

Course Outline
International Business Department
Spring 2010

INBS 57702: Special Topics in International Business:

Topic Title: *Multinationals & Cross-Cultural Communications*

I. Course Description:

This course will be situated within the context of multi-national corporate operations, where individual executives and managers must deal with peers, subordinates and superiors across boundaries of culture, distance and geography. It will focus on the idea that language differences are only one dimension of complex interactive situations where understanding of the other person's culture, reality construction and viewpoint play important roles in achieving interpersonal understanding, accomplishing communicative clarity and ensuring hoped-for results. Students will learn through a combination of reading assignments---important works of contemporary social science---together with the instructor's experience-based evaluation of these theoretical works, all in addition to role playing designed to highlight issues in a practical, understandable way.

The course is cross listed with MGMT 57701

Prerequisite: INBS 501

II. Course Content

The Course will utilize the following Modules:

1. What is culture, what is society? An introductory discussion of the basic building blocks of contemporary social science.
2. Who are you? Class discussion aimed at sorting out the roles of nationality, ethnicity, religion, race, gender, family, group affiliation and media in determining one's identity and consequent inter-cultural starting point. Discussion of assigned readings (see sample list, activity continuing).
3. Examination of four diverse cultures. Illustrative stories from the instructor's experiences with Hispanic, Japanese, German and Muslim

- cultures. How would someone raised (socialized) in each of these cultures likely differ from an American in terms of understanding situations that commonly arise in business and constructing what is appropriate behavior?
4. Information technology and post culture. This module will explore whether the internet and other manifestations of present day media and information technology have eroded local culture and homogenized it to the point where cross-cultural communications issues are less relevant. Is the “global village” real or not?
 5. Effective interpersonal communications (or not). This module will be based on the workshop of the same name, conducted at MSU in December 2008.

III. Sample Reading List

1. *Patterns of Culture* by Ruth Benedict.
2. *The Saturated Self: dilemmas of identity in contemporary life* by Kenneth Gergen.
3. *Modernity at Large* by Arjun Appadurai.
4. *The Medium is the Massage* by Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore.
5. *Modernity and Self-Identity: self and society in the late modern age* by A. Giddens.
6. *The Anthropology of Globalization* by T. C. Llewellyn.
7. *Spaces of Identity: global media, electronic landscapes and cultural boundaries* by D. Morley and K. Robins.
8. *Globalization and Culture* by J. Tomlinson.
9. *Personalities and Cultures*, R. Hunt (Ed.)

