IC 215 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
IES Abroad Vienna

DESCRIPTION:
We often feel that we are misunderstood or that we cannot express ourselves properly, yet we also have the impression that, especially in everyday matters, we get along pretty successfully; we also know that e.g. a good poem expresses far more than it actually says. So, how is it with human communication, with meaning (both with what we mean and what sentences do), especially if people of diverse cultures interact? Do we say less, or more than we intend? The course will explore this problem. We will begin by examining various levels of communication as subjects of academic study in the 20th and 21st century: we will start with the meaning of the sentence, then we shall study speech-acts, discourse (text), and sign-language. Moving from text to context, we will interpret culture as the largest context against the background of which meaning may unfold in the richest possible way. We will use Austrian, Hungarian and American phenomena as test-cases to study the various cultures of school and games, of everyday matters (eating, drinking, socializing), of home, of basic human relationships (family, friendship, partnership), and, finally, the problem of the media, including the Internet, all these from a historical, sociological and psychological point of view. The course is designed to help students develop their cultural awareness, as well as their communicative skills.

Scope of the course:
Intercultural communication, studying, broadly speaking, how people understand one another within and between various traditions they have inherited, is a relatively new and interdisciplinary branch of study both in the US and in Europe. Courses designed to teach it will concentrate, as it were, on either word of the title: they either put the intercultural aspect into focus, and include (comparative) anthropology, (comparative) intellectual history, (comparative) history of the fine arts, music, literature and even the sciences and examine how people communicate with these, or they aim at studying first and foremost the communicative side. Courses of the latter type will favour a basically applied linguistic approach, involving socio-linguistics (the description of various sociolects, i.e. how various social groups, e.g. students use language), psycho-linguistics, especially the problem of language-acquisition, secondary language-learning, the differences between grammatical (syntactic and semantic) competence and communicative competence, cognitive linguistics, even some aspects of the philosophy of language and the philosophy of the mind (reference, the relationship between thinking and language, how language may influence thinking, etc.). The differences in approach may also lie in either first seeking larger, more ‘universal’ patterns of cultural behaviour and then try to find how these are manifested in various concrete cultures (this is a more ‘deductive’ way of handling problems), or the approach is more ‘inductive’ and starts with relatively detailed descriptions of specific cultures and then generalises from these data.

This course will be ‘deductive’ in structure. It will start with a basically linguistic approach and will gradually enrich it with the intercultural analysis of topics involving human everydayness, our exposure to the media, our basic human relationships, games, school etc., using phenomena as test cases from three cultures: Austrian culture (to which students will be exposed while in Vienna); American culture (very diverse in itself but the culture of the students’ own) and Hungarian culture (where the instructor comes from, in many ways different from either American or West-European cultures).

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: none

ADDITIONAL COST: The field-trip to Budapest is optional and although IES contributes to the expenses with approximately 30 EUROs, about 60 EUROs for lodging, food etc. can be expected if one travels to Budapest for a weekend.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Midterm - 30%
- Final - 50%
- Class participation and journal entries - 20%
• Required reading
• Occasionally a "Quiz" at the beginning of a class to check familiarity with the assigned reading(s).

Class Participation
Class-discussion of specific topics on the basis of the compulsory readings (descriptive or theoretical pieces), as well as some communication exercises (speaking and listening to the Other) on the basis of the readings.

Written Work
Students are expected to keep a journal, which may be personal in tone but should be ‘professional’ in the sense that here students are expected to record significant cultural phenomena related to the course with some serious reflection. (E.g. recording only what you had for lunch and whether you liked it is not a good entry, whereas what you encountered in terms of the waiters’ and people’s behaviour in the restaurant is a worthy topic. Your entries may have emotional colouring but should not be too self-centered and overemotional. Please be personal by looking not only at your ‘inside’ but also ‘the outside’.) Students are expected to make two or three (hand-written or typed up) entries per week and hand them in to the instructor, who will provide feedback (ask further, challenging questions, make evaluative remarks, etc.). Emphasis is on depth and not on length but the weekly ‘output’ should be around two to three pages. Journal topics will be provided but students may also decide on themes on their own.

Examinations
Critical evaluation of concepts and essays as Midterm and Final examinations.
- Midterm: it will consist of two parts: (1) explanation and interpretation of concepts and (2) two shorter essays on major topics.
- Final: this will be a longer, integrative essay covering major themes of the course but students should still be critical of the concepts used. Emphasis will be on the development of the student’s ideas shaping alongside the course as a whole.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
IES Abroad Vienna requires attendance at all class sessions, including field study excursions, internship meetings, scheduled rehearsals, and exams. Attendance will be monitored and unexcused absences will affect the student’s grade via the “Participation” component of each course’s final grade.

Excused Absences
- Excused absences are permitted only when a student is ill, when class is held on a recognized religious holiday traditionally observed by the particular student, or in the case of a grave incident affecting family members.
- To be granted an excused absence, the student must write an email to his/her professor in a timely manner stating the reason for the absence (and, if appropriate, how long they expect to be away) with a cc to Center administrative staff. In an emergency, the student may call Student Services or the Front Desk. If the student is unable to send an email (too sick, no computer), he/she may call the Student Assistant at the front desk (01/512 2601-11) who will then write the email described above and send it to said parties as stated above, with a cc to the student.
- If a student is absent 3 consecutive days or more, he/she will need to obtain a doctor’s note and then submit this to the Registrar’s office.

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| 3       | Sentence vs. Statement | - First diary entries due!  
| 5       | Speech Acts I: Meaning as Intention | - Diary entries due!  
| 7       | Text and Discourse | - Diary entries due!  
|-----------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Session 11 | School                   | - **Diary entries due!**  
| Session 13 |                          | - **Diary entries due!**  
### Session 15
- **Diary entries due!**

### Session 16

### Session 17
- **Religion in Austria**
- **Diary entries due!**

### Session 18
- **Personal Relations**

### Session 19
- **Media**

### Session 20
- **Internet**
- **Reading:** Jonathan Bignell: “Chapter 7: Computer-based Media”, In Bignell:
COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:
- There will also be an optional field-trip to Budapest, led by the instructor.

REQUIRED READINGS:
- Ash, Rebecca: "The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis",
- Bignell, Jonathan: “Chapter 6: Articulating Media from the Global to the Local”, In Jonathan Bignell: *Postmodern Media Culture*, pp. 166-190
- Deuchar, Margaret: “Sign Language Research” In John Lyons et. al. (ed.), *New Horizons in Linguistics, Vol. 2.*, pp. 311-335
- Frege, Gottlob: “On Sense and Reference” Trans. by Max Black, In Peter Ludlow (ed.): *Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 563-584
- Kállay, Géza: “Higher Education in Hungary” – Fulbright Lectures, 2010 [manuscript]
- Levenstein, Harvey: “Chapter 3: The Rise of the Giant Food Processors” In Harvey Levenstein: *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet*. pp. 30-43


• Modell, John: “Chapter 11: Modern in a New Way” In John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States*, pp. 263-325


• Ricoeur, Paul: “What is a text? Explanation and understanding” In Paul Ricoeur: *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, pp. 145-164


• Searle, John R.: “A taxonomy of illocutionary acts” In John R. Searle: *Expression and Meaning*, pp. 1-29

• Searle, John R.: “Indirect Speech Acts” In John R. Searle *Expression and Meaning*, pp. 30-57


• Zulehner, Paul M.: “Religion in Austria” In Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka and Herman Denz (eds.), *Religion in Austria*, pp. 37-62


RECOMMENDED READINGS:


• Storti, Craig: *The Art of Crossing Cultures.* Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1996

• Ting-Toomey, Stella: *Communicating Across Cultures,* New York: The Guilford Press, 1999

