Exploring Cultural Diversity:
A Focus on Communication

COURSE IN BRIEF

This directed study course is designed for the student who will be participating in an overseas inter-cultural program. Its objectives are to:

- expand the student's cultural awareness;
- help the student become more tolerant to different values and behaviors; and
- help the student develop basic cross-cultural communication skills.

The course is divided into three separate, but related, study phases. These are identified as the Pre-Travel phase, the Travel phase and the Post-Travel phase. Each of these stages has its own set of required tasks that have been designed not only to familiarize the student with a specific topic relative to his/her travel experience, but to also create a foundation on which to base the next phase of the course.

TEXTBOOK

Purchased from a textbook company:
ISBN: 0-205-35864-0

This textbook is required for this course. You can order this book through online sites such as Amazon.com

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

THREE (3) credits requires satisfactory completion of:

PRE-TRAVEL PHASE

This period should be used for reading, attending orientation sessions, discussing cultural differences and forming educated ideas about your travel culture. In other words, it is the time to create an image or model of the culture you are about to visit.

To do this, satisfactory completion of the following is required.

1. **Review chapters 1, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the textbook** Principles of Intercultural Communication. (See ordering information above.)

2. Develop knowledge of the culture and society of the host country by completing background study of your travel destination as directed in the Pre-Travel Lessons handout, sent to you after you register

3. From your background study, **create a three to five (3-5) page written image of the foreign country you are going to visit.** Using the following list of communicative patterns, write your pre-trip perception/expectation of what you think the travel country is going to be like. You will then evaluate and validate your expectations during the travel phase. It is suggested that you
become familiar with the following list and include as many of the topics (dimensions) as you can in your cultural image.

**Communicative patterns** [Use this list in the image paper described in number 3 above.]

- Space/territorial dimensions
- Dimension of time
- Culture talk/etiquette
- Non-verbal behavior
- Emotions: a cross-cultural view
- Food and drink habits
- Clothes, costume and culture
- Visiting and hospitality
- Friendship customs
- Respect for age
- Religious practices
- Values and attitudes
- Gender roles/restrictions

4. Write the communication patterns in your travel journal.

**Bonus Points**

Keep a linguistic glossary of cultural terms plus linguistic patterns. This could be very useful to you in enlarging your cultural vocabulary and reducing the possibility of confrontation in the future.

**TRAVEL PHASE**

During the pre-travel phase, you have had an opportunity to do a brief background study of the culture you will be visiting. You have also had a chance to take a look at certain communicative patterns and create cultural images that could help you in comparing cultures. You should not assume, however, that accurate learning has taken place just because you have made this study; or, for that matter, just because you are in that foreign culture. Remember, wherever you are, you are a product of your own culture. Perceptions/experiences may cause false conclusions if what is seen/experienced, is not validated.

Your task during the travel phase is to observe, evaluate and validate the customs and cultural patterns of the foreign culture you are visiting. To do this, complete the following items:

1. Referring to the list of communicative patterns given in the pre-travel phase:
   a] Make observations - without interpretations [record only what you observe, without making value judgments];
   b] Evaluate your observations by suggesting what the observations may mean; record the possibilities;
   c] Validate the assumptions . . . eliminate those that are incorrect. You will need to ask questions. Questions should be asked objectively and in a non-confrontational manner; and
d] Adjust your behavior to fit your conclusions. [Record how you have done this.]

2. Complete a comprehensive academic journal which records:
   a] the pre-travel image/perception comparison;
   b] the communicative patterns (topics) listed in this syllabus [you can add to this list if you like];
   c] the process of observing, evaluating, validating and adjusting mentioned above;
   d] other pertinent communicative observations.

Option: certain findings, visual or even audio materials are welcome [pictures, slides, newspaper clippings, etc].

3. Fill in your portion of the University Credit Evaluation Form and give to your leader to complete. (Note: This form must be submitted in order for credit to be awarded. The travel leader may choose to submit the form to the university directly or may have the student submit the completed form. This form should be submitted via postal mail or fax. See General Information below for contact information.)

**POST-TRAVEL PHASE**

After returning home from your travels, write a four to six [4-6] page communicative patterns summary paper which includes:

1. Specific examples of communication adjustments made during your travels [use the records that you produced in your travel journal to support your examples].

2. Compare what communication patterns you expected to what you actually observed. Use what you learned in your textbook and from the communicative patterns list as a guide.

3. Your ideas about the future development of the country visited. Keep in mind your special study interest for this course is cross-cultural communication. Submit online the Journal/Activity Form. You must complete ten of these forms.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Click here for general information on this and all Field Studies courses or go to:

http://outreach.ewu.edu/1500
### COURSE REQUIREMENT OVERVIEW

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<tr>
<th>Work on during:</th>
<th>Required Assignments</th>
<th>3 Credits</th>
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| Pre-Travel                       | Lesson 1  
Historical Timeline                              | ✓         |
| Pre-Travel                       | Lesson 2  
Geography                                          | ✓         |
| Pre-Travel                       | Lesson 3  
Audio-Visual Review                                   | ✓         |
| Pre-Travel                       | Lesson 4  
Addressing Prejudice                                   | ✓         |
| Pre-Travel                       | Book Review  
(One review may be substituted for one workbook lesson) |           |
| Pre-Travel                       | Image/Model Communicative Patterns Paper  
(3 to 5 pages)                                           | ✓         |
| Pre-Travel                       | Academic Journal  
(Post-Travel forms)                                    | ✓         |
| Travel/Post-Travel               | Communicative Patterns Summary Paper  
(4 to 6 pages)                                            | ✓         |
| Post-Travel                      | Linguistic Glossary (Optional)  
(Submission area under Post-travel online)               |           |
| Pre or Post Travel               | University Credit Evaluation Form                       | ✓         |

**NOTE:** Credit will not be granted unless the student successfully completes both the academic and travel phases of the program. Exceptions to the stated course requirements will be granted by EWU only under extenuating circumstances. Refunds will be granted according to official university policy. EWU will make the final determination on matters in question.

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