Credits: 3
Office hours: by appointment (marcobracci@hotmail.com) and/or directly after class
Meeting times: Tuesdays - 3:35-6:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the contemporary world, characterized by globalization of goods, people, ideas, thoughts, and by increasing processes of distinction, dealing with cross cultural differences is a fundamental skill for each individual.

The aim of the course is to understand the importance of communication in our contemporary society. Given that communication is a complex and multilayered concept, the course will offer a variety of theoretical approaches from different disciplines (sociology, cultural studies, media studies and communication studies) and methods of analysis in order to better comprehend the deep and relevant relationship between communication and culture(s).

The use of several educational tools, such as readings, field experiences, lectures, and group works, will allow students to understand how different theoretical perspectives approach problems related to communication across cultures.

A variety of materials will be used to focus on specific case studies both from the US and especially from Italy in a comparative way, and to stimulate an active and critical in-class students’ participation. Students will be encouraged to apply theoretical skills to reality and to their own experience as individuals living in a foreign country and in a different continent, and to experience and observe Florence as a study subject as well.

Based on opportunities available in Florence, the course will try to fully integrate the students’ abroad experience in their learning process. During the course, students will be encouraged to express their positions and ideas through writings, presentations and in-class discussion.

The course will cover the following themes:
- Sociological notion of culture
- Models of Communication
- Communication competences
- A cultural approach to communication: the ritual and symbolic view
- Media representation of Italian stereotypes
- Sport as a cross cultural tool to overcome cultural dilemmas
- Fashion as a means of interpersonal and cultural communication
- A ritual view of food consumption in Italy
- Are Social media strategic tools to create shared experiences?
- Tourism in Florence: tourism industry facing cross cultural communication issues
- Digital music consumption among young Italians: crossing cultural boundaries
- Global, local and glocal: Americanization, homogenization and differentiation of cultures

COURSE OBJECTIVES
- To introduce students to key debates in the communication studies
- To understand communication as a “problem” and as a “resource”
- To reflect upon ways in which personal and social identities are increasingly linked to communication
- To encourage students to engage critically with questions around communication across different cultures, through research and writing
- To acquire a deeper understanding of students’ own patterns of communication, establishing a connection between personal dimension and the societal dimension
- To take full advantage of students’ experience in Florence using the city as a learning tool in order
to live a deep cross cultural experience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of this course the students will be familiar with:

- The most relevant theoretical perspectives on communication as a complex notion and as an unavoidable process of everyday lives
- The pervasive and influencing role played by media (especially social media) in the contemporary world
- The relationship between communication, culture and identity change
- An array of substantive fields of application of cross cultural communication principles, such as the media, fashion, food, tourism, music etc.

Students will be able:

- To critically apply concepts and theoretical perspectives to real-life situations
- To acquire new communication competences and to apply them to their everyday lives (family, school...) and to their future professions
- To understand the connections between cultural diversity and communication
- To develop specific cases studies of cross cultural communication
- To understand communication as a cultural process operating in different cultural contexts and in specific social groups
- To identify practical “problems” of communication and to transform them into “resources”
- To develop a critical thinking upon the main changes of their own communication patterns (being immersed in a different culture will be a great opportunity to question one’s patterns of communication)

METHODOLOGY
The course includes readings and discussion of a selection of primary sources and other materials such as movies and documentaries. The learning process will happen in a variety of formats in this course, mainly through lectures, visits, guest lectures on specific topics, home assignments, videos, discussions, out-of-class and in-class activities.

Class discussions and active participation are extremely vital, as they are essential to develop critical skills. For this reason, the readings assigned weekly are accompanied by an active discussion work on a case study or on a topic to be dealt with in class. This is the basis for the work that will be led in class.

We will remain flexible enough to take advantage of other potential opportunities for learning as they develop over the course of the semester.

BIBLIOGRAPHY/MATERIALS
The following readings will be assigned during the course of the semester


Movies/Documentaries
- Under the Tuscan Sun, 2003
- Bend it like Beckham, 2002

Further readings and materials (such as videos and documentaries) may be used on the basis of students’ specific interests.
Readings will be delivered in class or will be e-mailed to students by the Professor. Readings will be assigned week by week and must be taken to class as they will be the starting point for class discussion on specific topics and case studies. Professor could give home assignments (tasks to perform, documentaries to watch) when needed to facilitate in-class discussion and to integrate topics dealt with in class.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Exams:
There are two scheduled exams for this course.
- Students will take a Mid-Term Written Exam with short answer questions based mainly on the general subject that will be dealt with in the first part of the course
- The written final exam will consist of a Final Paper (see description below)

Final Paper:
- For the final exam students will choose a specific case study through which they will deal with certain aspects of the course program using specific tools and strategies developed in class.
- Students will hand in a written essay of around 2000 words.
- This project represents the occasion to originally elaborate on the readings and discussion conducted in class. It has to be an exercise in creativity and originality at the same time maintaining an analytic and critical perspective on the material studied during the semester.
- Guidelines will be given in class.

Final Presentation:
- Students will conclude the course with a presentation of the topic chosen for the Final Paper.
- Students will have to use all the tools available (such as: PowerPoint, handouts, surveys, extra information or evidence etc) to reach the point. The aim of this assignment is to demonstrate their communication skills in presenting their ideas and perspective to the rest of the class, activating a discussion and being able to respond to the instructor’s and other students’ feedback.
- Guidelines will be given in class.

Students-Led Discussion:
- During the class after the midterm, there will be a students-led discussion: students will present a specific topic dealt with in class till then, trying to argue in favor of it. A feedback from the class is required in order to start a discussion.
Summary of how grades are weighted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students-Led Discussion</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper Presentation</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades
94-100 % A
90-93.9% A-
86-89.9% B+
83-85.9% B
80-82.9% B-
76-79.9% C+
72-75.9% C
70-71.9% C-
65-69.9% D+
60-64.9% D
Below 60% F

ATTENDANCE, ACADEMIC HONESTY, DECORUM AND OTHER POLICIES
It is required to observe Gonzaga University’s policy regarding absences and academic honesty. Students are expected to behave properly and to show self-respect and respect for others. Please be advised that laptops are allowed only to take notes during the lecture. Students may not use their computer to surf the Web or for any other personal purpose. Documented learning disabilities or other medically certified problems that need special accommodation for any of the student’s expected academic performances will be treated with the due attention.

COURSE SCHEDULE (The order and content can be changed if necessary-useful)

WEEK 1: September 13
Course presentation; distribution of the course syllabus; sociological notion of culture; introducing communication.

WEEK 2: September 20
The ritual view of communication; communication competences.
Out-of-class exercise: a sociological observation of relevant social places in Florence.

WEEK 3: September 27
Media representation of Italian culture: going beyond stereotypes.
Movie: Under the Tuscan Sun, and class discussion.

WEEK 4: October 4
Media narratives about "us and them": sport as a cross cultural tool to face diversities.
Movie: Bend it like Beckham, and class discussion.

WEEK 5: October 11
Fashion as a means of interpersonal and cultural communication; Italian fashion luxury brands and their cross cultural strategies in Italy and in the world.
Visit: Gucci Museum, Florence.
WEEK 6: October 18
Guest Lecturer – Prof. Francesca Passeri Ph.D.: *A ritual view of Food consumption in Italy*.

WEEK 7: October 25
MID-TERM EXAM

WEEK 8: November 1 –
NO CLASS – All Saints Holiday

WEEK 9: November 8
Tourism in Florence: tourism industry facing cross cultural communication issues.
Visit: DotFlorence.com, web agency in Florence working in Tourism. Meeting with Marco De La Pierre, DotFlorence CEO.

WEEK 10: November 15
STUDENTS-LED DISCUSSION

FALL BREAK – November 21 - 25

WEEK 11: November 29
Digital music consumption among young Italians: crossing cultural boundaries; music as a tool to define and redefine personal identities and to build “bridges” among humans.

WEEK 12: December 6
Global, local and glocal: Americanization, homogenization and differentiation of cultures.
*Final paper due*

WEEK 13: December 13
FINAL PRESENTATIONS