

LMC 3206: Communication & Culture

SUMMER 2026 | CLASSROOM TBD
SECTION 58105 T/TH 8:00AM–9:55AM
SECTION 58106 T/TH 1:30PM–3:25PM

professor: Dr. Allegra W. Smith (she/her/hers)
email: allegra@gatech.edu
drop-in hours: Tues/Thurs 11am–1pm (walk-ins welcome, but if you'd like to guarantee a spot, [schedule here](#)), or by appointment

General Information:

(OFFICIAL) COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Examines ways in which forms and media of communication create and are created by other cultural constructs.

DR. ALLEGRA'S COURSE DESCRIPTION:

There are a lot of different factors that influence how we view ourselves and how we interact with the world:

- Who are we?
- Where do we come from?
- What do we like (and dislike)?
- Who are the people that we surround ourselves with?
- Where do we get our information?



This summer, we'll dive into these questions and how they shape *culture* and *communication*. We'll spend the first couple of weeks defining those two complicated terms, before exploring examples of how they interact out in the world.

This class should be applicable to all students who take it. This is why this section of LMC 3206 doesn't have a specific theme or focus on any particular type of communication or cultural community. We'll touch on a variety of types of communication (e.g., written, verbal, nonverbal, visual, multimodal, etc.) and elements of culture (e.g., race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, disability, nationality, language, etc.), but it's important to remember that no single class can cover *everything* about a topic.

Thus, you should think of LMC 3206 as a broad overview of these two concepts: it will give you a frame for understanding how they work in your daily life, and a jumping-off point for approaching them as a knowledgeable professional, citizen, and human.

PREREQUISITE:

Undergraduate semester level ENGL 1102 (English Composition II), minimum grade of D.

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of LMC 3206, students will be able to...

- Define “culture” and “communication” and articulate features and examples of their interplay.
- Critically trace historical and theoretical perspectives on communication and culture and apply them to contemporary issues.
- Examine the role of culture and communication in various venues of society, including advocacy, technology, media, health and medicine, etc.
- Reflect upon how both their own culture and others’ culture(s) influence their communication.
- Apply technical communication practices for navigating intercultural situations.
- Compose in a variety of media for different audiences.

Core IMPACTS Statement:

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area (see <https://undergradcurriculum.gatech.edu/general-education/> for more information).

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students’ broad academic and career goals. This course thus directs students toward a broad Orienting Question: *How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?*

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome: *Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.*

Content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies: *1) Ethical Reasoning, 2) Information Literacy, 3) Intercultural Competence.*

Required Materials:

There is no required textbook for this course. All required reading and viewing will be made available on Canvas or through the [Georgia Tech Library](#) resources.

Assignments & Grading:

Note that these are just brief descriptions. Each project has multiple required components (e.g., brainstorming activities, outlines, reflections, etc.) and full assignments will be provided on Canvas. See the course calendar for due dates.

Reading Responses (30% of final grade) Each week, you will respond to the readings to synthesize what you're learning in LMC 3206 with your experiences on study abroad, as well as other knowledge from your daily life, current events, your professional work, and/ or other classes. This will help you connect class concepts with the real world. You will also be expected to reply to classmates' responses to engage in dialogue about the readings. *There will be 8 total reading responses in this class. Your lowest reading response grade will automatically be dropped. If 85% or more of the class fills out the CIOS at the end of the semester, this number will increase to two dropped reading response grades, enabling you to skip up to two weeks of reading responses if need be. Use your skips wisely ;)*

Culture Profile (30% of final grade) After identifying a space or cultural group of interest, you will conduct an observational study of that space or group and write a formal report of your findings and analysis.

Choose-Your-Own Research Adventure (30% of final grade) You will have the option to select one of three paths (*researching* a topic, developing *resources* on a topic, or *responding* to an issue) to develop a deliverable that synthesizes research on a topic relevant to the content of our course.

Short Assignments, Classroom Participation, & Professional Ethos (10% of final grade) Class attendance and participation in classroom activities, writing short assignments, providing feedback on other classmates' drafts, and engaging in other in-class work will form this component of your course grade.

FINAL GRADE POLICY:

I do not curve/round up grades or offer extra credit at the end of the semester. The grading scale for this course is as follows:

A	B	C	D	F
100%–90%	89%–80%	79%–70%	69%–60%	59% or below
4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0.0

LATE WORK:

Assignments are due at 11:59pm local time on the specified date, unless otherwise noted.

WHAT IF I GET STUCK?

If you're struggling with course content, projects, or deadlines, please talk with me sooner rather than later! You can always stop by my office hours, ask to schedule an appointment with me, or send me an email. I'm here to help. Additionally, the [Naugle Writing and Communication Center](#) is an excellent resource for undergraduate and graduate students, offering consultations on writing and speaking projects, as well as job documents, presentations, multimedia, and more. They offer virtual consultations, so they can help you out even from afar.

Attendance & Participation:

Participation is essential in this course. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings that are due. Plan on expressing your ideas, frustrations, questions, confusions, etc., even if you're not able to articulate them without some hesitation—sometimes, ambivalent or ambiguous remarks spark the liveliest discussions!

Although your participation will not be explicitly graded, you will be evaluated on your preparedness for class. I will use my assessment of your participation to manage borderline grades; thus, it will help you to attend class, share your views on readings, and participate in activities. If you repeatedly arrive late to class, expect that your grade will also be lowered. If you are concerned about this assessment at any time, you can contact me to request a “snapshot” of your current grade or discuss ways to improve your participation.

You have four (4) permitted absences regardless of documentation or excuse; for each absence after four (4), your final course grade will go down 1%. Absences will be recorded through the Attendance function on Canvas; it is your responsibility to keep up with your absence count in the class. It is also important to come to class on time. Therefore, if you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent for that class period. If you are absent, you miss valuable class time with your colleagues, as well as instructions for assignments and projects that will help you complete quality work. If you miss class, you are still responsible for obtaining class notes and completing work you missed.

Technology Requirements:

To participate in course activities, the following technologies are required:

- A laptop or desktop computer (not all course activities can be completed on a mobile device)
- A high-speed internet connection, which you will access daily for course messages through email, as well as to use Canvas
- A microphone and/or webcam, for video conferencing
- A program that can open PDFs (such as Acrobat or Preview)
- Microsoft Office or Google Docs (please save documents in .doc, .docx, or .pdf formats—no PAGES files, please!)
 - You will need the desktop version of Microsoft Office (not the in-browser app) to complete some course activities and assignments. If you do not have Office downloaded, you can download it for free using your GT Office 365 account.

When you use technology during class meetings, make sure it is not a distraction to yourself or others. Avoid using technology as a barrier to actively engaging in class. Do not take phone calls, scroll social media, snap, livestream, do work for other courses, or text during class unless you have made arrangements with me ahead of time (due to an emergency or urgent issue). **TL;DR If technology isn't supporting classwork, turn it off.**

Copyright and Intellectual Property:

All videos, documents, and content in this course may only be used in and for this class. No video, document, or content may be downloaded or captured for personal use beyond this class without the written permission of its owner. Likewise, please seek permission from the instructor before recording (video or audio) the instructor or any portion of class.

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 the [Institute Rules and Regulations](#) 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.

Academic Integrity:

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit the [Honor Code Policy website](#) or the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the [Office of Student Integrity](#), who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

GENERATIVE AI POLICY (CHATGPT, COPILOT, GEMINI, ETC.)

This course involves writing, communication, and critical thinking. Generative AI agents such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others present great opportunities for learning and for communicating. However, AI cannot learn or communicate for you, and so cannot meet the course requirements for you.

In this course, using generative AI tools in the work of the course (including assignments, discussions, ungraded work, etc.) is allowed only in instances specified by your professor.

As with any technology, generative AI tools need to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, in instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, you are expected to adhere to these principles:

Responsibility: You are responsible for the work you submit. In instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, this means that any work you submit should be your own, with any AI assistance appropriately disclosed (see “Transparency” below) and any AI-generated content appropriately cited (see “Documentation” below). This also means you must ensure that any factual statements produced by a generative AI tool are true and that any references or citations produced by the AI tool are correct.

Transparency: Any generative AI tools you use in the work of the course should be clearly acknowledged as indicated by the instructor. This work includes not only when you use content directly produced by a generative AI tool but also when you use a generative AI tool in the process of composition (for example, for brainstorming, outlining, or translation purposes).

Documentation: You should cite any content generated by an AI tool as you would when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing ideas, text, images, or other content made by other people. If you do not clearly attribute AI-generated work, and/or attempt to pass it off as your own, you will receive a reduced or failing grade for the assignment.

Using generative AI tools at times not allowed by the instructor will be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity. Likewise, using generative AI tools in the course without adhering to these principles will be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity.

This policy has been adapted from the Georgia Tech Writing and Communication Program (WCP).

Accessibility:

If you are a student with learning needs that require accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or via [their website](#) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also email me within the first week of the semester to schedule an appointment to discuss your learning needs (you don't have to have a documented disability with the Office of Disability Services to do this!).

Nondiscrimination Policies:

The Georgia Institute of Technology has a commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, ancestry, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, disability, genetics, or veteran status. If you or someone you know believes you are experiencing any type of discriminatory behavior, even if none of the above policies have been violated yet, please consider reaching out to the Equal Opportunity, Compliance, and Conflict Management (EOCCM) team to learn more about possible supportive measures, resolution pathways, and on-and-off campus resources. The [EOCCM website](#) has more information on [reporting options](#) for students, faculty, and staff, as well as [resources for support](#).

Limits to Confidentiality:

Written and spoken materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the Institute's student record policies. However, students should be aware that Institute employees may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of GT community members and others. As the professor for

this course, I must report the following information to other Institute offices (including the university Title IX Coordinator and Police Department) if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if maltreatment happened when you were a child;
- Allegations of sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual harassment; and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with the [Center for Mental Health Care & Resources](#). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

- [Report an Incident of Sexual Misconduct](#)
- [Georgia Tech’s Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Campus and Community Resources for Sexual Assault, Rape, Dating or Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Stalking, and Related Issues](#)

Course Calendar:

** This schedule is tentative. As readings are added (and if deadlines are changed), a revised class schedule will be posted.

Week	Day	Topic(s)	Work Due
1	Tu 5/19	<i>What is Culture?</i>	Selections from Geertz, <i>The Interpretation of Cultures</i>
	Th 5/21	<i>Culture Profiles</i>	Liu et al., “Culture and People” Selections from Hebdige, <i>Subculture: The Meaning of Style</i>
2	Tu 5/26	<i>What is Communication?</i>	Hall, “Encoding/Decoding” Liu et al., “Communication and Culture” ★★ Week 2 reading response due by 11:59pm CEST Monday, 5/25; comments on at least two classmates’ responses due by 11:59pm CEST Wednesday, 5/27
	Th 5/28	<i>Digital Communication</i>	Lindgren, “Communities and Networks”
3	Tu 6/2	<i>Technology, Communication, & Culture</i>	Baron, “From Pencils to Pixels” Haas, “Wampum as Hypertext” ★★ Week 3 reading response due by 11:59pm CEST Monday, 6/1; comments on at least two classmates’ responses due by 11:59pm CEST Wednesday, 6/3
	Th 6/3	<i>Media and Cultural Change</i>	Jenkins, Introduction to <i>Convergence Culture</i> (“The Altar of Convergence: A New Paradigm for Understanding Media Change”

Week	Day	Topic(s)	Work Due
4	Tu 6/9	<i>Media and Cultural Change</i>	Liu et al., “Media and Cultural Change” ★★ Week 4 reading response due by 11:59pm CEST Monday, 6/8; comments on at least two classmates’ responses due by 11:59pm CEST Wednesday, 6/10
	Th 6/11	<i>Language and Intercultural Communication</i>	Carla, “The Intersection of Language and Culture” Liu et al., “Verbal Communication and Culture” ★★ Culture Profile workshop in class: come to class with a draft of your report, prepared to get feedback from classmates
5	Tu 6/16	<i>Race and Ethnicity, Research Methods</i>	Pullum, “African American Vernacular English is not Standard English with Mistakes” ★★ Week 5 reading response due by 11:59pm CEST Monday, 6/15; comments on at least two classmates’ responses due by 11:59pm CEST Wednesday, 6/17
	Tu 6/18	<i>(Unconscious) Bias</i>	Noble, selections from <i>Algorithms of Oppression</i> Rudder, selections from <i>Dataclysm</i> ★★ Culture Profile due (with Project Evaluation Memo) by 11:59pm CEST Tuesday, 6/18
6	Tu 6/23	<i>Race and Gender</i>	Nakamura, “Gender and Race Online” ★★ Week 6 reading response due by 11:59pm CEST Monday, 6/22; comments on at least two classmates’ responses due by 11:59pm CEST Wednesday, 6/24
	Th 6/25	<i>Gender</i>	Cameron, “Performing Gender Identity: Young Men’s Talk and The Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity” Eckert, “Gender and Sociolinguistic Variation” ★★ Proposal for Choose-Your-Own Research Adventure due by 11:59pm CEST Thursday, 6/25
7	Tu 6/30	<i>Visual Communication</i>	Know Your Meme “About” page (peruse at least a couple of memes) Lindgren, “Visuality and Visibility” ★★ Week 7 reading response due by 11:59pm CEST Monday, 6/29; comments on at least two classmates’ responses due by 11:59pm CEST Wednesday, 7/1
	Th 7/2	<i>Visuals Across Cultures</i>	Kostelnick, “Cultural Adaptation and Information Design”
8	Tu 7/7	<i>Disability and Communication</i>	Adams, Reiss, & Serlin, “Disability” Shakespeare, “The Social Model of Disability”
	Th 7/9	<i>Accessibility</i>	Zdenek, “Which Sounds are Significant? Towards a Rhetoric of Closed Captioning”
9	Tu 7/14	<i>Bank Holiday</i>	<i>No class—enjoy your time off! (Also, no reading response or comments due this week)</i>

Week	Day	Topic(s)	Work Due
	Th 7/16	<i>Listening</i>	Ratcliffe, “Rhetorical Listening: A Trope for Interpretive Invention and a Code of Cross-Cultural Conduct”
10	Tu 7/21	<i>Listening</i>	Rosenberg, “Requesting That Which Would Enrich Life” (from <i>Nonviolent Communication</i>)
	Th 7/23	<i>Intercultural Competence</i>	Liu et al., “Intercultural Competence in a Global Community” ★★ Choose-Your-Own Research Adventure workshop in class: come to class with a draft of your project, prepared to get feedback from classmates
11	Tu 7/28	<i>Final Instructional Day</i>	No reading due—instead, we’ll look back on the semester and do job interview practice in class! ★★ Choose-Your-Own Research Adventure Due (with Project Evaluation Memo) by 11:59pm CEST Tuesday, 8/4