

OUR SYLLABUS

COMA 304: Intercultural Communication

Class Date/Time/Location: MWF 11:15 AM - 12:20 PM in Ingram 109	Instructor: Dr. Marnie Ritchie , Assistant Professor of Communication, mmritchie.com
Student Hours: Tuesdays 1-3 PM in Ingram 129; also available over Zoom during this time and by appointment (email me to set it up).	Email: ritchiem@plu.edu Email is the best way to reach me. I try to respond within 24 hours. I do not correspond weekdays after 5 PM nor weekends.

Jump to [click]...

ABOUT COMA 304

- Masking
- Course Description
- Course Objectives
- Required Materials
- Student Hours
- Land Acknowledgment

COURSE POLICIES

- Attendance Policy
- Self Care
- Add/Drop
- Academic Integrity
- Laptops, Tablets, Technology
- Accommodations
- Pronoun Use
- Title IX
- Class Inclusivity
- Respectful Learning Environment
- Content Warnings

ASSIGNMENTS

- How to Submit Assignments
- Discussion/Participation
- Close Readings
- Project #1
- Project #2
- Project #3
- Project #4

GRADES

- Grade Breakdown
- Grading Scale
- Explanation of Assessment

ABOUT COMA 304

Masking

I strongly encourage us to mask in our classroom space. Thank you!

Course Description

This course studies the nature of communication among people of diverse cultures. We examine contemporary theory—including postcolonial, critical, and social justice lenses—and a variety of cultural variables—including cultural backgrounds, perception, social organization, language, and nonverbal aspects of messages.

Course Objectives

1. Understand the cultural identities that influence one's own sense of self
2. Develop intercultural praxis (inquiry, framing, positioning, dialogue, reflection, and action) for transforming the world
3. Practice writing for foreign affairs contexts to prepare for potential careers and advanced study
4. Dialogue about global issues using respectful, sensitive, and competent communication strategies that address conflict

Required Materials

- Articles and Book Chapters linked in the Course Schedule, as well as on Sakai under Close Readings and Resources. **There is no textbook for this course.**
- A tool (laptop, tablet, notebook) to take notes in class
- Access to the internet

Student Hours

- In-Person Hours: TBD
- I am also available on Zoom or by appointment (Email me to set up a time: ritchiem@plu.edu)

This time is set aside for you. You are not interrupting me when you pop in or set up a time to meet with me during these hours. You should feel free to use this time as you need. I am here to be responsive to your needs and ambitions in your education. Please wear a mask if we are meeting in person.

Land Acknowledgment

PLU is on the traditional lands of the Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island and Steilacoom peoples; we acknowledge and respect the traditional caretakers of this land. We recognize that members of these peoples are leaders in their communities. We recognize that land acknowledgments are not enough.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy

To succeed in this course (to reach the learning goals), it's important for everyone to participate in discussions and complete assigned work. Trainings with the Provost's Office at PLU indicate that clear attendance policies *can* be more inclusive for students (structure is better than no structure), so that's why we have one.

Our attendance policy:

- You are allowed two freebie absences that will not affect your grade - no note or explanation is necessary for these absences.
- Further absences beyond the two freebies will result in a 10% reduction of your participation grade.
- Three late arrivals or early departures of 10 minutes or more is equivalent to one absence.
- Eight or more absences results in automatic failure of the course.

Excused absences, for which you do not need to provide documentation, include physical sickness (including COVID), religious observation, caregiving obligations, emotional and mental health barriers to attendance, trauma and safety reasons, and family emergencies. Your grade will not automatically be reduced for missing a class day for these reasons. However, **email me** if that is the case.

Do not attend class if you believe you have been exposed to COVID. Should your health or other circumstances change, negatively impacting your ability to attend our class in person, please notify me and the [Office of Accessibility and Accommodation](#) as soon as possible.

Self Care

Your personal well-being is essential and not just to your performance in college. Learning to manage stress is an ongoing process. Asking for help is a skill. If you feel that you might fall behind in work, **I ask that you email me or come to student hours ASAP.**

I encourage you to contact the Center for Student Success (CSS), which can connect you to resources. You can contact the CSS by email (success@plu.edu) or phone (253-535-8870).

Add/Drop

Students are responsible for understanding [the policies](#) and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, and similar topics.

Academic Integrity

All graded work must be the original work of the student claiming credit for it, with proper credit given to outside sources via citations. Students who use unoriginal work or permit another student to use their work will not receive for the course. Students who are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult with me. For more information, please see PLU's [statement on Academic Integrity](#).

Laptops, Tablets, Technology

I allow laptops and tablets in class, and I put considerable trust in students that you use them responsibly. Please put your phone away before our class begins.

Accommodations

I am committed to supporting the learning of all students in my class. If you have already registered with the Office of Accessibility and Accommodation (OAA), please meet with me early in the course to discuss, plan, and implement your accommodations in the course. If you have a documented disability that requires reasonable accommodations or have questions about what constitutes reasonable accommodations, please contact the OAA at 253-535-7073 or oaapl@plu.edu.

Pronoun Use

We will use one another's personally designated pronouns. Do not assume anyone's gender in the course. Some of our readings use "she and/or he" to the exclusion of a more inclusive "they." I encourage you in your reading to note these exclusions and normalize using gender neutral language in your communication practices.

Title IX

I am a mandatory reporter under Title IX. This means that if you disclose sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or gender-based discrimination to me related to the Pacific Lutheran University community, I must report it to Campus Safety, Students Rights and Responsibilities, Human Resources, and/or a member of the University Dispute Resolution Committee. If you would like to confidentially submit a disclosure, meaning one that does not activate Mandatory Reporting, you can do so via the following resources:

Advocacy Services in Center for Gender Equity

(<https://www.plu.edu/diversity-justice-sustainability/advocacy-services/> or 253-538-6304)

PLU Health Center (<http://www.plu.edu/health-center/> or 253-535-7337),

PLU Counseling Center (<https://www.plu.edu/counseling/> or 253-535-7206)

PLU University Pastor (<https://www.plu.edu/campus-ministry/staff/> or 253-535-7464)

Class Inclusivity

We will strive to make our learning spaces inclusive, equitable, and just. It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course and that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity across all dimensions, including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Here are a few best practices for ensuring our space is actively inclusive: avoid words with exclusionary histories; try to summarize what a peer is saying in class in your head before responding; do not minimize historically marginalized students' feelings; take responsibility for the impact of our words. If you are unsure what might constitute an exclusionary impact in class, let's chat in Student Hours or by appointment further.

Respectful Learning Environment

The University holds as basic the integrity and well-being of every person in the community. I am committed to providing a living, learning and working environment that is fair, consistent, caring, and supportive of intellectual and personal growth. Further, PLU is committed to protecting the rights of its community members to engage in dialogue and express ideas in an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and exploitation. This freedom of expression does not, however, entail the freedom to threaten, stalk, intimidate, harass, or abuse.

Students are expected to treat every individual with respect. The University prohibits any activities that cause or threaten physical or mental harm, suffering or exhaustion, that demean the dignity of any individual, and/or that interfere with one's academic progress, living environment, or employment responsibilities.

Content Warnings

Students are advised that difficult or sensitive issues may be represented or discussed in this class. While care will always be taken not to cause distress and to create a welcoming learning environment for everyone, there may be occasions where you will confront images or texts, or where you hear discussions that are uncomfortable for you. While I cannot presume to know what is and is not triggering or traumatizing for a student, the syllabus does include content warnings (signaled by CW) for topics in the readings that may be sensitive for students.

If you ever feel unable to continue to participate in a particular class, you may leave at any point. I will follow up to address any concerns and provide additional resources for support. You are also welcome to share any concerns about the course content you may have at any time during the term, and I promise to listen openly and respectfully.

ASSIGNMENTS

How to Submit Assignments

Work should be submitted through Sakai under Assignments.

Discussion/Participation

Point Value: 200 points

Your perspective is important to the critical discussions that we will have. Your attendance affects this grade.

How I assess discussion:

- 180-200 points – Creative insights and questions, risked speaking in class on a regular basis (1-3 times a week), consistent evidence of preparedness, generous openness to other perspectives, excellent insights and questions, took an active role in their own success, evidence of listening to peers (references to peers' comments in close reading comments and/or in class)
- 160-179 – Adequate class participation, reliable evidence of preparedness, curiosity concerning other perspectives, was present
- 140-159 – Present in class, adequate preparedness, acknowledgment of differing perspectives
- 120-159 – Unpreparedness that disrupted others' learning, no acknowledgement of differing perspectives
- 0-119 – Student interfered with peers' learning, disrespectful of class atmosphere, consistent unpreparedness, un-self-reflexive in their treatment of others

Close Readings

Point Value: 200 points (18 total readings for 10 points a piece; 20 freebie points)

To make for the best discussions, readings should be done before class. I recommend that students bring the readings to class, either in print or digitally, so that we can reference them.

This class asks you to engage in close readings of the assigned readings using hypotheses on Sakai. To do the close readings, click the Close Readings tab in the left-hand menu on Sakai. To receive credit, these should be completed *before* class.

Each close reading should have the following components:

1. TWO substantive comments on the reading. These can be a critical question, a reflection on why a sentence stuck out to you, a reference to other relevant sources, and/or a critique of something the author wrote. Be yourself; don't just assume the "discussion board voice."

2. AND ONE reply to a peer. This can be a specific compliment, a question, and/or a complication. If no one has responded to the reading yet, please make a third comment.

Project #1: Centers and Margins

Point Value: 100 points

See Sakai > Assignments > “Project 1” for more information.

For this assignment, students are asked to create a visual collage that re-structures the centers and margins of Intercultural Communication. What has been centered that you want to de-center? What has been marginal that you believe holds power from the margins?

In Unit 1, we will explore a variety of theoretical perspectives that answer these questions: Afrocentricity, Asiancentricity, Hawaiian ways of knowing, *interculturalidad* in Latin America. We will learn how these authors challenge the Eurocentric tradition in communication, and you will have an opportunity to do the same.

Project #2: Intersectional Autoethnography

Point Value: 100 points & 50 points for presentation

See Sakai > Assignments > “Project 2” for more information.

For this assignment, each student is asked to create an intersectional autoethnography. Your goal in this intersectional autoethnography is to produce a text that is a creative yet critical account of your lived experience. Your autoethnography should ultimately answer the question of what “intercultural communication” means to you. This assignment is not just listing categories of identity; instead, it is a reflection on how your experiences help you arrive at a definition of “intercultural communication.”

If you do *not* want to write about your own lived experience, you are welcome to construct an intersectional *ethnography*, where you write about how you encounter others or observe others.

The intersectional autoethnography should be at least one page in length, double-spaced. I encourage you to get creative here. Students will have the opportunity to present their work to the class.

Project #3: Research Brief on Queer/Trans Interculturality

Point Value: 100 points & 50 points for presentation

See Sakai > Assignments > “Project 3” for more information.

For this assignment, each student is asked to write a brief that researches the *intercultural communication practices* of a queer and/or trans group, community, or population in an *international* context of that student’s choice. Scholar Karma R. Chávez (2013) asks, “What would a queer or trans critique of intercultural communication scholarship entail and reveal? Why have such conversations largely been kept

outside of the boundaries of international and intercultural communication scholarship?” (p. 84) We will have these conversations with one another. We will not keep them outside the boundaries of our scholarship.

Research briefs should be at least 2 pages in length, double-spaced; a recommended format will be provided. Students will have the opportunity to present their research to the class.

Project #4: Foreign Affairs Memo

Point Value: 100 points

See Sakai > Assignments > “Project 4” for more information.

For this assignment, each student is asked to write a short memo (no more than 500 words) that models the structure of written communications in foreign affairs. We will vote on our top three current events together, and students will have a choice of what event to write about. We will look at many examples.

In Unit 4, students are asked to learn about intercultural competence from a variety of cross-cultural contexts. This assignment applies our intercultural competence by modeling the kind of writing you would do in a foreign affairs career.

GRADES

Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Point Value
Discussion/Participation	200
Close Readings	200
Project 1	100
Project 2 & Presentation	150
Project 3 & Presentation	150
Project 4	100
TOTAL:	900

Grading Scale

Please see grading scale [here](#).

Explanation of Assessment

I use rubrics which are made available to students. Please wait 24 hours before speaking with me about any graded assignments. Any grade complaints must be submitted within seven days of receiving the grade in writing.

CITATIONAL ETHICS

I thank Dr. J. Jackson for inspiration from their “Postcolonial/Global/World” syllabus and Dr. Kate Hoyt for the idea and template for the “live” syllabus.

OUR COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note: the course schedule is subject to change at instructor's discretion.
Any alterations will be announced over email and reflected in this "live" schedule

COURSE INTRODUCTION			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due By Start of Class
W 02/08	Course Introduction and Drafting Learning Community Agreement	Look over the Course Syllabus and Course Schedule (the document you are in) Read this Short Guide to Pronouns	Introduce yourself in our Introduction Slideshow Link to Collective Notetaking
F 02/10	On Ethnocentrism and Ethnorelativism: In-class screening and discussion of "Old Enough!" and SNL parody	Come to class!	---
M 02/13	Elements of White Supremacist Culture (WSC)	" White Supremacy Culture in Organizations ," CoCo Part 1 (Optional) See this free website about this resource: https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/	Close Reading 1

W 02/15	Elements of White Supremacist Culture (WSC)	<p>“White Supremacy Culture in Organizations,” CoCo Part 2</p> <p>(Optional) See this free website about this resource: https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/</p>	Close Reading 2
F 02/17	Discussion of WSC	Please come to class ready to discuss antidotes to the elements	<p>Watch: “What is Accountability?” Barnard Center for Research on Women, October 2020 (CW: Mention of assault and other violence)</p> <p>Look over where we see the WSC features document</p>
M 02/20	No Class: PLU-Recognized Holiday		
UNIT 1: THE CENTERS AND MARGINS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due By Start of Class
W 02/22	Does the US have a dominant culture?	<p>“Opening the Conversation: Studying Intercultural Communication” Kathryn Sorrells (CW: Mention of slavery p. 13)</p> <p>“Communicating Across Cultures with People from the United States” by Dianne Hofner Saphiere</p>	Close Readings 3 & 4

F 02/24	Afrocentricity and Communication Introduce Project 1	“Afrocentricity,” Molefi Kete Asante	Close Reading 5
M 02/27	Asiancentricity and Communication	“The Asiacentric Turn in Asian Communication Studies,” Yoshitaka Miike	Close Reading 6
W 03/01	No Class: Sorry, y’all!		
F 03/03	Intercultural Communication Game: BARNGA	Come to class!	---
M 03/06	Workshop for Project 1: How to Create a Collage	---	Bring a laptop to class if you have one. The computer lab (Ingram 115A) will also be available.
W 03/08	Hawaiian Ways of Knowing	“Indigenous and Authentic: Hawaiian Epistemology and the Triangulation of Meaning,” Manulani Aluli-Meyer	Close Reading 7
F 03/10	Interculturality in Latin America	“Interculturality Versus Intercultural Competencies in Latin America” by Adriana Medina-López-Portillo and John H. Sinnigen (Optional): “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor” Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (CW: Colonial violence)	Close Reading 8

M 03/13	Islamic Worldviews	<p><u>“Communication and Cultural Settings: An Islamic Perspective,”</u> Hamid Mowlana</p> <p>Optional additional reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt of Do Muslim Women Need Saving?, Lila Abu-Lughod 	<p>Close Reading 9</p> <p>Watch: Lila Abu-Lughod, <u>“Do Muslim Women Need Saving?”</u> (3 min)</p>
W 03/15	Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication	<p><u>“The Functions of Silence in India”</u> by Nemi C. Jain and Anuradha Matukumalli</p> <p>Optional additional reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>“Silence of a Pakistani Muslim Woman,”</u> Sakina Jangbar 	<p>Close Reading 10</p>
F 03/17	Section Wrap-Up	---	Project 1 Due

UNIT 2: INTERSECTIONAL INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due By Start of Class
M 03/20	DeWhitening Intersectionality Introduce Project 2	<p><u>“Black Feminist Thought, Intersectionality, and Intercultural Communication”</u> by Aisha Durham (CW: Mention of attack against CeCe McDonald on p. 52; mention of racial slur as studied by Amber Johnson on p. 52; mention of state-sanctioned murder p. 52)</p> <p>Optional additional reading:</p>	<p>Close Reading 11</p> <p>See definitions of ethnography, autoethnography, and intersectional autoethnography here.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On Collards,” a brief autoethnography by Aisha Durham 	
W 03/22	Immigration and Identity	“Revisiting Cross-Cultural Adaptation: An Embodied Approach,” Tomide Oloruntobi	Close Reading 12
F 03/24	No Class: Everyone is tired		
M 03/27 - F 03/31	No Class: Spring Break		
M 04/03	Intercultural Alliances In-Class Film Screening: Nailed It! (58 minutes)	---	---
W 04/05	Presentations	---	<p>Project 2 Due (Everyone’s is Due!)</p> <p>Please come prepared to present!</p>
F 04/07	No Class: PLU-Recognized Holiday		
M 04/10	Presentations	---	<p>Please come prepared to present!</p>

W 04/12	Presentations	---	Please come prepared to present!
F 04/14 & M 04/17	No Class: Professor at wedding		
UNIT 3: QUEER AND TRANS* INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due By Start of Class
W 04/19	No Class: Professor Trapped in Texas. 🤖		
F 04/21	<p>Queer and Trans* International and Intercultural Communication</p> <p>Introduce Project 3</p> <p>Workshop: How to Do Research for Project 3</p>	<p>“On the Horizon: Desiring Global Queer and Trans* Studies in International and Intercultural Communication” by Shinsuke Eguchi</p>	Close Reading 13
M 04/24	In-Class Film Screening: <i>Muxes</i> (60 minutes, Ivan Olita)	---	<p>Fill out this brief form for topic selection for Project 3.</p> <p>(If you’re struggling with choosing a topic, see the supplemental handout under Project 3 on Sakai. You can also explore this website that</p>

			describes worldwide genders. Please note that this map is not comprehensive.)
W 04/26	Lecture: Hofstede's Six Cultural Dimensions Masculine-Feminine in Intercultural Communication	“The Masculine–Feminine Construct in Cross-Cultural Research,” James W. Chesebro, David T. McMahan, Preston Russett, Eric J. Schumacher	Close Reading 14
F 04/28	How do cultures talk about toileting?	“Shithole Rhetorics” by Lamiyah Bahrainwala (CW: Discussion of anti-Muslim sentiment, ecomisogyny, racist, ableist, and anti-queer rhetoric; discussion of Trump’s rhetoric)	Close Reading 15
M 05/01	Sharing research	---	Please come prepared to present!
W 05/03	Sharing research	---	Please come prepared to present!
F 05/05	Sharing research	---	Please come prepared to present! Project 3 Due through Sakai (Everyone’s is Due!)
UNIT 4: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due By Start of Class

M 05/08	<p>Intercultural Sensitivity</p> <p>In-Class Self-Assessment of Intercultural Sensitivity</p> <p>Introduce Project 4</p>	<p>“Intercultural Sensitivity” by R. Michael Paige and Janet M. Bennett FYI: This model is used by PLU study away!</p>	<p>Close Reading 16</p>
W 05/10	<p>Lecture: Power Distance</p>	---	<p>Listen to “Power Distance in Cultures,” Laurentine Amaliza, Culture Flow (8 min)</p> <p>Bring your intercultural sensitivity scores from last class!</p>
F 05/12	<p>Time Orientation: Lecture</p>	---	<p>Listen to “About Time: Cultural Differences,” Laurentine Amaliza, Culture Flow (10 min)</p>
M 05/15	<p>Trust: Lecture</p>	---	<p>Listen to “The Tricky Obligations of utang na loob,” NPR’s Code Switch, March 29, 2023 (30 mins)</p>
W 05/17	<p>Project 4: Sharing Our Memos</p>	---	<p>Project 4 Due</p>
F 05/19	<p>Final Class Day:</p>	---	<p>Potluck day. We’ll have cupcakes.</p>

	Writing thank you notes (Materials provided). Let's take time to practice gratitude (reflection as praxis).		
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FYI: There is no midterm or final for this course.