



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.

**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)

## **Assignments**

### **Team Project**

Working in teams, students will develop a training manual for U.S. companies sending employees on assignment to France. The purpose of this manual is to give American employees a hands-on professional survival guide to facilitate their cultural adjustment and to reduce culture shock. Students will use what they learn in class as well as their own observations in personal and professional settings as they travel throughout Europe.

The manual should be about 10-15 pages long, double-spaced, size 12 font, and include a list of references used.

## 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

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	30%
Team project	20%
Presentation	20%
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

Class	TOPIC
Module 1	Globalization: Living and Working in the Global Village <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas &amp; Inkson, Ch 1</i>
Module 2	Cultural Knowledge: Dimensions of Cultural Differences <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas &amp; Inkson, Ch 2</i>
Module 3	Spain: Communication Behaviors, Cultural Characteristics, and Personal vs Professional Interactions <i>Reading Assignment: "<a href="#">Spanish Culture</a>" by Nina Evason (Cultural Atlas)</i>
Module 4	Mindfulness and Cross-Cultural Skills <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas &amp; Inkson, Ch 3</i>
Module 5	Making Decisions Across Cultures <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas &amp; Inkson, Ch 4</i>
Module 6	Italy: Communication Behaviors, Cultural Characteristics, and Personal vs Professional Interactions <i>Reading Assignment: "<a href="#">Italian Culture</a>" by Nina Evason (Cultural Atlas)</i>
Module 7	Communicating and Negotiating across Cultures <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas &amp; Inkson, Ch 5</i>

Module 8	France: Communication Behaviors, Cultural Characteristics, and Personal vs Professional Interactions <i>Reading Assignment: “<a href="#">Adjusting to the French Culture</a>” by Université Paris Saclay</i>
Module 9	Motivating and Leading Across Cultures <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas &amp; Inkson, Ch 6</i>
Module 10	Working with Multicultural Groups and Teams <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas &amp; Inkson, Ch 7</i>
Module 11	The Netherlands: Communication Behaviors, Cultural Characteristics, and Personal vs Professional Interactions <i>Reading Assignment: “<a href="#">Dutch Culture</a>” by Universiteit Leiden</i>
Module 12	Developing Cultural Intelligence in an Interconnected World <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas &amp; Inkson, Ch 8</i>
Module 13	Cross Cultural Cooperation: Experiences <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas &amp; Inkson, Conclusion</i>

### **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.