



Course Unit: Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace (B 07b)

Semester	2
Hours per week	2
Contact hours (total)	32 h
Individual study	28 h

Language of Tuition/Assessment	English
Group size (max)	25
ECTS credits	2
Lecturer	Prof Dr. Magdalena Stülb, Dr. Ceyhun Mahmudlu (Azerbaijan)

Objectives

What does culture have to do with business? Despite of current discourses on the decline of regional cultures and the rise of a homogenous global culture, it seems that more than ever before it is referred to culture when something goes wrong or misunderstandings occur in business interactions. Although culture is soft and not measurable, it still has an undeniably important impact business communication. Due to the internationalization of companies and the mobility of individuals communication has grown increasingly complex. While most business today is conducted in English, this language is no longer the sole domain of native speakers. People of widely different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are dealing with each other either face to face or over long distances without ever meeting personally. The success of companies largely depends on managers' ability to foster international relations and to maintain cross-national networks. Intercultural communication skills as well as interdiscourse communication skills are basic requirements. This course is meant to strengthen students' ability to gain strategic advantages over their competitors in an increasingly diversified business environment.

Contents

Intercultural communicative competence is a combination of knowledge, attitudes and skills. Students will be enabled to reflect on their own culture, its values and communication styles in order to identify and understand different patterns of communication in intercultural contexts. They will be encouraged to embrace cultural diversity as an opportunity rather than an impediment and to turn working with international and intercultural teams into an advantage. They will master complex communicative tasks such as chairing international meetings and resolving problems arising from critical incidents. Students will be enabled to critically reflect on current models of culture and notions of group membership and identity. They will draw on the main theories of intercultural communication and discuss generalizations and oversimplifications. Identifying relevant categories for interpersonal negotiation will be a central aim in transferring this knowledge to concrete managerial challenges. Topics will be:

- Conceptualizing culture in applied sciences
- The role of language in intercultural business communication
- Verbal and nonverbal aspects in intercultural communication
- Working in intercultural (virtual) teams
- Building trust in long-distance communication
- The influence of business structures and corporate culture on intercultural business communication

Teaching methods

Team Teaching, Blended Learning Methods, Analysis of video case studies, exercises to enable self-reflection and stereotypes, simulation of business communication situations, text discussions

Prerequisites

Students must be able to communicate freely in an English-speaking environment.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment on the basis of classroom work (e.g. chairing a meeting, managing an intercultural team, solving problems in e-communication and phonecalls), student interview project (presentation and essay)

Literature

- Spencer-Oatey, H. and Franklin P. 2009: Intercultural interaction: a multidisciplinary approach to intercultural communication. Basingstoke [u.a.]: Palgrave Macmillan
- Neuliep, J. W. 2009: Intercultural communication: a contextual approach. Fourth Edition. Los Angeles [u.a.]: Sage.
- Tuleja, E. A. 2009: Intercultural communication for business. Mason: South-Western.
- Piller, I. 2011: Intercultural communication. A Critical Introduction. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Varner, Iris /Beamer, Linda 2011: Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace. Mcgraw-Hill Higher Education