

What does culture actually mean? How are cultures different? How do people in different cultures act and communicate? What are the challenges of intercultural communication, particularly when working in international teams? How can we deal with these challenges?

These questions are at the heart of this class we offer each semester. Participants learn to recognize cultural differences in a more nuanced manner, critically assess different explanatory models, and reflect upon their own value systems.

Our class offers a mix of theoretical and experiential learning opportunities (e.g. simulations, role plays, discussions): Intercultural communication and conflict issues are analyzed using case studies and combined with knowledge transfer via interactive workshop oriented techniques, e.g., primarily from the European and North American contexts.

Students in this course will be assessed based on a presentation of selected cross cultural case studies and group projects.

Learning Goals:

- Raise awareness for your own cultural perspective and how you deal with foreign cultures or other people's cultural orientation systems (e.g. behavioral standards, norms, values, prejudices, stereotypes).
- Reflect on what you consider normal as well as your own criteria for evaluating others
- Expand your intercultural knowledge and communication tools

Focus:

The course covers various concepts of culture, cultural value orientations, perception and mental evaluations, our image of self / others, intercultural communication, working in international teams, dealing with stereotypes and everyday racism.

Course Content:

- Culture Definitions
- Cultural Concepts / Metaphors
- Cultural Values / Dimensions
- Self-Perception / Outside Perception
- Adjustment Models
- Stereotypes – Causes, Functions, Strategies for Dealing with them
- Perception Processes
- Communication Styles (e.g., direct / indirect, verbal / non-verbal)
- Working in International Teams
- Conflict Management