

**Commerce IBH 3AD3, Cross-Cultural
Communications
Winter 2025 Course Outline
DeGroot School of Business
McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

In this course, students will explore the links between language and culture and learn skills necessary to be intermediaries between cultures. On completion of the course students should be aware of the role of their own cultural filters, i.e., how their own culture affects the way they perceive the world, and they should become better equipped to interpret other cultures. They will learn to analyse how linguistic behaviour reflects complex cultural values and how to deconstruct culture-specific rituals in order to represent them in terms of another culture.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Section 1: Wednesday 4:30
PM – 6:20 PM**

Friday 5:30 PM – 6:20PM

Thanuja Thananayagam

Instructor

thananat@mcmaster.ca

Office Location/Hours: Zoom,
by appointment

Student TA

Marc-Antoine Paul

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Office Location/Hours: Zoom, by appointment

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value: 3
A2L: Yes
Participation: Yes

Leadership: Yes
Ethics: No
Innovation: Yes

IT skills: No
Numeracy: Yes
Group work: Yes

Global view: Yes
Written skills: No
Oral skills: Yes

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will carry out a number of small weekly assignments, discuss their findings in class, write two minor essays, and complete three rounds of case studies. The final exam will reflect topics covered during the term and will be based on critical thinking about cross-cultural issues. Topics include communication within family, communication between genders, cognitive role of metaphors, language and perception (using colour terms as an example), emotions across cultures, the role of culture in advertising, significance of personal space and body language, the importance of language in identity construction, and cultural stereotyping.

IMPORTANT LINKS

- [Mosaic](#)
- [Avenue to Learn](#)
- [Student Accessibility Services - Accommodations](#)
- [McMaster University Library](#)

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- Reflect on their own cultural background as a benchmark for evaluating others
- Gain cultural sensitivity
- Reflect on their own cultural biases and stereotypes
- Learn tools to resolve cultural conflicts

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND TEXTS

“Intercultural Communication: A Canadian Perspective” by Elizabeth Suen and Barbara A. Suen published by Canadian Scholars Women’s Press 2019. ISBN 9781773381510.

Print: \$97.95

[Digital PDF/ePUB : \\$92.95](#)

Rental PDF/ePUB: \$74.95

CLASS FORMAT

Our in-person class offers a dynamic and immersive learning experience that goes beyond traditional lectures. Our classes typically consist of interactive discussions, group activities, case studies, and hands-on exercises. This format encourages active participation, fosters meaningful peer-to-peer interactions, and allows for immediate feedback and clarification. This format is designed to create a vibrant and collaborative atmosphere where students can deepen their understanding of the subject matter and develop essential interpersonal skills crucial for success in both academic and professional settings.

COURSE EVALUATION

In Winter 2025, you will spend at least three hours a week on self-study of the textbook and attending and taking notes during the lecture. The combination of these two sources of information should prepare you for the quizzes and the assignments.

<i>Grade Component</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Self-Assessment</i>	5%	More information will be posted on A2L.
<i>Class Participation and Engagement</i>	10%	In the form of active and informed participation in class discussions and exercises, including reading all assigned material before class.
<i>Discussion Post</i>	10%	Active participation in the discussion board by posting an original post (responding to the reading and weekly class content) and replying to colleague's post (at least 2).
<i>Research Projects x 2</i>	30%	Students will be assigned two research projects during the semester. More information and assignment instructions will be posted via A2L.
<i>Self-Reflections x 2</i>	20%	More information will be posted on A2L.
<i>Final Project Report and Presentations (group project)</i>	25%	Group Project Report – 20% Group Presentation – 5%

COURSE DELIVERABLES

Class Participation and Engagement – 10%

Class participation is worth **10%** of your final grade. Students are expected to attend class, to have read the assigned material before class, discuss the material and participate in discussions/ exercises in an active and informed manner. High levels of participation include consistent and active contributions in class discussions and activities. Each student must take an active role in creating a collaborative learning environment. Students are expected to demonstrate leadership skills with thoughtful contributions that support their own learning process, along with those of their peers.

Discussion Board – 10%

Weekly "discussion posts" are designed to help you delve more deeply into the topic of the week. In many sessions, students will be assigned one brief article or video referring to a key issue and/or case. On each day an "article for discussion" has been assigned, the teaching assistant and/or professor will post at least one question relating to that reading. For periods of one week (see the course calendar below for the opening and closing times of each discussion), students will post comments on the discussion board. The teaching assistant (or professor) may make further posts to facilitate further discussion. In addition, students are expected to engage by replying to their colleagues (at least two responses is a must).

Both the quantity and the quality of these posts will be evaluated. On the whole, students who post many comments that are thoughtful, demonstrate knowledge of the assigned reading material (including both the discussion article(s) and the textbook), and which make significant efforts to engage with others on the board (e.g. by commenting on peers' posts) will receive the highest grade on this component.

Self-Assessment – 5%

More information will be posted on A2L.

Research Projects x 2 – 30%

More information and details of the research project will be posted on A2L.

Self-Reflections x 2 – 20%

More information and details will be posted on A2L.

Group Project Report and Presentation – 25%

The final product is an 8 - 10-minute in-class presentation and a 2500 – 3000 word report.

More information and details of the project will be posted on A2L.

For Group Work When working as a team, students are reminded of the following expectations with respect to their behaviour and contributions to the project. Each team member is expected to:

- Treat other members with courtesy and respect.
- Establish a positive and productive team dynamic.
- Contribute substantially and proportionally to the final project.
- Ensure enough familiarity with the entire contents of the group project/assignment so as to be able to sign off on it as original work.
- Meet the project timeline as established by the team.

Learning to work together in teams is an important aspect of your education and preparation for your future careers. Project work is often new to students; conflicts can - and do - occur. Teams are collectively expected to resolve disputes or misunderstandings as soon as they arise. In cases where

teams are unable to reach a mutually agreeable solution, the entire team must meet with the Professor as soon as possible. The Professor will listen to the team and help the team develop options for improving the team process. All members of the project team must commit to and utilize their action plans. If you notice problems in your group (e.g., not all group members are contributing equally), please tell me immediately. There will be zero tolerance for free-riding. If you only tell me about a problem at the end of the term, there is nothing I can do to solve the problem. If you tell me about a problem early on, we'll work together to solve it.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

No late assignments will be accepted.

If you anticipate missing an assignment deadline due to uncontrollable circumstances, you should contact the course instructor as early as possible, but within at least 24 hours to explain the situation.

The reallocation of grades, if any, for assignment deadlines missed for legitimate reasons will be made at the discretion of the instructor.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants. All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

- For Level 1 and Level 2 courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.*
- For Level 3 courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.*

Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar [“Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”](#) and the link below*;

<http://ug.degroot.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

* Non-Commerce students must follow the Missed coursework protocols outlined by their home faculty and Program Office.

COURSE MODIFICATION

From time to time there may be a need to remove/add topics or to change the schedule or the delivery format. If these are necessary, you will be given as much advance notice as possible.

GENERATIVE AI

SOME USE PERMITTED

Students may use generative AI for [editing/translating/outlining/brainstorming/revising/etc] their work throughout the course so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following citation instructions given in the syllabus. Use of generative AI outside the stated use of [editing/translating/outlining/brainstorming/revising/etc] without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the limitations for use and to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service

(Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work.

For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. Avenue to Learn, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use online elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn, LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in Commerce IBH2AD3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

A lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Commerce IBH3AD3, Cross-Cultural Communications
Winter 2025 Course Schedule**

Week	Date	
Week 1	January 8, 10, 2025	Introduction – Course overview and expectations Chapter 1 & 2 Discussion Board #1
Week 2	January 15, 17, 2025	Chapter 3 Discussion Board #2
Week 3	January 22, 24, 2025	Chapter 4 Self-Assessment due Friday January 24, 2025 @ 12 noon Discussion Board #3
Week 4	January 29, 31, 2025	Chapter 5 Discussion Board #4
Week 5	February 5, 7, 2025	Chapter 6 Self-Reflections #1 due Friday February 14, 2025 @ 12 noon Discussion Board #5
Week 6	February 12, 14, 2025	Chapter 7 <i>Friday February 7, 2025 – meet your group</i> Discussion Board #6
Week 7	February 19, 21, 2025	Reading week – no class
Week 8	February 26, 28, 2025	Chapter 8

		<p>Research Project #1 due Monday March 3, 2025 @ 12 noon</p> <p>Discussion Board #7</p>
Week 9	March 5, 7, 2025	<p>Chapter 9</p> <p>Group contract due Friday March 7, 2025 @ 12 noon</p> <p>Discussion Board #8</p>
Week 10	March 12, 14, 2025	<p>Chapter 10</p> <p>Self-Reflections #2 due Friday March 14, 2025 @ 12 noon</p> <p>Discussion Board #9</p>
Week 11	March 19, 21, 2025	<p>Chapter 11</p> <p>Discussion Board #10</p>
Week 12	March 26, 28, 2025	<p>Chapter 12</p> <p>Research Project #2 due Wednesday March 26, 2025 @ 12 noon</p>
Week 13	April 2, 4, 2025	<p>In-class presentation</p> <p>Group Project – report and presentation due Wednesday April 2, 2024 @ 12 noon</p>