



UNIVERSITÀ  
CATTOLICA  
del Sacro Cuore



**Franklin University Switzerland  
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore  
Forum-Nexus Program  
Course Syllabus**

**Cross-Cultural Communication:  
Understanding Cultural Differences in Europe**

**Introduction**

In an increasingly globalized and flat world, the ability of companies and individuals to be effective internationally has become a key ingredient for commercial and personal success. This course will develop the students' cross-cultural interpersonal skills and offer a hands-on learning experience that will greatly benefit them personally and professionally.

**Course Description**

The course introduces a way of thinking that will enable participants to function effectively in any culture, and in particular acquire experience dealing with cultural differences in Europe. It presents essential concepts of national and global culture and examines key differences in communication, facilitating the correct interpretation of a wide variety of cross-cultural situations and laying the foundation for necessary behavioral adaptations. Other important topics include working effectively in multi-cultural teams, cross-cultural negotiations, and international careers.

The course puts a strong emphasis on practical applications in real world business and professional situations. This practical dimension will be enhanced through exercises, videos, and visits to leading international companies and organizations.

As a graduate-level course, students will sit in on the undergraduate-level lectures and complete additional readings and assignments in addition to the undergraduate requirements, in-line with expectations of graduate students.

**Course Objectives**

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Exhibit a high degree of cultural intelligence
2. Acquire a sharper understanding of their own culture and how it impacts their behavior in a multicultural setting
3. Interpret behavior, attitudes, and communication styles of people from different cultures correctly
4. Become familiarized with the key cultural characteristics of the major European countries, and the

- most crucial differences among them
5. Use a repertoire of behavioral skills appropriate for different intercultural situations
  6. Deal with ambiguity in an ever-changing and unpredictable context that results from the globalization of business and people
  7. Exhibit a high degree of effectiveness when working in culturally diverse groups

### **Course Requirements**

The course requires active student participation. Students are expected to read the assigned textbook chapters and other readings before every class. Punctual attendance is required. There will be a midterm exam, a final exam, a team project, and a final presentation. Each student is required to participate in professional visits and cultural visits, as well as the International IQ Seminar.

### **Teaching Procedures and Methodology**

Teaching methods used in this course include lectures, discussions, assignments, and professional and cultural visits. Learning in this course requires the student's constructive participation and active involvement in both class discussions and small group discussions. The professional visits will expose the participants to different aspects of the class and will highlight the practical relevance of the concepts learned. Cultural visits enhance the students' understanding of the history and culture of the country.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students are permitted to miss class only once, due to illness, injury, or another appropriate reason. Missing more than once may result in a letter grade deduction for every additional absence.

### **Participation in "Europe Today: An International IQ Seminar"**

All students also attend **Europe Today: An International IQ Seminar**, a daily session conducted by the Academic Director, Dr. Edward Gray, with occasional distinguished guest lectures. In this seminar, students learn about the culture of each country visited, gain an understanding of essential European geography and current events, discuss their experiences and cross-cultural interactions, get language tips, and identify ways to have an even more immersive study abroad experience. The material covered in the seminar complements the syllabus for this course, and there will be some exam questions based on the seminar. Knowledge from and participation in the International IQ Seminar is factored into the grade for this course.

### **Required Books**

#### **Cultural Intelligence: Surviving and Thriving in the Global Village**

by David Thomas and Kerr Inkson  
Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2017  
(Paperback or Kindle edition recommended)

### **Additional Readings**

1. **Rockstuhl, T., et al. (2011).**

*Beyond general intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ): The role of cultural intelligence (CQ) on cross-border leadership effectiveness.*

Journal of Social Issues, 67(4), 825–840.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2011.01730.x>

2. **Mangla, N. (2021).** *Working in a pandemic and post-pandemic period – Cultural intelligence is the key.* *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 21(1), 53-69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958211002877>
3. **Alexey V Semenov and Arilova Randrianasolo (2024).** An Extended Conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence, *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, Vol. 24, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/14705958241268289>
4. **Lam, R., Cheung, C., & Lugosi, P. (2022).** The impacts of cultural intelligence and emotional labor on the job satisfaction of luxury hotel employees. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 100, 103084. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.103084>
5. **Stoermer, S., Davies, S., & Froese, F. J. (2021).** The influence of expatriate cultural intelligence on organizational embeddedness and knowledge sharing: The moderating effects of host country context. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 52(3), 432-453. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-020-00349-3>

Additional articles covering current international business may be distributed by the instructor throughout the course.

## **Final Research Paper**

As a graduate-level course, students are expected to craft a 10 page literature-review and analysis of one of the key elements of the luxury business. These papers must be informed by credible sources, which will be cited in the paper. Students will select the topic of their paper in consultation with the professor, but topics may include analyses of luxury brands marketing strategies, challenges currently faced by the European luxury-good market, opportunities for expansion in luxury goods in upcoming markets, or analyses of positive, or negative, market-expansion ventures in the past (e.g. into Asia, Eastern Europe, etc). Students are expected to select their topic within ten days of the program's start.

## **Assignments**

### **Essays**

Students will be required to submit five 1500 words essays selected from the following:

#### **1. Comparative Framework Analysis**

Discuss the usefulness and limitations of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and the GLOBE study when analyzing cultural differences within Europe. How do these models complement or contradict each other when applied to European business contexts?

#### **2. Case Study Application**

Choose two European countries with contrasting cultural profiles (e.g., Spain and the Netherlands). Analyze how their cultural norms influence communication styles, leadership expectations, and conflict resolution approaches in professional environments. Use course theories to support your argument.

#### **3. Cultural Identity and Professional Behavior**

Reflect on the concept of cultural self-awareness. How does understanding your own cultural biases enhance or hinder your ability to communicate effectively with individuals from different European cultures? Incorporate at least two intercultural communication theories discussed in class.

#### **4. Cross-Cultural Negotiation Strategy**

Design a negotiation strategy for a multinational European project team (comprising French, Dutch, and Italian members) aiming to reach a consensus on a high-stakes business decision. How would cultural values such as formality, directness, and hierarchy influence your negotiation plan?

#### **5. Crisis Leadership and Cultural Adaptability**

In times of European-wide crises (e.g., economic recession, political instability), how can cultural intelligence (CQ) help leaders maintain team cohesion and motivate diverse employees? Provide real-world examples from European organizations or recent events to illustrate your points.

**6. Ethics and Cultural Diversity**

European organizations often face ethical dilemmas when operating across cultures with different value systems. Analyze how cultural intelligence (CQ) can help leaders navigate ethical challenges without imposing one culture's moral standards over another's. Use examples from at least two European countries to support your analysis.

**7. Consensus-Building in European Union Negotiations**

Consensus is often a critical (and challenging) requirement in European Union policymaking and negotiations. How do differing national communication styles, negotiation norms, and concepts of leadership affect the process of reaching agreement? Discuss with reference to both theory and recent EU case studies.

**PowerPoint Presentation**

Each team will also deliver a presentation highlighting the main points of their manual. Each presentation will last about 15 minutes.

**Components of Final Grade**

Five essays	50%
Final Exam	20%
Presentation	10%
Class participation	10%

**Grading Scale**

A	93-100 %	B-	80-82.9 %	D +	67-69.9 %
A-	90-92.9 %	C +	77-79.9 %	D	63-66.9 %
B+	87-89.9 %	C	73-76.9 %	D -	60-62.9 %
B	83-86.9 %	C-	70-72.9%	F	Below 60 %

**Course Outline**

- 1 **Introduction: Globalization and Cultural Intelligence**
  - Evolution of globalization and multicultural workplaces
  - Definition and components of CQ (motivational, cognitive, behavioral, and metacognitive)
  - Comparative overview: cultural intelligence vs. emotional intelligence
  
- 2 **Cultural Frameworks and Dimensions**
  - Hofstede's dimensions and critiques
  - GLOBE study and universal leadership attributes
  - Trompenaars' cultural value orientations

- Application in leadership practice

3 **Cultural Identity and Self-Awareness in Leadership**

- Culture as a mental programming
- Intercultural sensitivity models (e.g., Bennett's DMIS)
- Bias, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism

4 **Spain: Leadership and Hierarchies**

- Spanish corporate etiquette and hierarchical expectations
- Personalismo in professional interactions
- Spanish attitudes toward time, deadlines, and formality

5 **Mindfulness and Adaptability in Cross-Cultural Settings**

- Cross-cultural adjustment and cultural shock
- Mindfulness as a tool for intercultural agility
- Resilience and ambiguity tolerance

6 **Italy: Family Business Culture and Communicative Styles**

- Relationship building and loyalty in Italian firms
- High-context communication in professional settings
- Balancing tradition and innovation

7 **Cross-Cultural Negotiation Strategies**

- Strategies and styles across cultures
- Negotiation failures: case examples
- French and German models vs. U.S. models

8 **France: Centralization, Formality, and Professionalism**

- French emphasis on intellectualism and formality
- Role of education (Grandes écoles) in elite networks
- Feedback culture and power distance

9 **Cultural Leadership and Motivation**

- Motivating culturally diverse teams
- Power distance and participative decision-making
- Leadership prototypes across cultures

10 **The Netherlands: Egalitarianism and Directness**

- Dutch workplace egalitarianism and blunt communication
- Flat organizational structures
- Role of consensus in decision-making

11 **Multicultural Teams and Organizational Behavior**

- Groupthink, cultural friction, and in-group/out-group dynamics
- Leadership in diverse virtual teams
- Case study: failures and successes in cross-cultural teams

12 **Strategic Cultural Intelligence in Practice**

- Mergers and acquisitions: cultural integration challenges
- Building global leadership pipelines
- Designing inclusive global strategies

13 **Capstone Presentations and Reflective Synthesis**

- Student presentations of integration projects
- Reflective discussion of key leadership insights

- Connecting theory to personal professional goals

### **Academic Integrity**

The Forum-Nexus program places a high value on the integrity, good conduct, and academic honesty of all students. Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity at all times. Any instance of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a grade of F for the course.