

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: NAVIGATING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

COURSE INFORMATION

Program	Empowering Community Engagement: Soft Skills Micro-Courses for Students and Staff
University	Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen
Department	Centre for Competence Development
Course name	Navigating Cultural Differences: Practical Communication Skills
Course code	ECE1.7
Credits/hours	4 hours
Language of instruction	English
Course dates	October 2026
Course schedule	asynchronous
Course coordinator	Helena Grünebaum
Course instructor	Helena Grünebaum
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SHORT DESCRIPTION

Throughout the history of society, people in different parts of the world have developed different habits, beliefs, and means of communication. In short: different cultures. People often differentiate between self and other, fuelling stereotypes. In this course, participants will learn how to approach different cultures without falling into the traps of stereotyping and miscommunication. They will prepare for communicating about cultural characteristics respectfully and become sensitized towards more and less obvious signals in communication. This will help them encourage intercultural collaborations within their private or work-related communities.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **Explain** key principles of intercultural communication in professional and social contexts.
 - **Analyse** stereotypes and distinguish them from objective cultural observations.
 - **Apply** appropriate strategies to manage intercultural interactions respectfully and effectively.
 - **Identify and evaluate** verbal and non-verbal communication risks in intercultural settings.
 - **Develop** approaches to foster inclusive intercultural collaboration.
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COURSE CONTENTS

- **Awareness:** becoming aware of one's own and other cultures' habits and practices without supporting stereotypes and prejudices
 - **Approaches:** preparing for intercultural encounters by learning about ways to communicate about culture and paying attention to verbal and non-verbal language use
 - **Collaboration:** developing strategies and ideas for successful collaboration in intercultural settings, e.g. working or living in intercultural communities
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TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The course *Navigating Cultural Differences* is a 100% asynchronous e-learning course for self-studying. Participants will receive text- and video-based analysis tasks that strengthen their reception and



communication skills in intercultural settings. They will test their knowledge via multiple-choice tests and short reflection tasks, which will result in a pass/fail grading. Additionally, participants will be encouraged to apply their knowledge to real-life situations, observe their own ideas and behaviours in certain settings, and reflect on personal experiences (ungraded).

STUDENT WORKING HOURS

- **Chapter 1: Awareness** – 60 minutes
 - o readings, multiple-choice test, reflection
- **Chapter 2: Approaches** – 60 minutes
 - o short reading, video-analysis, multiple-choice test, reflection
- **Chapter 3: Collaboration** – 60 minutes
 - o readings, multiple-choice test, reflection
- **Final test** – ca. 15 minutes (+ 45 minutes review and preparation time)
 - o multiple-choice test and reflection

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Overall weight
READINGS	Reading Chapter 1 + Follow-up test and reflection tasks	30%
	Reading Chapter 3 + Follow-up test and reflection task	30%
VIDEO-ANALYSIS	Video Chapter 2 + Follow-up test and reflection task	30%
FINAL TEST	Summarising test and reflection	10%

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)

Contact hours	Outside classroom	Overall
0	4	4

READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

Holliday, A. (2013). *Understanding Intercultural Communication. Negotiating a grammar of culture.* Routledge.

