

AHA Macerata

SYLLABUS

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION/CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Instructor: Prof. Angélica Bonilla

Contact Hrs: 20

Language of Instruction: English

MACERATA, ITALY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will take the cultural integration of the Macerata program one step further, and at the same time it will extend the discussions of the pre-departure orientation, the post-departure orientation and the general meetings. It is meant to convert the frustrations and surprises many students are confronted with during their stay in a foreign culture into a useful learning experience, while at the same time induce those students not so sensitive about cultural differences to reflect on their role and identity abroad (i.e. what it means to be an American in Italy/Europe/South Europe, how to keep one's identity and still adapt, what defines the "foreignness" of the culture one encounters, etc.).

Given the short time available (in relation to the material we wish to cover) we will be concentrating on Italy with a culture-specific rather than a culture-general approach. Experiences taken from the students' daily life in Macerata will constitute the basis for discussions, at the same time emphasizing the general applicability of the concepts and skills they will acquire to any cross-cultural context, be it in the US or in any other foreign situation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

It is thus the aim of the course to lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the interstitial spaces and negotiated identities produced by cross-cultural encounters. This should be achieved by combining "academic" knowledge about the Italian culture with a practical emphasis and hands-on experience on location.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The course is designed to offer a theoretical basis for the concept of cross-cultural communication, but utilizes in most respects a very hand-on approach; it will consist of regular class meeting of 90 minutes each. Requirements will include readings as basis and preparation for discussions, assignments intended to insure that the students actively pursue the questions discussed in class and group activities.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

- Attendance and active participation 40%
- Written assignments focused on particular weekly topics 40%
(four papers: one page minimum each). Late papers will be penalized.
- Final take home essay exam. 20 %
The three topics for Final will be based on class discussions.
(Half page minimum for each topic required).

COURSE OUTLINE

Readings, assignments and group activities have been planned to the best of our knowledge at the moment, but they will certainly vary and be supplemented as the course develops and we discover which methods and approaches are best applicable to this particular group and their own experiences.

Session 1

I. Introduction to the Course

- Overview of course organization and expectations.

II. The organization of daily life: meals

- Italian Cuisine: comparing fast and slow food.
- Italian Cuisine: the protagonists.
- Some secrets about *pasta*. Exploring some classic recipes.
- Italian Menu’.

III. Shopping at the supermarket

Readings: Bennet, Milton J., “Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective” in *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*
Althen, Gary, Chapter 21: “Some Helpful Ideas” in *American Ways*

Session 2

I. Main concepts of Cross-Cultural Communication

- Monocultural Communication vs Intercultural Communication
- Assimilation vs Adaptation
- Upper-Case *Culture* and Lower-Case *culture*
- Cultural Shock
- Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity
- D.I.E. method, a way to develop cross-cultural awareness.

II. Non verbal communication. Communication styles

Readings: Althen, Gary, Chapter 8: “Religion” in *American Ways*.

Session 3

I. Believers or Disbelievers, Common Morality

- Parochial Italy and its sacred places.
- What do Italians believe in? What does it mean to have a “national religion”, both personally and politically?
- What role does Catholicism play in Italian life?
- Catholic Church as a center of culture.

II. The organization of community life: calendar

- Holidays as a result of millenary stratification (religious, civic, international)
- Civic symbols: Flag, National Anthem
- The Carnival (Spring semester)

Session 4

I. The Grand Tour

- The long tradition of visiting Italy including famous American Travelers.

- Student / tourist: aspects that make the difference in organizing a trip.

II. Visit the “Museo delle Carrozze” at Palazzo Buonaccorsi.

Readings: Althen, Gary, Chapter 6: “Family life” in *American Ways*
Althen, Gary, Chapter 7: “Education” in *American Ways*

Session 5

I. American and Italian family life style

- The extended Family. The role of Grand parents and relatives in the Italian family.
- The new families and the destiny of marriage.

II. Becoming American or Italian

- The role of educational institutions in the American identity: most important values and patterns.
- Educational institutions and Italian identity.
- How the two formal educational systems are organized and how students are taught and evaluated.

Readings: Althen, Gary, Chapter 20: “Business” in *American Ways*

Session 6

I. “The small firm”, a typical pattern of Italy, and especially of the Marche Region.

- Some basics aspects of the Italian business system.

II. Visit to a small factory

Readings: Kramer Taruschio, Lisa, “*From Manhattan to the Marche: two lives in one*”.
Brenner, Steve, “*How bout some customer service?*”.
Darling, David, “*The Science of Death, the Logic of Reincarnation*”.

Session 7

I. Concepts of Citizenship: Reflections on definitions of civic responsibility, entitlement and expectations of U.S. and Italian citizens.

- How do Americans and Italians view their respective roles as citizens?
- Historic perspectives and practical consequences.

Session 8

I. Society and the Individual: Community and Mobility.

- How do Americans and Italians conceptualize “community”?
- How does mobility affect the individual and the community?

Readings: Althen, Gary, Chapter 11 “Racial and Ethnic Diversity” in *American Ways*
Bennet, Milton J., Stereotypes and Generalizations in *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*

Session 9

I. “Us” and “Them”: Immigration and the united colours of Italy

- How are Italians coping with the recent move from a racially homogeneous society to a multi-ethnic one.
- Male domestic workers in Italy: a case study

II. Film: *The Visitor* (Tom Mc Carthy’s film over immigration)

Session 10

Conclusions

COURSE TEXTS

- Althen, Gary (2003). *American Ways. A Guide for Foreigners in the United States*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Barzini, Luigi (1977). *The Italians*. New York, NY: Atheneum
- Bennet, Milton J. (1998). *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*. Yarmouth, ME.: Intercultural Press.
- Cresciani, Gianfranco (1985). *The Italians*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sidney.
- Fisher, Glen (1997). *Mindsets – The Role of Culture and Perception in International Relations*, Yarmouth ME: Intercultural Press,
- Hall, Edward T. (1981). *Beyond Culture*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
 - (1990). *The Silent Language*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
 - (1990). *The Hidden Dimension*. Doubleday.
- Jason, Kathrine, Posner, Holly (1995). *Explorations in American Culture*, Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Kohls, L. R. and Knight, J.M. (1994). *Developing Intercultural Awareness: a Cross-Cultural Training handbook*, ed. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Kohls, L. R. (1996). *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*. 4th ed. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Richards, Charles (1995). *The New Italians*, London: Penguin Books.
- Seelye, N.H. (1996). *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*, Intercultural Press.
- Zanobini, Folco (2000). *What do you Think of Italy?* Firenze: Bulgarini.