

ML 3500 “The Theory and Practice of Intercultural Communication”
Fall 2026

Instructor: Hyoun-A Joo
Contact: joo.hyouna@gatech.edu
Office: Swann 212

Course Description:

Society is becoming increasingly globalized, and the need for intercultural knowledge and skills is now of paramount importance to business, government, and innovation. One main goal is to learn how to reflect critically upon one’s own cultural assumptions when perceiving other cultures. The class begins by introducing students to intercultural communication as a field of academic inquiry, important theories of culture and communication, and the analytical dimensions of cross-cultural comparison. The course then adopts a contextual approach to intercultural communication, examining the cultural, micro-cultural, environmental, perceptual, socio-relational, verbal, and non-verbal contexts within and through which communication takes place. The course will end with a closer look at specific examples of practices, attitudes, competencies, and approaches to measuring intercultural communication.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, students will

- Understand the interrelationships between the concepts of culture, communication, globalization, and citizenship
- Exhibit cultural, contextual, and ethical awareness. Students will become more aware of the diversity of cultural, communicative, and ethical systems in the world. This includes the ability to identify, analyze critically and self-reflexively, and apply distinguishing traits/perspectives/ formulations/ institutions in comparative or international empirical cases or issue areas
- Differentiate communitarian and cosmopolitan perspectives and other cultural dimensions on issues related to globalization, citizenship, migration, and communication
- Explain the concept of identity in relation to culture, communication, political values, and society
- Demonstrate critical thinking in the analysis of intercultural communication and global citizenship using normative and empirical evidence from concepts studied in class
- Develop skills necessary to engage in effective intercultural communication and teamwork through group projects, oral presentations, and case studies
- Demonstrate knowledge of the goals, methods, and tools of the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Natural Sciences and what each academic approach may contribute to the investigation of the meaning and practices of intercultural communication and global citizenship
- Demonstrate familiarity with intercultural learning concepts and the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity
- Define what intercultural competence and global citizenship can and should mean to you as individuals in an increasingly globalized world and workplace, as well as what it means as a member of the Georgia Tech community

Course Book:

Neuliep, J. W. (2020). *Intercultural communication: A contextual approach*. **8th edition**. Sage Publications. (e-textbook)
[LINK TO MATERIAL](#)

Course Requirements:

Active Participation 20%

You are expected to come to class on time and prepared to contribute your opinion, comment, and reflection on the homework proactively. The main homework assignment is reading. It is your responsibility to read the texts thoroughly and to look up notions or concepts that you encounter in the homework but are unfamiliar with. I strongly recommend that you take notes when reading the homework texts to actively participate in the in-class

discussions. You are further expected to attend all class sessions. If you cannot attend a class, you must notify me in advance. Unexcused absences affect your Participation grade. See also the section “Attendance” in the policies below.

Your Active Participation grade consists of the following components (25% each):

1. Attendance and punctuality
2. Preparation of homework
3. Participation in class-discussions and group/partner work, proactively and voluntarily
4. Complete focus and commitment to class discussion and no involvement with unrelated things (e.g., texting, homework for other classes etc.)

Weekly Reflection 20%

Every week, you will upload a 200-word short reflection on the week’s readings on Canvas. Reflecting is not summarizing. You are expected to critically ponder the views and insights you learned through the readings and class-discussions and demonstrate an open-minded approach towards your own perspectives regarding the discussed topic. Also, make sure to articulate whether your view on the discussed topic has changed or not, and provide your thoughts as to why that is.

The Weekly Reflection will be graded based on the following components (33.3% each):

1. Punctuality
2. Word count is at least 200 words but not more than 300 words
3. Thorough reflection of the topic (homework & class discussions) and not summary of the readings

Research Paper Presentation 20%

Over the course of the semester, you will select one research article from the supplementary readings and prepare a presentation followed by a discussion. The presentation schedule will be completed on a first-come, first-serve basis. As the presenter, you are responsible for a 20–25-minute presentation-discussion session. The presentation (ca. 10-15 min.) should be accompanied by presentation slides or a handout. The research paper presentation should not entail your subjective opinion, but an objective recount of the goals, methods, and results laid out in the paper and the impact / implications of the research. For the discussion (ca. 10 min.), the presenter is expected to prepare at least 2 discussion questions that will be discussed in small groups first and then with the entire class. The questions should help the class to understand the research on a deeper level and to connect it to the course topic. Part of the Research Paper Presentation grade is furthermore your active participation in your peers’ presentations.

The grading components of the Research Paper Presentation are as follows (20% each):

1. Accurate, thorough, and concise presentation of the research
2. Clearly structured slides / handout, information easy to follow
3. Relevant and appropriate discussion question
4. Professional presentation style, engaging the audience
5. Participation in classmates’ presentation

Exams 20%

You will write a Mid-Term Exam and a Final Exam. The exams will be written in class and should be completed in 30 minutes.

Final Projects 20%

The goal of the final project is for you to grapple with one of the course topics on a deeper level and provide a detailed critique of it. You are free to choose the topic and medium of your final presentation. You can select any of the topics discussed through homework, class-discussion, or supplementary reading. You can prepare presentation slides, develop a podcast or short film, run a mini-study and present it, etc. The Final Project consists of the following components:

- **Initial Proposal (due week 10):** You will submit a 1-page proposal where you lay out your idea for the final project in the form of an abstract. This means that you propose an argument, i.e., a question you would like to investigate deeper, and describe the sources you will use to research and prove your argument. The Initial Proposal will be graded as follows (25% each): (1) Relevance to course theme, (2) clarity of argument, (3) depth of information presented, (4) explanation of relevance.

- **Revised Proposal (due week 12):** Upon receiving feedback, you will revise your initial proposal as indicated in the feedback. In addition, you will add a title and an annotated bibliography of at least 5 sources to your proposal.
The Revised Proposal will be graded as follows (25% each): (1) Thoughtfulness of revisions based on feedback, (2) extension of proposed line of argumentation, (3) fitting title, (4) complete annotated bibliography.
- **Peer Review Session (week 12-14):** For the Peer Review Session, you will prepare a short presentation of your final project, including all components from the proposal. You will further provide constructive feedback to your classmates' proposal presentation. The Peer Review Session is done in small groups.
The Peer Review Session will be graded based on: (1) Quality of proposal presentation (80%) and (2) helpfulness of peer review (20%).
- **Final Presentation (week 15-16):** The final presentation completes the final project. You will present your final project, integrating all the feedback you have received thus far. The final presentation should be a significantly revised and improved version of your proposal.
The Final Presentation will be graded based on (25% each): (1) Clarity of purpose, goal, and relevance of the final project, (2) clarity of articulated argument developed, (3) convincing line of argumentation, (4) clarity of information in the presentation material (easy to follow and absorb), (5) presentation style (engaging the audience)

Grading Scale:

A 90-100%, B 80-89%, C 70-79%, D 60-69%, F 0-59%

Pass/Fail Students: You need a grade of C to pass the class.

Policies:

Attendance

Attendance is required in this course. Absences due to health issues that are communicated to the instructor before the day of absence are excused and will not affect the overall grade negatively, only your Participation grade. Absences without any prior notification to the instructor will result in a lowering of the final grade. Starting the third unexcused absence, 1% of your overall final grade will be deducted for each day absent. Five or more unexcused absences result in an F.

Late Submission

In case an assignment cannot be submitted on time, it is the student's responsibility to contact me ASAP and receive an extension within the duration of the unit. Late submission without prior notice or after completion of the respective unit is not accepted.

Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are expressly forbidden in this class, and by the university's Honor Code (<http://honor.gatech.edu/content/2/thehonor-code>) and the student Code of Conduct (<https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>). The first cheating on quizzes, exams, and all other course assignments will lead to an automatic zero; the second cheating will immediately earn you a failing grade for the entire course. I will also pursue further disciplinary actions according to Georgia Tech's policies and procedures (see <http://honor.gatech.edu/plugins/faq/> for more information on this). All submitted work must be your own original work. The original thoughts, ideas, and drafts must be your own work.

Responsible Use of AI

In the age of AI, it is important to understand how AI can help or hamper you in growing your intellectual skills. The core ability that sets humans' intelligence apart from artificial intelligence is critical thinking. Therefore, you must not misuse AI (i.e., be used by AI) to do the thinking for you, but demonstrate metacognition about your AI use that enhances your education. You are required to be transparent about how you used AI and adhere to the following AI use criteria: (1) critical engagement (verify, question, recognize AI failure, synthesize information), (2) responsible use (transparency, judgment when to use AI, academic integrity), (3) ethical awareness (recognizing bias and broader impact of AI output)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/> as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also email me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> for an articulation of some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Mental Health Resources

We value your well-being and want to support students experiencing mental health challenges. GA Tech Psychiatry: 404-894-2585 (during business hours); Counselor on call: 404-894-2575 (also available after-hours). If you or someone else is experiencing a mental health crisis, call 1-800-273-8255 (24 hours).