



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**

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.

Learning 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 required materials before every class. Punctual attendance is required. There will be a midterm, a final exam, a project, and a final presentation. Each student is required to participate in all professional visits and eight independent cultural visits (ICVs).

Teaching methods used in this course include lectures, discussions, field activities, and professional visits. Learning in this course requires the student's constructive participation and active involvement in both class discussions and small group discussions. Small group discussions in particular are a key mechanism for facilitating learning from other team members. Thus, it is essential to attend all group activities inside and outside classes. The professional visits will expose the participants to different aspects of the class and will highlight the practical relevance of the concepts learned. The visits will be accompanied by individual or group assignments. Cultural visits enhance the students' understanding of the history and culture of each country.

Participation in "Europe Today: An International IQ Seminar"

All students also attend **Europe Today: An International IQ Seminar**, a daily session with occasional distinguished guest lectures. In this seminar, students learn about the culture of each country, 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.

Assignments & Grading

Students will be evaluated with a midterm and a final exam. The basis for these exams will be material covered in class, as well as the readings. Relevant material from the International IQ seminar may be included.

Students will also complete a group project and make a presentation that applies their knowledge to a practical use case. This is a group project of 2-3 students. The group will deliver a 15 minute presentation highlighting the main points of the project in which all group members participate. After the presentation, each student will handwrite, in class, a report summarizing the project and its findings

Active and engaged participation in class is necessary to succeed in this course. This requires solid attendance as well as active participation in class discussions. Students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings, and ready to discuss in a respectful, collegial manner with their peers.

Project & Presentation

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.

Components of Final Grade

Midterm Exam	35%
Final Exam	35%
Group Project	20%
Class Participation	10%

Grading Scale

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

Required Textbook and Readings

Cultural Intelligence: Surviving and Thriving in the Global Village

by David Thomas and Kerr Inkson

Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 3rd Edition, 2017

(Paperback or Kindle edition recommended)

The professor will share other shorter readings with students for specific classes as needed.

Course Outline

Class	TOPIC
Module 1	Globalization: Living and Working in the Global Village <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 1</i>
Module 2	Cultural Knowledge: Dimensions of Cultural Differences <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 2</i>
Module 3	Spain: Communication Behaviors, Cultural Characteristics, and Personal vs Professional Interactions <i>Reading Assignment: "Spanish Culture" by Nina Evason (Cultural Atlas)</i>
Module 4	Mindfulness and Cross-Cultural Skills <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 3</i>

Module 5	Making Decisions Across Cultures <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 4</i>
Module 6	Italy: Communication Behaviors, Cultural Characteristics, and Personal vs Professional Interactions <i>Reading Assignment: "Italian Culture" by Nina Evason (Cultural Atlas)</i>
Module 7	Communicating and Negotiating across Cultures <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 5</i>
Module 8	France: Communication Behaviors, Cultural Characteristics, and Personal vs Professional Interactions <i>Reading Assignment: "Adjusting to the French Culture" by Université Paris Saclay</i>
Module 9	Motivating and Leading Across Cultures <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 6</i>
Module 10	Working with Multicultural Groups and Teams <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 7</i>
Module 11	The Netherlands: Communication Behaviors, Cultural Characteristics, and Personal vs Professional Interactions <i>Reading Assignment: "Dutch Culture" by Universiteit Leiden</i>
Module 12	Developing Cultural Intelligence in an Interconnected World <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 8</i>
Module 13	Cross Cultural Cooperation: Experiences <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Conclusion</i>
Class	TOPIC
Module 1	Globalization: Living and Working in the Global Village <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 1</i>
Module 2	Cultural Knowledge: Dimensions of Cultural Differences <i>Reading Assignment: Thomas & Inkson, Ch 2</i>

Attendance Policy

Attendance is a critical component of this course. Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions throughout the program. Excused absences are granted only under specific circumstances: documented illness, physical injury requiring medical attention, or other situations that Forum-Nexus staff determine to be valid and appropriate reasons for missing class. Any unexcused absence will lead to a reduction to the overall grade.

Academic Integrity

Franklin University Switzerland, and Università Cattolica place 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.

AI Policy

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, Grammarly, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your creative ideas for specific writing assignments;
- Finding information on relevant topics related to the course;
- Checking spelling on your writing assignments and presentations.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Generating a draft of your writing assignments and final presentation.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or responses to complete class assignments.

In sum, any content that you hand in must not be generated by AI software, but it has to represent your intellectual contribution. Unauthorized use of artificial intelligence tools to write your paper or disguise plagiarized work is considered unauthorized assistance in this course and will result in a failing grade on the assignment.