

Vesalius College

Course description

Course title: Intercultural Communication

Course code: CMM 271E / CMM 271

Teacher responsible: Jan Walravens, Professor

Course description:

The first part of CMM271/CMM 271E deals with the phenomenon of culture in a broad sense. In the second part we examine different ways of studying culture. Via a series of case studies, major theoretical issues are highlighted. In fact, the main point of the case studies is to illustrate the difficulty of studying culture and identity (in all their complexity) in an academic manner. That is why several existing theoretical models are presented to show how these issues have been dealt with so far. Finally, we examine the role of religion(s) in human behaviour.

Course objectives:

The main goal of this course is to familiarize students with the ins and outs of studying 'culture' in an academic fashion. We do not aim to turn them into specialists in the field, but want to offer a broad -yet thorough- introduction that may appeal to future specialists and a wider audience alike.

Specific emphasis will be put on transferability of knowledge so that students are equipped to do research in the field of intercultural communication independently. Alternatively, they should be able to apply intercultural research within another academic discipline.

This course is informed by the most recent developments in the field of intercultural studies; students become familiar with contemporary theoretical, methodological and practical issues in this typically interdisciplinary field.

Grade weighting scheme:

One short paper (to be handed in the week *before* **Midterms**) of 2pp. (**10%** of the final grade)

One longer paper (to be handed in **THREE WEEKS** *before* **Finals**) of 3pp. (**30%** of the final grade)

A personal intercultural journal of 10pp. (to be handed in **THREE WEEKS** *before* **Finals** -- **20%** of the final grade)

Late hand-ins (papers and journal) are NOT accepted! The exact dates for submission of papers will be given in class.

A midterm and a final examination (respectively **10%** and **20%** of the final grade): the goal of these two examinations is to see whether the students can explain the methodology, theories and cases discussed in class (**from memory**) and whether they have understood the (sociological, political, historical, linguistic etc.) implications of said materials.

Permanent evaluation (10% of the final grade): attendance is required and students are expected to participate in discussions in class. Active participation will result in a higher grade; disturbing class (for instance by frequently being late) will result in a lower grade.

Used course material (handbooks, readers, readings, newspapers, magazines) and references:

Reader provided by the professor