Foundations for Intercultural Competence
GLBL 102 | CRN: 20923
Time: Tu/Th 12-1:50 PM | Location: GSH 123

Instructor: Dr. Lesley Jo Weaver, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Email: ljweaver@uoregon.edu
Office hours: Tu 10:00-11:30 AM, Wed 12:30-2 PM via Zoom. Please make an appointment for a time slot in this window at https://calendly.com/ljweaver. If normal office hours times don’t work for you, please email for availability.

Graduate Educator: Ms. Taylor Paone
Email: tpaone@uoregon.edu
Office hours: Mon/Wed 12:15-1:45 PM in PLC 315. If normal office hours times don’t work for you, please email for availability.

Grader: Tobias Lehmann
Email: tlehmann@uoregon.edu
Please email with grading questions, or to set up a Zoom appointment.

Course Description: What does it take to study and work across cultures successfully? What does “success” even mean in this context? Most of us are taught little, if anything, about how to engage with cultural others, even though we are challenged to do so in our everyday lives. This course aims to teach you practical skills and analytic frameworks that will help you have safe, respectful, enlightening experiences in any setting where you might be engaging people from other cultures—but particularly in experiences abroad. Weekly topics include (but are not limited to) health and safety, humor, privacy, money and gifting, food and eating, interreligious dialog, language learning, legal concerns, volunteerism, and the taking and use of images on social media. The course is lecture-based but strongly focused on active learning and cultural case studies that encourage students to develop a healthy tolerance for ambiguity, uncertainty, and thinking in non-binary terms. In that spirit, rather than taking exams, students will be evaluated based on weekly assignments they will carry out in the larger university and Eugene communities. There are no prerequisites.

Course Learning Outcomes: Students who complete all requirements should be able to:
1. Identify and reflect on their own cultural values, and how those might shape their interactions with others
2. Practice new modes of meta-cognition and critical thinking: non-binary thinking, suspension of judgment, and tolerance for ambiguity
3. Evaluate various potential resolutions to ethically ambiguous scenarios involving interaction across cultural difference
4. Anticipate some challenges they may face when working across cultures and develop proactive approaches to dealing with them
5. Identify and make use of campus-based resources for intercultural interaction, study, and communication

Required Texts: There is no required textbook for this course. All readings and assigned case studies will be available in the Canvas course site or on the Internet.

Grading: This course is explicitly designed around active learning principles. The grading system is set up to reward students who are actively engaged both inside and outside of class. Your course grade will be based on: 1) your completion of 9 weekly exercises outside of class, on which you will submit 500-word written reflections that draw on course readings; 2) a 1000-word final reflection paper; 3) in-class participation and attendance in 19 class sessions. Please see the tables below, which contain descriptions that are aimed to help you understand what constitutes “good” or not-so-good levels of participation and writing.

You can earn up to 300 points in this class, as follows:
1. Weekly exercises and written reflections (up to 20 pts each x 9 assignments) .......................................................... …..180 points
2. Final reflection paper..........................................................60 points
3. Class attendance and participation (up to 3 points per class x 19 classes) ...............................................................57 points
4. Submitting final course evaluation at end of term .................................................................3 points

**TOTAL POSSIBLE** 300 points

**Grading scale:** A+=98+; A=93-97; A-=90-92; B+=88-89; B=83-87; B-=80-82; C+=78-79; C=73-77; C-=70-72; D+=68-69; D=63-67; D-=60-62; F=59 or below

**Class attendance and participation:** Attendance and participation are mandatory in this course and constitute a significant part of your final grade. Even though this is a large class, students are expected to contribute meaningfully during full group discussions either via verbal comments or Canvas chat comments, and in small group work. We will assess your course participation grade each class day as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance and participation</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Not present, or present but appears distracted some or all of the time, does not offer comments</td>
<td>Present but arrives late or leaves early; or present and appears to be paying attention but does not offer any comments</td>
<td>Present and fully engaged for entire class time and offers at least one verbal or written comment</td>
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**Weekly Assignments:** There are 9 weekly class activities after which you will write short (roughly 500-word) reflection papers worth 20 points each. These form the heart of the course. Each assignment is due on Canvas at 11:59 AM on the listed due date, generally one week after it was assigned. This syllabus contains an appendix with a detailed description, step-by-step guide, and grading rubric for each of the 9 exercises. Assignment dates and due dates are listed in the quick-reference table below, and again in the day-by-day course schedule toward the end of the syllabus. There will be weeks when your work on two separate assignments overlaps. Please plan accordingly. Remember, these stand in place of midterm and final exams, so they’re very important! Please also see the written work guideline below to understand how we will evaluate these assignments in a general way. Each assignment has an associated rubric specific to it that can be found in the appendix and also on Canvas.

**Final reflection:** In lieu of a final exam, you’ll write and submit a reflection paper of about 1000 words worth 60 points toward your final grade. Choose a world area where you envision potentially studying or working. Using the personal and counterpart profiles you created in Exercise 2 as a starting point, plus the insights you’ve accrued over the course of the term, identify areas where you might expect to encounter culturally-based differences and challenges. Drawing directly on course readings and concepts, discuss what you might do to address those challenges in a culturally relativistic, respectful manner. See the appendix for a detailed rubric and fuller description of the assignment.

**Assignment due date quick reference guide:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date assigned</th>
<th>Date due (before class, on Canvas)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 1-Observation interpretation</td>
<td>Jan 11</td>
<td>Jan 13 *note short turnaround time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 2-counterpart profile</td>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Jan 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise 3-proxemics</td>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
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<td>Exercise 4-life aspirations</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Feb 3</td>
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<td>Exercise 5-food</td>
<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>Feb 8</td>
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<td>Exercise 6-religion</td>
<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>Feb 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise 7-language roundtable</td>
<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>Mar 1 *note 2 weeks to complete</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise 8-self-presentation</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Feb 24</td>
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<td>Exercise 9-social media</td>
<td>Mar 3</td>
<td>Mar 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final reflection paper</td>
<td>Mar 10</td>
<td>Mar 15 (finals week)</td>
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**Written assignment guidelines (these also apply to your final paper):**

*Excellent (20 pts)*
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Written work presented at a mature level, organized well and carefully edited, with correct grammar, good vocabulary, and high quality of careful and informed thinking. Meets all course expectations timely and completely. Shows thorough and active grasp of concepts and demonstrates exceptional ability to synthesize course lectures and materials.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Good (17-19 pts)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Written work is presented at the college level, with good grammar, vocabulary, and thought, with good command of content and organization and only a few minor flaws. Meets course expectations timely and completely. Shows good grasp of concepts and ability to synthesize course lectures and materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfactory (14-16 pts)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Written work is presented at college level with adequate grammar, vocabulary, and thought, but with frequent flaws, problems with organization, weak or minimal grasp of concepts, and limited ability to synthesize the course lectures and materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minimal Credit (10-13 pts)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Written work is marred by serious problems of grammar, vocabulary, disorganization or unclear expression. Fails to meet basic minimum course expectations in a timely way. Grasp of concepts is incomplete or uncertain, and student does not adequately synthesize lecture and course materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Far Below Standard Expectations (0-9 pts)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written work does not achieve college level grammar, vocabulary, organization, and thought. Does not master concepts and lacks the ability to synthesize the lecture and course materials.</td>
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**Deadlines and class make-up policy:** Given the exigencies of the COVID pandemic, each student will automatically be allowed one “freebie” late reflection assignment without penalty, and without making prior arrangements. This “freebie” late assignment must be turned in within a week of the original due date to receive credit. After that “freebie” late post, additional late posts will be graded as usual but will also have one percentage point deducted from that grade for every 24 hours of lateness. The final reflection paper is excluded from the “freebie” option.

Each student is also allowed 3 “freebie” missed classes, meaning you’ll receive full points for attendance and participation on your missed days. After those 3 freebies, you’ll receive 0 points for participation and attendance on days you miss, regardless of whether or not you have a valid excuse.

**Class conduct and device policy:** My goal as an instructor is to promote a classroom environment that supports those who wish to learn. To this end, please ensure you do nothing to interrupt others’ learning. Do your readings because class discussions will assume you have, arrive on time, and avoid unrelated activities during class. In this class, we discuss many controversial social issues. Our educational mission is enhanced by the robust exchange of ideas that occurs between a diverse student body, faculty, and staff within a respectful and inclusive learning environment. In that spirit, all perspectives are welcome in class discussion, provided they are presented respectfully.

**Academic misconduct:** The Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students’ obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

**Getting your needs met at the UO**

**Accessible education:** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation.
You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 155 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

**Basic needs:** Any student experiencing problems meeting basic needs can visit this helpful UO-specific website: [https://blogs.uoregon.edu/basicneeds/](https://blogs.uoregon.edu/basicneeds/) and contact the Office of the Dean of Students Office (346-3216) for support. Furthermore, if you are comfortable doing so, please let me know about your situation so I can help point you in the right direction for assistance.

**Dreamers:** I support all students, regardless of national origin or immigration status. For more information on campus resources for undocumented or Dreamer students, see: [https://www.uoregon.edu/dreamers](https://www.uoregon.edu/dreamers). International student support services are available at: [https://isss.uoregon.edu/current-students](https://isss.uoregon.edu/current-students).

**Mental health and wellness:** I recognize that being a college student is filled with stressors and challenges to student well-being. For assistance with mental health and wellness, seek out these campus resources at [https://counseling.uoregon.edu](https://counseling.uoregon.edu) or the after-hours support hotline at 541.346.3227. The Duck Nest in the EMU offers many resources to support student wellness, see: [https://health.uoregon.edu/ducknest](https://health.uoregon.edu/ducknest).
Daily schedule of topics, readings, and exercises
(subject to change at the discretion of the instructor)

Jan 4: Frameworks: cultural relativism and tolerance for ambiguity

Reading:
- Miner “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema” (PDF on Canvas)
- Tolerance for Ambiguity
- Robson The ‘Hidden Talent’ that Determines Success
- Podcast episode: Brene Brown and Barack Obama on leadership, family, and service:
  https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-president-barack-obama-on-leadership-family-and-service/

Jan 6: How does who you are shape what you think and how you interact with others? PART I—intercultural communication

Reading:
- Barna “Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication” (PDF on Canvas)
- Bennett Intercultural Competence chapter (can skip sections on pp. 157-8 and 160-164; PDF on Canvas)
- Unite for Sight Module 7, which is a good summary of the Bennett piece

Jan 11: How does who you are shape what you think and how you interact with others? PART II—examining oneself and others

Reading:
- How Job Candidates Show Their Emotions May Result in Hiring Disparities
- Mendez “Chapter 2: Know yourself” From The Culture Solution (PDF on Canvas)
- Video: The Danger of Civility - Cleveland

*Exercise 1 assigned: Observation or interpretation? Due Jan 13 by class time.

In class: Sara Clark (Mills International Center): What’s your social/cultural identity?

Jan 13: Jumping in: Dealing with culture shock and getting immersed

Reading:
- Choo Surviving Culture Shock is Key to Working Abroad.
- Darrah How is cultural immersion different to cultural appropriation?

*Exercise 1 due on Canvas before the start of class.
*Exercise 2 assigned: Create a counterpart profile. Due Jan 20 by class time.

Jan 18: Conceptions of self, space, and privacy

Reading:
- Nisbett “The Geography of Thought” Ch. 3 (PDF on Canvas)
- Storti “Understanding the World's Cultures” pp. 26-37 (PDF on Canvas)

*Exercise 3 assigned: Proxemics. Due Jan 27 by class time.
Jan 20: Conceptions of time and its value

Reading:
- Cultural Differences: Monochronic versus Polychronic
- Lewis How Different Cultures Understand Time
- Storti “Understanding the World’s Cultures” pp. 55-66 (PDF on Canvas) RESCAN

*Exercise 2 due on Canvas before the start of class.

Jan 25: Race and difference

Reading:
- Read Aulette Ch 4 (Canvas)

Jan 27: “The good life”: aspiration and cultural understandings of social inequality

Reading:
- Chua “In Pursuit of the Good Life” Chapter 1 (PDF on Canvas)

*Exercise 3 due on Canvas before the start of class.
*Exercise 4 assigned: In-class international student panel about life aspirations; later reflection. Due Feb 3.

Feb 1: Food and eating

Reading:
- Guptill et al. “Food and Identity: Fitting in and Standing Out” (PDF on Canvas)
- Groundwater Have you ever refused a local dish? That's not polite

*Exercise 5 assigned: Eat something that’s unappealing to you. Due Feb 8 by class time.

Feb 3: Money and gifts

Reading
- Emergency Sex pp. 29-43 (PDF on Canvas)
- “Agenda Setting in Intercultural Transactions” (PDF on Canvas)

*Exercise 4 due on Canvas before the start of class.

Feb 8: Religion

Readings:
- Explore Harvard University’s Pluralism Project, including the page for the most common religion in your world area of focus. Read and take notes on this to prepare for small group discussion.
- Then, choose 2 of the short essays under the Pluralism Project’s “Today’s Challenges” page that most interest you. Read and take notes on them to prepare for small group discussion.
- Smith et al. “Mapping American Adolescent Subjective Religiosity” (PDF on Canvas)

* Exercise 5 due on Canvas before the start of class.
* Exercise 6 assigned: Attend a religious service. Due Feb 15 by class time.

**Feb 10: Laws and protocols**

Reading:
- Storti “Understanding the World’s Cultures” pp. 38-54 (PDF on Canvas)
- Video “Adam Ruins Everything: Why Tipping Should Be Banned”

**Feb 15: Language learning and its limitations**

Reading:
- Peace Corps Ongoing Language Learning manual (pp. 3-16 and 49-71 only) (PDF on Canvas)
- Ludden You Are What You Speak
- Language universals

*Exercise 6 due on Canvas before the start of class.
*Exercise 7 assigned: Attend a Mills Center Language roundtable this week or next. Due Mar 1 (extra time for scheduling purposes!).

**Feb 17: Gender dynamics**

Reading:
- Case 1 “Developing cultural understanding”
- Why are so few male students studying abroad?
- Women abroad

*Exercise 8 assigned: Present yourself in a way that’s atypical for you. Due Feb 24.

**Feb 22: Sexuality and romantic relationships**

Reading:
- Emergency Sex pp. 95-104 (PDF on Canvas)
- Kulick “Taboo” Introduction (PDF on Canvas)

**Feb 24: Health and wellbeing: maintaining yours and understanding others’**

Reading:
- Doing Development in West Africa, pp. 137-52 (PDF on Canvas)
- Case 5 “Addressing Ancillary Benefits”
- Case 3 “Exceeding Level of Training”

*Exercise 8 due on Canvas before the start of class.

**Mar 1: Doing good and doing it well: The ethics of international development work**

Reading:
- Emergency Sex pp. 127-8, 135-38, 139-42, 172-74 (PDF on Canvas)
- Hobbes. Stop Trying to Save the World: Big ideas are destroying international development

*Exercise 7 due on Canvas before the start of class.
Mar 3: Social media and representation

Reading:
- Poverty porn vs empowerment: The best and worst aid videos of 2016
- Gharib Stunning photos depict migrants ‘as they’d rather be seen’

*Exercise 9 assigned: Find a “bad” social media example. Due Mar 10.

Mar 8: Coming back and moving forward

Reading:
- Storti The Art of Coming Home, Chapter 1 (PDF on Canvas)
- Unite for Sight Module 11: Reverse culture shock
- Skim back over “Tolerance for Ambiguity” piece from first week

Mar 10: Catchup and Q&A

No reading!

*Exercise 9 due on Canvas before the start of class.
* Final reflection assigned. There is no final exam in this class; your final reflection will stand in lieu of the exam. See Appendix of this syllabus for a full description. Due Mar 15 on Canvas before 11:59 AM.
APPENDIX: Assignment details.

Exercise #1: Observation or interpretation?

This exercise will give you the opportunity to practice differentiating between observations and interpretations of behaviors. The purpose is to begin to implement the new ways of thinking that were introduced during Sara Clark’s guest lecture—specifically, helping you recognize and interrupt the process of assigning interpretations to other people’s behaviors that may not accurately reflect their intentions. This is a difficult mental shift to make, but it’s very useful when working across cultures, or just in your everyday life.

Steps:

- Refer to the handout titled “Engaging Our Stories” that you received in the class session with Sara Clark’s workshop.
- Throughout the day (whatever day you start the assignment), look around for behaviors you find confusing or irritating. Choose one incident about which you will write a reflection.
- In the body of your reflection:
  - Describe the incident. Again, it should be something that you found confusing or irritating. It might be, for instance, that your roommate did not wash their dishes.
  - Describe how you initially interpreted it. This should be your knee-jerk reaction: whatever you were feeling that resulted in you being confused or irritated. An example would be, “I am so frustrated. My roommate didn’t wash the dishes because s/he is lazy and expects me to do it for her. What an entitled jerk.”
  - Then, following the handout, ask yourself: “Why would a reasonable person do this?” and write at least two possible interpretations of the behavior based on your response to that question. For instance: “S/he might have gotten an upsetting phone call right after cooking food, so s/he forgot to do the dishes,” or “S/he might be planning to do the dishes later.”
  - Then, following the handout, ask yourself: “If they have different values or norms than me, what could be going on?” and write at least two possible interpretations of the behavior based on your response to that question. For instance: “S/he might come from a household where someone else always did the dishes, so they don’t think of it as their responsibility,” or “S/he and I have different ideas about how long dishes can be left in the sink before it’s a problem.”
- In a final reflection paragraph: Following the handout section “Engaging the situation, some options,” close by reflecting on how these insights caused you to respond differently to the incident than you would otherwise. For instance, “Instead of yelling at my roommate and calling her lazy, I would ask if she was ok,” or “Instead of feeling angry, I realized we needed to create a chore wheel because expectations weren’t clear.”

Rubric: This exercise is worth a total of 20 points toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A. You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses. As with other reflections, you should aim for ~500 words total.

4 points  Detailed description of the incident and your initial interpretation
4 points  “Why would a reasonable person do this?” alternative interpretations. For full credit, list at least two, and be creative and expansive in your thinking. More than two is fine.
4 points  “If they have different values or norms than me, what could be going on?” alternative interpretations. For full credit, list at least two, and be creative and expansive in your thinking. More than two is fine.
8 points  Final reflection paragraph: “Engaging the situation, some options.” How did this exercise give you new insight or perspective on the incident you chose? This is the largest category of points for this exercise, so be specific and detailed in your response. Do not simply say, “I realized someone might have different reasons for doing this than I initially thought.” Instead, think through how that realization might cause
you to respond differently to the incident, tolerate the behavior, or even be able to creatively problem-solve in ways that you would not have thought of before.

**Exercise #2: Create a personal and a counterpart profile**

This exercise will accomplish two things: first, it will get you familiar with some of the resources available for intercultural study at the UO. Second, it will give you the opportunity to begin to develop a systematic understanding of cultural differences in a world area of your choosing.

Please note, this exercise contains two parts: one you’ll complete on your own using our class readings as a guide before our class meeting on Jan 13 (your personal profile), and one you’ll complete after our Jan 13 class with outside research (your counterpart profile). The purpose is to help you develop insight about how other cultures work. Your final submission will consist of both your personal profile from before class and the counterpart profile you completed on your own after class.

**Steps:**

- **Read Mendez “Chapter 3: Who are They? Create a Counterpart Profile” on Canvas. This will serve as the guide for the exercise.**
- **Create your personal profile before our Jan 13 class meeting, using the questions in Mendez's Ch 2 (one of your readings for this day of class; see especially the instructions on pp. 32-33 of that chapter). It asks you to mark on the chart on page 32 where you fall for each spectrum, based on your response to the questions they provide. Then it asks you to identify your "stronger" (farther toward the ends) and "weaker" (closer to the middle) tendencies. Once you've done so, please write up at least one example where you have had an intercultural conflict around your strong tendencies. This will comprise your personal profile. We'll share some elements of these in class on the 13th, and you'll then be halfway toward finishing exercise 2. As an example, let's say that during the Mendez reading I identified that I have a strong tendency to organize along a schedule rather than letting things flow (for the record—I do, in fact, have that tendency). I can recall many times when I have experienced intercultural conflict because of that tendency. For example, when I was doing fieldwork in India during the monsoon season, my research assistant would sometimes just not show up for an interview we had scheduled. That would mean the interview couldn't get done. From her perspective, appointments were contingent on larger factors such as the weather (in fact, monsoons can make roads pretty messy and hard to cross, though rarely impossible). To me, appointments were appointments no matter the weather, and heavy rain was no excuse for missing them. So we argued more than once about what "counted" as a valid reason for missing an appointment. Eventually I had to accept that she--and most other people around me--were operating from a more fluid organizational tendency than I was, and I had to accept that she sometimes wouldn't be there. So I would write about that as an example of one of my strong tendencies, and then I would do the same for other strong tendencies I'd identified for myself. This would comprise my "personal profile" portion of Exercise 2.**
- **After Jan 13 class, research your country or area of interest. You may go to the Mills Center to browse their library, which contains series of books called *Culture Shock* and *Culture Smart* about cultural engagement styles in countries around the world. Or, you may search online for cultural guides using reputable free resources such as the Human Relations Area Files, World Bank country profiles, or the CIA World Factbook.**
- **Create a counterpart profile for a group of your choice using the resources you’ve found and the Mendez book as an instruction manual.**
- **Write a ~500-word counterpart profile. This should address as many of the elements of a counterpart profile listed in the Mendez chapter as possible (including indirect vs direct, neutral vs expressive, achievement vs endowment, network vs process, independent vs group, rule vs situation, opportunity vs thoroughness, schedule vs flow). It should also contain a reflection on how that profile would or would not apply to everyone in the world area you’ve chosen.** See the rubric, below, for more details.
- **Post BOTH your personal profile from class and your counterpart profile to Canvas.**

**Rubric:** This exercise is worth a total of 20 points toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A. You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses.
Address as many of the elements of the personal and counterpart profile as you can from Mendez’s chapter: indirect vs direct, neutral vs expressive, achievement vs endowment, network vs process, independent vs group, rule vs situation, opportunity vs thoroughness, schedule vs flow. You can get up to a maximum of 16 points in this category, and there are 8 elements listed by Mendez. Not each book will allow you to address each of these elements with equal thoroughness in a given world area, so you should pick those about which you can gather the most information. In other words, you don’t have to address all 8 elements, but you should address at least 4. Points will be awarded based on thoroughness—so 4 thoroughly described elements is worth the same as 8 minimally described elements.

Reflect on how the profile you have created would or would not apply to everyone in the world area you have chosen. How might subcultures or countercultures differ in their cultural expressions from the mainstream elements you have identified in this assignment?

Exercise #3: Proxemics
This exercise will get you out and about doing fieldwork in your everyday world. You'll be focusing explicitly on forms of nonverbal communication. The purpose of this exercise is to help you further develop the “eye” for objective observation of everyday interactions that probably seem natural to you right now.

- Choose a public location where people have to share space (restaurant, bar, elevator, gym, bathroom, bus, etc.).
- Watch how people move in the space.
- Note these patterns and other relevant observations in a notebook.
- Do something different than what these patterns would suggest you should do—in other words, violate the norm you’ve identified. Note how others react. Note how YOU react. Take detailed notes. You'll need at least one solid example of a specific interaction to write about in the reflection.
- Write a reflection of ~500 words describing your proxemics experiment, and post it on Canvas before the deadline (see the rubric below for details on content).

CAUTION!!!!!!! Make SURE you choose a social norm involving the use of space. For instance, noting typical clothing patterns and dressing differently is NOT a norm involving the use of space. Saying socially inappropriate things to people is NOT a norm involving the use of space. **DO NOT DO ANYTHING THAT COULD GET YOU SUSPENDED, EXPELLED, OR BEATEN UP.**

Rubric: This exercise is worth a total of **20 points** toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A. You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses.

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<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Appropriate choice and detailed description of the norm you observed</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>What you did to violate the norm; why you chose the actions you chose</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Description of general reactions you received from others; your own reactions to violating the norms</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Concrete example(s) of an interaction(s) you had</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Reflecting on what these norms imply (this means thinking about the larger cultural issues that come up when you pay attention to these norms; what observing these norms can tell you about the larger cultural values we hold; why we might hold these norms instead of others; etc.)</td>
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Exercise #4: International student panel about life aspirations.
People in different cultures share different ideas about what counts as a “successful life,” and those differences can reveal a lot about a person’s or group’s deepest values and beliefs. This assignment is designed to get you thinking about what constitutes the “good life” for someone with a different background than your own.

Steps:
- In class, observe a panel of UO international students who will speak in a roundtable-style discussion about their and their compatriots’ life aspirations. (We will prepare a set of prompts as a class in advance.)
- Take detailed notes about students’ responses to our questions.
- Write a ~500 word response reflecting on life aspirations you and your fellow countrypeople hold, and comparing those with some of the aspirations you heard during the in-class panel. (See the rubric below for details on content.)

Rubric: This exercise is worth a total of 20 points toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A. You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses.


7 points Identifying and reflecting on some of the international students’ life aspirations, and how those might be influenced by their home cultures’ values and ideals. Examine the same dimensions for them that you did for your own aspirations: these might include job, income, dwelling, transport, social/family/romantic life, appearance, leisure time, etc.

6 points Comparing thoughtfully between your and their aspirations. How similar or different were they? In what specific ways? What were you expecting out of this comparison, prior to the class? Did anything surprise you? If so, what and why?

Exercise #5: Eat something you think is ‘gross.’
Feeding guests is one way that most cultures demonstrate respect, hospitality, and a desire to connect. Work abroad almost invariably involves situations where you will be expected to try and enthusiastically receive foods that are unfamiliar to you. This usually happens in a public setting where people are carefully watching your reactions. This exercise is designed to simulate that experience. The purpose is to get you to eat a food you would not otherwise choose to eat, practice publicly receiving it with goodwill, and reflect on the experience.

Steps:
- Go to a restaurant, grocery store, food-related event, or friend’s house where you know you will be able to find food that isn’t part of your normal diet. The farther outside your food comfort zone, the better. This food should not just be something outside your personal comfort zone, but outside your cultural comfort zone—something that wouldn’t be considered palatable by most people in your culture of origin. Eating green jelly beans even though you only like the red ones isn’t a great choice. If you’re American, eating chicken feet, tongue, liver, insects, flowers, etc. would be a better choice.
- Eat that thing. Take at least 4 hearty bites. Pretend as convincingly as possible that you like it, even if there is nobody around watching you.
- Write a ~500 word reflection on the experience that draws on ideas of cultural relativism, food taboo, and the social meaning of food from this week’s and the previous weeks’ readings. Post it to Canvas before the deadline. See the rubric below for details on content of your post.

Rubric: This exercise is worth a total of 20 points toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including
the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A. You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses.

4 points  Appropriate choice and detailed description of the event, setting, and food item

6 points  Description of the social interaction around your consumption of the food item. What was your initial reaction? How did others react? How did you cope with having to eat something that doesn’t really seem like ‘food’ to you? What did it feel like? What kinds of emotions or thoughts did it provoke, and how did you overcome those to eat your 4 (or more) bites?

10 points  Reflect on the experience, drawing on the readings from this week. How would an impartial observer describe the experience you just had in terms of cultural food taboos and culturally mediated food preferences? How about in terms of cultural relativism? What was the meaning of the social interaction you had around the food? In particular, what underlying understanding of food taxonomies was violated by eating this strange item?

Exercise #6: Attend a religious service.
In many places, religious participation is an integral part of everyday life. In intercultural work, people may invite you to religious events as a way to welcome you into the community. And, you’re likely to be quizzed about your own religious beliefs as a matter of everyday conversation. It is usually wise to accept those offers to engage around religion, even if the faith or denomination differs from your own beliefs, as a way to develop mutual understanding and demonstrate goodwill. This exercise is designed to simulate that aspect of fieldwork by providing you an experience of interreligious participation. The purpose is to get you thinking (and feeling!) about what it is like to be a religious outsider, and how you might want to handle those differences in your everyday conversations and practices.

Steps:
• Identify a religious service or worship event that is hosted by a religion that differs from yours (or, if you are non-religious, pick any one).
• Attend that event. Bring a notebook, and inconspicuously jot down things you observe that seem strange or unusual to you.
• But don’t just sit quietly in the corner. Respectfully participate in the event to the extent that you can, and talk with people in the group afterward. You can use things you’ve jotted down that you didn’t understand as a way to start conversations if you would like. People in religious communities are almost always interested in explaining their practices to a curious, respectful outsider. You can also ask people how they got involved in the community, or what it means to them.
• Write a ~500 word reflection on the experience and post it to Canvas before the deadline. See the rubric below for details on content of your post.

Rubric: This exercise is worth a total of 20 points toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A. You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses.

2 points  Appropriate choice and detailed description of the event and setting

6 points  Description of your observations. What seemed strange or unusual about the practices you observed? What was recognizable based on your own personal experiences either in a religious faith or in watching depictions of religious events (e.g., in movies)?

12 points  Reflect on the meaning of the experience for you and for the participants, drawing on the conversations you had after the event. How did it make you feel to sit there as an outsider? How did it feel to talk to people? What made you comfortable/uncomfortable, and how did you respond to those feelings? Especially: did people try to bring you into their practice, and how did you respond respectfully? How would you frame all of this in terms of cultural relativism?
Exercise #7: Attend a Mills Center language roundtable this week or next.

When you work interculturally, you will very likely engage in some language learning. This learning can be formal (in a classroom) or informal (in conversation with others). Learning some words in another language is often a fun activity that people use to teach you how to be part of their social setting. But this can cause some people to feel shy or uncomfortable. This exercise is designed to put you in a situation where you are interacting with people in another language, and get you to reflect on that experience—particularly how language use shapes interaction.

Steps:

• Identify a Mills Center language roundtable that you would like to attend either this week or next. (They’re held on Mondays from 4-7 PM. Each is only an hour long.) If you speak more than one language, you could choose a roundtable in your second language. If you speak only English, you have two options: you can attend an English roundtable, where non-native English speakers have the opportunity to practice speaking. Or, if you’re feeling adventurous, you can choose any table and experience what it is like to be in a setting where you don’t speak the language.

• Attend the language roundtable, and participate actively. “Participation” means speaking. It also means asking questions (when appropriate) about words that don’t have direct English translations or that are unique to the language at hand, and/or observing how people’s intonation and body language change when they shift from one language to another. Look for both language universals and language particulars.

• Write a ~500 word reflection on the experience, and post it to Canvas before the deadline. See the rubric below for details on the content of your post.

Rubric: This exercise is worth a total of 20 points toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A. You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses.

2 points  Appropriate choice and detailed description of the event and setting

6 points  Description of your observations. Did people’s intonation or body language change when they switched languages? Were they able to identify words or phrases that do not have a neat English translation? Be precise in your descriptions. Report on both language universals and language particulars you observed in this multilingual setting.

12 points  Reflect on the experience. Based on your observations about body language and intonation and language-specific vocabulary, how did it seem that the language being used shaped people’s worldviews or modes of personal expression, or even personalities? How different were those differences? What was the same across languages? Draw on the readings for this week to support and interpret your reflections.

Exercise #8: Present yourself in a way that’s atypical for you.

In some settings, you may feel the need to dress in a way that is not typical for you, or hide or minimize some aspects of your personal identity, either for safety or cultural acceptability. (These identities could be religious, sexual, political, etc.—we are not limiting the discussion to gender and sexuality here, even though that is the topic for this week.) Different people will face differing levels of pressure to do this depending on their own identities, the features of the cultural context in which they are working, and their own personal level of concern, but virtually everyone engages in image management during intercultural work. This exercise is designed to get you to experience what it is like to present yourself publicly in a way that is not typical for you, and to reflect on that experience. The purpose is to sensitize you to the intriguing, as well as the potentially stultifying, sides of identity management.

Steps:

• Reflect on how you normally dress, talk, move, converse, and present yourself to others. This is something we have been building all term, so by now you probably have some sense of how others perceive you culturally.
• Identify one particularly important aspect of your personal presentation. If you have a world area in which you’re particularly interested in working, try choosing an aspect of your personal presentation that you think you might need to change in that setting.
• For one day, change it significantly. Don’t be culturally offensive when you do this (e.g., don’t appropriate a religious symbol such as a headscarf or cross necklace), but get outside your comfort zone so that you’re presenting yourself in a way you would not normally do. Make sure it is obvious enough that other people can notice it.
• Throughout the day, journal on how this makes you feel internally, as well as if/how people respond to you differently than usual.
• Write a ~500 word paragraph reflection and post it to Canvas before the deadline. See the rubric below for details on the content of your post.

**Rubric:** This exercise is worth a total of **20 points** toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. **Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A.** You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses.

2 points  Appropriate choice and detailed description of the thing you changed

2 points  Description of general reactions you received from others; your own internal reactions to this shift in personal presentation

8 points  Concrete example(s) of an interaction(s) you had

8 points  Reflect on what this experience felt like. Was it liberating? Limiting? Intriguing? Depressing? Also—this is very important—reflect on how you might manage having to make this change (or a similar one) in the long term. What coping strategies could you use to help alleviate the difficult aspects of this kind of transition?

**Exercise 9: Find a bad social media example.**

Often we post and share images online with little thought about the ethics or privacy implications of doing so. It is natural to want to share images and experiences of extraordinary experiences, but it is important to consider how those representations could contribute to stereotypes or could compromise the integrity of the cultural others involved. This exercise is designed to get you thinking critically about best practices for image collection and sharing during intercultural work. The purpose is to teach you to pause and think carefully before any post you make, but especially one that depicts entire groups of people to a foreign audience.

**Steps:**

• Browse your social media pages for posts from friends who have spent time abroad or otherwise engaged in intercultural work. If you don’t have any, browse public posts that strangers have made.
• Identify a post that you think is ethically problematic based on class discussions and readings. Take a screen shot, and block out the author’s name and contact, and face.
• In a ~500 word reflection accompanied by the screenshot you took, reflect in detail on why this post might be ethically problematic, and how it could have been done differently. Incorporate ideas of the ethics of representation in your response. See below for details on the contents of your post.

**Rubric:** This exercise is worth a total of **20 points** toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. **Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A.** You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses.

4 points  Appropriate choice and inclusion of a screen shot of the social media post you are analyzing (no names or faces of the author please!).

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8 points  Describe your rationale for that choice. What struck you as problematic about this post? Why? What do you think the author of the post was thinking when s/he posted it? What kind of harm could this post have done?

8 points  Reflect on how this could have been done to minimize harm—that is, what could have been changed about the post to preserve privacy or integrity, or to reflect cultural respect?

Final reflection.
This course has covered a lot of theoretical and practical material about intercultural experience. In this final paper, you’ll have the opportunity to review and synthesize that material for yourself. Choose a world area where you envision potentially studying or working. Using the personal and counterpart profiles you created in Exercise 2 as a starting point, plus the insights you’ve accrued over the course of the term, identify areas where you might expect to encounter culturally-based differences and challenges. Drawing directly on course readings and concepts, discuss what you might do to address those challenges in a culturally relativistic, respectful manner.

Your reflection should be 1000 words of high-quality, organized, proofread writing. To get full points, do not rely only on the research you did for Exercise 2. Be sure to elaborate on it. Also be sure to properly cite any references you use from inside or outside of class using APA style, and draw on reputable academic sources.

Rubric: This paper is worth a total of 60 points toward your final grade. Points will be awarded based on the following elements. Minimal points will be awarded for the mere presence of the element in the reflection; just including the elements listed below is not enough to get you an A. You can earn additional points for excellent writing, detailed description, clear communication, and evidence of well-thought-out, reflective responses.

20 points  Choice of world area and description of cultural norms is well-researched, accurate, thorough, and culturally sensitive. Take care to avoid trafficking in stereotypes! Balancing a discussion of cultural tendencies so that you don’t end up stereotyping is a very challenging but very important skill. As part of this, be sure to include some consideration of the fact that not everyone will adhere to the tendencies you are discussing.

20 points  Robust, well-thought-out, realistic consideration of how one might cope with cultural differences. Draws on key concepts of the course such as identifying one’s own cultural biases, the difference between observation and interpretation, cultural relativism, tolerance for ambiguity, and recognizing one’s own subjectivity.

10 points  Choice and skillful use of in-class or outside-class sources. Sources must be academic and peer reviewed, not web or popular media citations. Quotes, if present, are relevant and well-explained. Citations follow APA style.

10 points  Overall writing quality: correct grammar and spelling, organization, clear communication, meets but does not substantially exceed the word limit.