Freie Universität Berlin

"Switching Perspectives: Intercultural Communication and (Digital) Cross-Cultural Collaboration"

Instructor:	Amanda Wichert
Format:	Online Course
Duration:	7 weeks
Language of Instruction:	English

Description

The world is increasingly global. We cross cultures throughout the workday, living and working with colleagues and clients from around the world. Through the shift to digital work over the past several years, we've become even more interconnected. Working across cultures can be challenging. Differences in cultural values and expectations can make collaboration challenging, and these differences can become amplified through the digital channels in which we collaborate in the modern world. The potential for hidden misunderstandings, confusing miscommunication, and unexpected conflict can cause project delays and make it difficult to truly achieve the full potential of effective collaboration and allow us to unlock the promise of culturally diverse cooperation.

Developing intercultural skills and a strong understanding of effective communication – both in-person and through digital channels – helps us flourish in cross-cultural situations. In this course, we'll explore the basic of intercultural communication, learn about how cultural values shape our work, discover and reflect on how our experience influences our expectations, and build a toolkit for intercultural success. We'll take a look at real-world case studies for intercultural communication in a variety of situations and learn how to apply tried and tested strategies for effective collaboration across cultures.

Learning Objectives

Participants will develop an understanding of communication and culture, and how cultural values influence behavior and expectations in the world around us. Using case studies and personal experience, participants will reflect on the potential effects of culture on situations in the workplace and beyond. Together, we will learn and apply cross-cultural communication strategies, from designing communication spaces and building a framework for communication (in-person and virtually) that enables the full participation of culturally diverse team members to identifying and effectively navigating conflict in communication. Participants will leave this course with the skills to effectively communicate across cultures and will feel confident in navigating challenging situations.

Target Group

Young professionals, graduates, postgraduates, advanced students, HR staff, professionals from all other fields. This course is of particular relevance to professionals who work or would like to work in internationally active companies or who are planning a professional stay abroad.

General Requirements

Participants need to be able to speak and write English at an Upper Intermediate Level (at least B2). Attending the live sessions is essential to truly learn in this course – communication is interactive, and it will be difficult to have a full learning experience without participation. To receive a certificate for this course, you will need to attend at least two of the three live sessions. These live sessions will be combined with additional material and intensive work through the online course platform, both individually and in groups. Please see course requirements for the various assignments.

To ensure a comfortable learning environment for all, please adhere to our Code of Conduct.

Technical Requirements

Stable internet connection.

Fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones is not recommended) with camera and microphone, headset recommended.

Recommended operating systems: Windows 10 or higher or MacOS 10.13 or higher. Avoid using a VPN.

Software: Webex Meetings. Please log in to Webex at least a day before course start in order to avoid any technical delays on the first live session.

Course Requirements

Interactive Reflections, Individual Assignments, Pair Work & Readings

Intercultural Project

Literature

Provided online.

Modules

Module	Topics, Guiding Questions, Reading, Assignments
1	**LIVE SESSION** **Culture: What is it, why does it matter?** In this session, we'll get to know each other and explore culture as a concept. We'll explore the definition of culture – what is it, why does it matter, and how do we experience it in the real world?
2	**Asynchronous Work** **Understanding Cultural Differences: Cultural Dimensions** In this video + individual session, participants will explore a model for developing an awareness of potential cultural differences. We'll learn about cultural dimensions, apply a cultural dimension to a case study, and learn how to use dimensions to open our eyes to potential differences in expectations.
3	**Asynchronous Work** **Communication Models: Message and Meaning** In this video + individual session, we'll explore communication and look at various communication models. We'll explore the differences between the messages we think we're sending and how they're received and look at how culture plays a role in the communication process.
4	**LIVE SESSION** **Effective Communication: Case Studies** In this session, we'll explore other elements that can affect cross-cultural communication. We'll take a look at intercultural case studies and develop strategies to resolve cross-cultural conflict.

5	**Asynchronous Work**
	Virtual Collaboration
	In this video + individual session, we'll explore virtual collaboration and learn how virtual collaboration can be impacted by cultural differences. We'll also explore how building a virtual framework for effective cross-cultural communication can make virtual collaboration more accessible for others with diverse needs.

6	**Asynchronous Collaborative Work**
	Virtual Communication Case Studies
	In collaborative units, you'll explore communicating across cultures in virtual settings via case studies and develop solutions for effective intercultural collaboration.

7	**LIVE SESSION**
	Leadership, Careers, and Culture
	In this session, we'll discuss how leadership is influenced by cultural values – what's a good leader? What does an effective manager look like? We'll talk about how cultural values shape our idea of success in our careers. Together, we'll explore how to effectively lead across cultures.