



## **SYLLABUS**

### **CROSSCULTURAL COMMUNICATION/CROSSCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES**

**Instructor: Prof. Angélica Bonilla**

**Contact Hrs: 15**

**Language of Instruction: English**

**MACERATA, ITALY**

The course is designed to offer a theoretical basis for the concept of cross-cultural communication, but utilizes in most respects a very hand-on approach; it will consist of regular class meeting of 90 minutes each. Requirements will include readings as basis and preparation for discussions, assignments intended to insure that the students actively pursue the questions discussed in class and group activities.

Given the short time available (in relation to the material we wish to cover) we will be concentrating on Italy with a culture-specific rather than a culture-general approach. Experiences taken from the students' daily life in Macerata will constitute the basis for discussions, at the same time emphasizing the general applicability of the concepts and skills they will acquire to any cross-cultural context, be it in the US or in any other foreign situation.

This one-credit course should take the integration of the Macerata program one step further and at the same time extend the discussions of the pre-departure orientation, the post-departure orientation and the general meetings. It is meant to convert the frustrations and surprises many students are confronted with during their stay in a foreign culture into a useful learning experience, while at the same time induce those students not so sensitive about cultural differences to reflect on their role and identity abroad (i.e. what it means to be an American in Italy/Europe/South Europe, how to keep one's identity and still adapt, what defines the "foreignness" of the culture one encounters, etc.).

It is thus the aim of the course to lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the interstitial spaces and negotiated identities produced by cross-cultural encounters. This should be achieved by combining "academic" knowledge about the Italian culture with a practical emphasis and hands-on experience on location.

Readings, assignments and group activities have been planned to the best of our knowledge at the moment, but they will certainly vary and be supplemented as the course develops and we discover which methods and approaches are best applicable to this particular group and their own experiences.

#### **Session 1**

##### **I. Introduction to the Course**

- Overview of course organization and expectations.
- Presentation of the Tandem project

## **II. The organization of daily life: meals**

- Italian Cuisine: comparing fast and slow food.
- Italian Cuisine: the protagonists.
- Some secrets about *pasta*. Exploring some classic recipes.
- Italian Menu’.

### **Readings:**

- *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*, “*Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective*” (Milton J. Bennet).
- *American Ways*, Chapter 21: “*Some Helpful Ideas*” (Gary Althen).

## **Session 2**

### **I. Main concepts of Cross-Cultural Communication**

- Monocultural Communication vs Intercultural Communication
- Assimilation vs Adaptation
- Upper-Case *Culture* and Lower-Case *culture*
- Non verbal communication. Communication styles
- Cultural Shock
- Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity
- D.I.E. method, a way to develop cross-cultural awareness.

### **II. The Grand Tour**

- The long tradition of visiting Italy including famous American Travelers.
- Student / tourist: aspects that make the difference in organizing a trip.

### **Readings:**

*American Ways*, Chapter 8: “*Religion*” (Gary Althen).

## **Session 3**

### **I. Believers or Disbelievers, Common Morality**

- Parochial Italy and its sacred places.
- What do Italians believe in? What does it mean to have a “national religion”, both personally and politically?
- What role does Catholicism play in Italian life?
- Catholic Church as a center of culture.

### **II. The organization of community life: calendar**

- Holidays as a result of millenary stratification (religious, civic, international)
- The Carnival

### **Readings:**

*American Ways*, Chapter 6 “*Family life*” (Gary Althen).

## **Session 4**

### **I. American and Italian family life style**

- The extended Family. The role of Grand parents and relatives in the Italian family.
- Italian “Familism”.
- The “famigliuola” and the lower middle-class dream.
- The new families and the destiny of marriage.

**Reading:**

*American Ways, Chapter 7: "Education"* (Gary Althen).

**Session 5**

**I. Becoming American or Italian**

- The role of educational institutions in the American identity: most important values and patterns.
- Educational institutions and Italian identity.
- How the two formal educational systems are organized and how students are taught and evaluated.

**Readings:**

*American Ways, Chapter 20: "Business"* (Gary Althen).

**Session 6**

**I. Some basics aspects of the Italian business system**

- "The small firm", a pattern typical of Italy, and specially of the Marche Region.

**II. Visit to a small factory**

**Readings:**

- *"From Manhattan to the Marche: two lives in one"* (Lisa Kramer Taruschio).
- *"How bout some customer service?"* (Steve Brenner).
- *"The Science of Death, the Logic of Reincarnation"* (David Darling)

**Session 7**

**I. Concepts of Citizenship: Reflections on definitions of civic responsibility, entitlement and expectations of U.S. and Italian citizens.**

- How do Americans and Italians view their respective roles as citizens?
- Historic perspectives and practical consequences.

**Session 8**

**I. Society and the Individual: Community and Mobility.**

- How do Americans and Italians conceptualize "community"?
- How does mobility affect the individual and the community?

**Readings:**

- *American Ways: Chapter 11 "Racial and Ethnic Diversity"* (Gary Althen)
- *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Stereotypes and Generalizations* (Milton J. Bennet)

**Session 9**

**I. Us and Them**

- Immigration and the united colors of Italy. How are Italians coping with the recent move from a racially homogeneous society to a multi-ethnic one.

**II. Conclusions**

**Reference books:**

Althen, Gary: *American Ways. A Guide for Foreigners in the United States.* Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press 2003.

Barzini, Luigi, *The Italians.* New York, NY: Atheneum 1977.

Bennet, Milton J.: *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication.* Yarmouth, ME.: Intercultural Press 1998.

Hall, Edward T.: *Beyond Culture.* New York, NY: Doubleday 1981.

Hall, Edward T.: *The Silent Language.* New York, NY: Anchor Books 1990.

Hall, Edward T.: *The Hidden Dimension.* Doubleday 1990.

Jason, Kathrine, Posner, Holly, *Explorations in American Culture,* Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle Publishers 1995.

Kohls, L. R. *Survival Kit for Overseas Living,* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Yarmouth, ME: The Intercultural Press 1996.

Richards, Charles, *The New Italians,* London: Penguin Books 1995.

Zanobini, Folco: *What do you Think of Italy?* Firenze: Bulgarini 2000.