works. I require enrolled students who skip the 1<sup>st</sup> and/or the 2<sup>nd</sup> class(es) to withdraw from the course, since they are eligible students seeking enrollment in this course.

You will not be accommodated for missed assignment deadlines if you do not alert me to your condition and absences. If you have medical or family emergency that affects your participation in class activities, notify me as soon as you are able to, preferably in advance of the missed class, to explain the circumstances. When this is done in a timely manner, such absences will be excused and may not impact your assignment grade, unless I have reasons to doubt your honesty and integrity. Contacting me well after an absence and claiming to have some sort of medical or family issues earlier in the quarter will not be accepted. I may ask you to support your absence(s) by official documentation; please consult with me. I do not require you to disclose the details of your personal situation to me; if I ask for official documentation in this situation, you can contact the Office of Student Life, x3706, VU 506. Students who participate in WWU-sponsored activities (e.g., debating contests, musical or theatrical performances, or intercollegiate athletic competition) are responsible for obtaining and submitting proper documentation. Your personal travel plans and job schedules that affect your attendance are not considered valid excuses for absenting yourself from class activities that are formally graded.

**Professionalism.** Since this class will be discussion driven, you are to make quality contributions by listening to and with others, offering honest and constructive criticism, investing effort in graded and non-graded assignments, participating in class activities, and asking appropriate and helpful questions, and integrating readings into discussion. Please do not assume that I understand your concerns without you communicating them to me. Ask if you need help, do not clearly understand assignments, or have other questions or concerns. Know that you are not a small part of this class. Each student has the right to learn, as well as the responsibility not to deprive others of their right to learn. Therefore, you are expected to show courtesy as required in a college-level classroom.

Unless I instruct you to do so, our communication in teaching and learning during class time does not involve the use of your individual, personal electronic devices (unless you have documented physical needs, see the ADA section in this syllabus). Therefore, turn off your electronic devices before I start class. If you use laptops to take notes during class time, you are required to move to a designated area in the classroom if you distract your classmates and/or me. Depending on the activity, I may impose the no-laptop rule in certain class sessions. Electronic devices are wonderful learning tools, but also great distractions to other class members and the professor. Please remember that single disruptive act of anyone affects everyone else in the classroom and lessens the effective use of everyone else's valuable time.

Each class member deserves a fair learning opportunity without being disrupted by other students' misdemeanors that impede the class learning. Show respect to all class members, both your professor and your peers. Avoid unnecessary disruptions during class, such as private conversations, reading newspapers, and doing work for other classes. Be attentive to and participate in lectures and classroom activities. Please do not talk simultaneously while lecture is in session or when other students ask questions or make comments. Wait until class is completely over before putting your materials away in your backpack, standing up, or talking to your peers. Surfing online, checking e-mails, texting, and using social networking sites should be done at your own time, not in the classroom

Students who violate the professionalism policy stated will be asked to leave the classroom. Each unprofessional behavior will adversely affect your final course grade. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the participation and professionalism evaluation rubric on the course Canvas. If you visit me or the teaching assistant during my office hours, please turn off your electronic devices. I expect you to behave professionally as a student who is enrolled in the course, including when you communicate with me via e-mails and/or phone calls.

**E-mail Etiquette.** Please do not send me e-mail messages regarding issues that should be dealt with in person (e.g., asking me to read and critique drafts of your work, or requesting me to explain and send you lecture materials or quizzes you have missed). Do not expect my e-mail responses immediately; I usually respond to student e-mails during my office hours. ***I do not finish reading or reply to e-mail messages that are poorly written or disrespectful.*** You are expected to write as you would in any professional correspondence. My basic principle about e-mail communication as written form of communication is that if it is not worth the writer's time to send a thoughtful message, then it is not worth my time to read and reply to it. Please include a salutation so that it is clear to me that the message is not junk mail and deleted. When appropriate, I may ask my student assistant to reply to you if you ask me general questions regarding policies and/or matters that are already stated in the syllabus and related course documents posted on Canvas. The best way to reach me is through my WWU e-mail, not Canvas chat.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement.** If you have documented physical, sensory, cognitive, learning, and/or psychiatric disabilities that affect your performance in this course, please let me know by the 3<sup>rd</sup> class meeting. To request disability accommodation, contact the Disability Resources for Students, x3083, <http://www.wvu.edu/depts/drs/>

**Make-up Works and Incompletes.** The nature of assignments used in the class renders make-up work impractical. Therefore, plan to prepare and submit your work on time. Details regarding requesting for and receiving an incomplete grade (K) are available in WWU Catalog.

**Academic Integrity.** I do not tolerate academic dishonesty. I assume any conversation between/among students during the exam as a violation of academic integrity policy (i.e., cheating). If you need to talk during the exam, approach me. Any use of resources and electronics during exams will *not* be permitted and is considered a violation of the academic integrity policy, unless otherwise instructed. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the university's policy regarding academic honesty (see Appendix D in WWU Catalog). **All course works are individual assignments, unless otherwise stated.** Discussing and sharing answers for class assignments without my written permission constitutes plagiarism. Please talk to me before working on the assignments if you are unsure of behaviors that may be considered plagiarism.

**Grade Records.** Grades posted on the course Canvas are for instant communication purposes; they are not comprehensive. You are responsible for keeping track of your grades. Please do not e-mail or phone me to ask about your grades for individual assignments. I will return all graded items, except the exams, to you in class or otherwise designated. Your final grade will be available on Web4U after noon on the Tuesday following final exam week.

**Assignment Submissions.** All papers must be submitted in person as hard copies at the start of class on the indicated due date, unless otherwise instructed. No other forms or electronic versions (e.g., e-mail attachments or thumbdrives) will be accepted. I also do not accept papers that are slipped under my office door or tacked to the memo board next to my office door. Papers handed in after all class papers are collected at the beginning of the class are considered late. See each assignment evaluation criteria and/or description regarding late submissions.

In cases where you must miss a class, submit your papers as hard copies prior to the due date. If an emergency and unpredictable medical, funereal, or law-related incident impedes your ability to submit a paper on time, you must have written, official documentation of the incident (see the Attendance section for documentation requirement). All documentation must be submitted together with your work for consideration. I will be glad to give feedback on drafts if you visit me during my office hours at least 3 business days before the deadline; I will accept *only* hard copies that follow the writing guidelines. Please do not e-mail me your drafts. Rewriting graded assignments is not an option.

**Late Assignments.** The tentative course schedule details assignment deadlines, and I have posted the schedule on Canvas before the first day of class. Please plan accordingly. I do not accept late assignments. You can always submit your assignments prior to the due date. Also see each assignment regarding consequences of late submissions. Technology (i.e., computer- and/or printer-related) and transportation issues, be they personal, public, and/or the university's, are no justification for late assignments. Please communicate with me prior to the deadline if you have a medical or a family emergency (see the Attendance section in this syllabus).

**Assignment Returns.** I will return all graded items, except exams and online exercises, to you in class or otherwise designated. You are responsible for retrieving your critiqued and/or graded assignments from me during my office hours if you were absent on days I return the assignments. When the quarter is over, I will keep your graded assignments until the end of the following quarter (not counting summer quarter) and will shred them after that. You are welcomed to obtain your graded assignments from me during my office hours. Alternatively, I will mail your assignments to you provided that you give me a self-addressed, stamped envelope together with your final paper submission. You are responsible for ensuring you include sufficient postage. Be informed that I will not be responsible for any missing items once I mail your paper.

**Requests for Reevaluation.** The burden of proof in any disagreement over evaluation of student performance rests with the student. If you desire reevaluation of a grade for an assignment, an activity, or the quiz, you must wait 24 hours before you submit your rationale in writing. The 24-hour cooling off period will allow you time to re-read the grading comments and to assess your performance. Your request should identify the specific change requested and provide a reasoned argument and evidence (e.g., photocopies of cited sources) in support of that change. Submit your request in a hardcopy, signed formal letter. Any request for reevaluation must be made within 5 business days of receiving the original evaluation. After you have received your final grade and would like to talk to me about your grade, you will see me during my office hours in the following quarter. You must give me all necessary documents, including a comprehensive grade record containing your individual assignment scores and all assignments I have graded. E-mail me ahead and follow all instructions that I give you. I am not opposed to re-evaluating your grade. Of course, a reevaluation may increase or decrease your scores, since I will scrutinize all submitted details, in addition to your original assignment.

**Grading of Course Assignments.** Your grade in the course will depend on the amount of work you wish to complete and will be largely determined by the depth you are willing to engage the material. Skipping classes do not allow you to learn what you can. Your learning in this class is intricately complicated if you do not actually attend and participate in the class. I teach to students who are ready or want to engage in meaningful learning in their university education. I am here to support your learning if you are here to learn and maintain a positive attitude toward learning. Your work ethics impact your learning and your grade in this class. WWU has established the credit load policy in which each hour in a course requires at least 2 additional hours of study (see the University catalog). Prepare to maintain a good, reliable work ethics to earn your desired grade. Prioritizing your life and managing your time is your sole responsibility. **Attention to details is key to success in this course.**

You must score 100% on the course syllabus and policies quiz by the start of class on the 3rd class meeting for all activities to be evaluated by the instructor. The following chart lists the assignments you must complete for the grade you can earn. Late submission, partial attendance, and/or absence during any activity constitute an unsatisfactory grade.

#### **Grade “A”**

- Fully meet the criteria of either all 4 book critique and discussion assignments—both written work and oral participation, or research project.
- Fully meet the criteria of all 3 video observation assignments—both written work and oral participation.
- Fully meet the criteria of all 4 discussion session assignments—both written work and oral participation.
- Score at least 78% in both exams.
- \*Score within the designated range of percentages for participation and professionalism, so that your final course grade will not be affected.

#### **Grade “C”**

- Fully meet the criteria of all 4 discussion session assignments—both written work and oral participation.
- Score at least 78% in both exams.
- Score at least 83% in all Prasso's quizzes.
- \*Score within the designated range of percentages for participation and professionalism, so that your final course grade will not be affected.

#### **Grade “B”**

- Fully meet the criteria of all 3 video observation assignments—both written work and oral participation.
- Fully meet the criteria of all 4 discussion session assignments—both written work and oral participation.
- Score at least 78% in both exams.
- Score at least 83% in all Prasso's quizzes.
- \*Score within the designated range of percentages for participation and professionalism, so that your final course grade will not be affected.

#### **Grade “D”**

- Score at least 78% in both exams.
- Score at least 83% in all Prasso's quizzes.
- \*Score within the designated range of percentages for participation and professionalism, so that your final course grade will not be affected.

An “F” grade will be given if students completing anything less than the above requirements.

**Course Assignments.** Detailed descriptions and associated evaluation criteria for course assignments are posted on Canvas. I may make changes on the assignments as necessary. Depending on student performance, I may distribute handouts or post additional materials on Canvas for the assignments. If you choose not to attend class, you are still responsible for the material distributed or assigned, and changes made during class time. I strongly suggest you keep all versions of your work, including electronic files, hardcopies, graded and non-graded papers, until you have received your final course grade. **You need to keep track of assignment changes and deadlines.**

You have 1 “free” chance to improve on an “unsatisfactory” *written* assignment during the quarter; see the grading rubric for each assignment. You can use the 1 “free” chance to improve the written work (i.e., excludes oral participation) of following assignments: (a) research project, (b) video observation, and (c) discussion session. Follow all instructions, including submitting all required documents, for grading consideration. Since I cannot “recover” in-class discussion and any collaboration that entails collective effort, you can choose to receive a deduction of ½ letter grade from your final course grade (per assignment) or arrange with me to complete a make-up service-learning assignment (see the associated grading rubric). You must submit all revised assignments within 5 business days or by the deadline I impose after the grade is announced. Your “free” chance does not include the violation of writing guidelines detailed below.

Course assignments writing guidelines. Assignments that violate any of the following writing guidelines will result in a deduction of ½ letter grade from your final course grade. Course assignments submitted must be **typed and printed in a clear, readable format on white papers**. Unless otherwise stated, font type and size for assignments are to be set in **Times New Roman, 12**. When you submit more than 1 page, please **staple** your work. *Papers that are loose, paper clipped, dog-eared, or held together by some other mechanism that is not a staple will result in a deduction of ½ letter grade from your final course grade.* **Type or write your name** on your assignment. This is a 300-level communication course, and I expect professionalism in university-level student works. Please read and follow all instructions.

**Course Syllabus and Policies Quiz.** The readings for this quiz are based on the course syllabus, tentative schedule, materials posted on Canvas, and class materials you need to acquire. You will have multiple attempts to take the quiz on Canvas by the deadline specified. Late quizzes will not be accepted. You can submit your quiz prior to the due date. Please allow yourself enough time to take the quiz; **do not wait till you have very little time left.** If you fail to obtain 100% by the deadline, I will ask you to withdraw yourself from the course since you do not meet this basic criterion to continue participating in the course. There are waitlisted and interested students who are seeking enrollment in this course.

**Discussion Sessions Preparation and Participation.** I have scheduled 4 discussion sessions. I will breakdown the class size in order for us to engage in meaningful dialogues. Therefore, I have scheduled 2 days for each discussion session. You will attend 1 day per discussion session. Sign-up for your preferred days on my big, gray memo board (i.e., not my office hours and advising appointment sign-up board). Please ensure you correctly record your selected days. Attending the “wrong” day will decrease your final course grade by  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a letter (e.g., from B to a B-). See Canvas for readings, preparation materials, and evaluation rubric.

**Video Observation Assignment.** I have scheduled 3 video observation sessions. You will attend the video observation session on days you do not attend the discussion session outlined in the previous paragraph; see tentative schedule. The videos must be watched in sequence on the assigned days (see tentative schedule for day and assignment deadlines). The teaching assistant will conduct the session, since I will be running the discussion session in our classroom. You will watch a video, respond to a written exercise conducted in class, prepare for the video discussion session by completing written work, and attend the discussion session for the video on the scheduled days stated in tentative course schedule. I will announce the meeting location and the assignment material. See Canvas for evaluation rubric.

**Research Project.** The quarter-long, progressive research project and activities involved is detailed on Canvas. Expect to write multiple drafts and receive suggestions for revision. See tentative course schedule for deadlines.

**Participation and Professionalism.** You will be graded via participation exercises and your oral participation in class. Your total scores for this assignment may impact your course grade (i.e., maintain, increase, or decrease by  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 full letter grades). See Canvas for the participation and professionalism evaluation. As we progress, I will announce in- and out-of-class exercises that you should complete. I may distribute the exercises in class or post on Canvas. You will be asked to respond to the exercises as preparation for class discussion or post responses on Canvas to engage in discussion. You are responsible for keeping yourself updated when I announce these opportunities. Submitting the exercises without participating in class (incl. partial attendance or absence) will decrease the scores you may earn. Late exercises will not be accepted.

**Exams.** Exams must be taken on the scheduled dates in our classroom or the designated computer lab. Exams may combine closed-ended items (i.e., multiple-choice, true/false, matching), fill-in-the-blank items, and short essays. Please contact the Disability Resources for Students, x3083 for documentation if you cannot take the exam in the specified format. Make-up exams will be allowed in the most extreme cases and only with my permission. You must contact me 7 business days ahead of the exams, and take them 2–3 days before the scheduled dates specified on the tentative course schedule. See me in person and provide me with evidence that I request for my approval. You will be given a different exam (i.e., a different format with different questions) compared to the class. Make-up exams are to be arranged with the Testing Center. You will have to find out procedures involved and make proper arrangements. Visit <http://www.wvu.edu/assess/makeup.shtml> for information and service cost. Call the center (x3080) for scheduling.

Two days are designated for each exam; I label the days as *Time 1* ( $T_1$ ) and *Time 2* ( $T_2$ ) for each exam, respectively (see the tentative course schedule). This means that you have 1 more chance to take the exam if you do not obtain the scores you plan to earn; however, you are restricted to re-taking only the closed-ended items during  $T_2$ . Your mean scores of  $T_1$  and  $T_2$  will replace your old,  $T_1$  scores. If you obtain the desired scores on  $T_1$ , then you will not need to attend  $T_2$ . When you score lower than 40% at Time 1 in any exam, and I deem your inappropriate use of the multiple-attempt format (e.g., to check out the exam questions during  $T_1$ ), you will be considered failing the entire exam, and you will not be allowed to retake the exam. You must obtain an overall scores of at least 78% in Exam 1 and Exam 2, respectively, to be considered meeting all criteria of the assignment. You are not to review the graded  $T_1$  exam on the day  $T_2$  exam is held. Since exams are sensitive matters, you are not allowed to attend  $T_2$  if you choose not to attend  $T_1$ . Giving, taking, or receiving exam questions or answers before, during, and/or after the exam constitute academic dishonesty; see Academic Integrity section of this syllabus. See Canvas for study guides.

**Exam Reviews.** All exam reviews are to be scheduled with the teaching assistant. You may review your current exam as soon as I announce the exam review schedule. **Exam reviews are not answer sessions.** You will bring your textbooks and *hardcopy* notes to make sense of the exam material; no electronics permitted. The purpose of the exam reviews is for you to engage in active learning. Do not ask the TA or me to recite textbook page numbers or lecture dates so that the answers can be given to you. The TA or I will guide you in *thinking about* course concepts, theories, and/or key terms that you are supposed to learn. Unprofessional behavior during the exam review will lower your final course grade by ½ to 1 full letter grade. See Canvas for information; please read the document before attending the review. Exam grade disputes must be completed and resolved within 5 business days. You must see me to get a specific form to fill out; you will be asked to give reasons for your disputes and to support your claims with evidence.

**Quizzes.** Quizzes covering Prasso's chapters are to be completed on the Canvas. The quizzes may combine closed-ended items (i.e., multiple-choice, true/false, matching), fill-in-the-blank items, and short essays. With the exception of open-ended items, you have 3 attempts to take each quiz with the highest scores recorded. See tentative schedule for deadlines.

***This syllabus is subject to change as necessary to adapt to class size, student performance, and unexpected circumstances. See Canvas for the tentative course schedule and frequent updates.***

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**Appendix A. Detailed course objectives.** This course supports the department mission—"To teach communication that nurtures inclusive civil discourse, critical thinking, and cooperative solutions in a diverse world. We provide a strong liberal arts foundation and pathways to applied communication skills." The course also fits the department programmatic goals of:

1. *Knowing*∗:

- a. Students can define communication.
- b. Students can explain major theoretical communication perspectives.
- c. Students can discuss major contexts of human communication.
- d. Students can read and use communication literature.

2. *Thinking*∗:

- a. Students can construct persuasive arguments.
- b. Students can analyze and evaluate others' arguments.
- c. Students can recognize credible information.
- d. Students can reflect on self concepts and behaviors.
- e. Students can appraise appropriateness of their own and other communication behaviors.

3. *Expressing*∗:

- a. Students can analyze and adapt to various audiences and situations in their speaking and writing.
- b. Students can write college-level communication research papers.
- c. Students can use correctly major citation styles, including APA and MLA.

4. *Interacting*∗:

- a. Students can identify and refine their interaction in one or more of the following: interpersonal relationships, problem-solving groups, organizations, intercultural settings.
- b. Students can listen actively across contexts.
- c. Students can cooperate and solve problems in decision-making groups.

5. *Valuing*∗:

- a. Students participate in guided discussions regarding diverse perspectives.
- b. Students partake in guided discussions regarding ethical choices. They recognize the consequences of actions on themselves and varying communities in our complex world.

∗ See the department website for definitions and details.

**COMM 325 Intercultural Communication Reading List for Discussion Sessions**  
Spring 2014

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**Discussion Session #1**

- Martinez, 2002: Learning to see what I was never supposed to see: Becoming Chicana in a White world.
- Dalton, 2012: Failing to see.

**Discussion Session #2**

- McIntosh, 1988: White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies.
- Amirkhan et al.: Reflections on affirmative action goals in psychology admissions
- Plous, 2003: Ten myths about affirmative action

**Discussion Session #3**

- Creating a safe space Questionnaire
- Allen, 2000: Sapphire and Sappho: Allies in authenticity
- Lotter, 2009: Why are all the white kids sitting together?

**Discussion Session #4**

- Southern Poverty Law Center, 2005: Responding to everyday bigotry: Speak up!