

The University of Texas at Dallas

COMM 3342.001 – SPECIAL TOPICS IN COMMUNICATION:

U.S. AMERICAN CULTURE & COMMUNICATION

“How like children the Americans were, with their pranks and easy warmth. Men who offered their hands for strangers to shake, ladies who sat and chatted at dinner with gentlemen they had never seen before, children who threw snowballs at adults no matter what their station. He would miss them.”

Betty Bao Lord, Spring Moon

Dr. Shelley D. Lane
Office location: JO 5.410
Phone: (972) 883-2931
Shelley.Lane@utdallas.edu

Fall 2009
Office Hours:
TR 11:15 a.m.- noon
and by appointment

Course location, days, and time: JO4.502 TR 10:00 – 11:15 pm

Course pre-requisite: Upper-division standing or RHET 1302 or equivalent. It is assumed that students who enroll in the course have the grammatical, logical, and rhetorical skills necessary for university-level writing.

Course description: (3 semester hours) COMM 3342 is a discussion and activity-based class that examines the relationship between U.S. American culture and communication. The course is comprised of four units: culture; American culture; American culture and communication; and Co-cultures, subcultures, and regional dialects. Students will read, discuss, and participate in activities related to “What is culture?; Is there a ‘true’ American culture?; Components of American culture; American identity and diversity; American verbal communication; American nonverbal communication; American communication style; and the communication styles of American co-cultures, subcultures, and dialects related to geographic locations.”

Student learning objectives/outcomes:

- To understand how culture is conceptualized and what characterizes U.S. American culture
- To recognize the various and diverse identities that influence how we communicate
- To learn about American verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and communication style
- To recognize and appreciate the communication styles of American co-cultures and subcultures, and to identify regional dialects

Required textbook: Johnson, Fern *Speaking Culturally: Language Diversity in the United States*. CA: Sage, 2000.

Students will also be responsible for reading various journal articles and book chapters that I will assign throughout the semester.

Grading policy: All tests and assignments are based upon a 400 point system. Complete descriptions of all assignments will be handed out before the assignments are due. Assignments will be collected at the beginning of class. Students arriving late to class will have points deducted from their assignment at my discretion.

Test One	50 points (12.5%)	Tuesday, September 8
Test Two	50 points (12.5%)	Tuesday, October 6
Test Three	50 points (12.5%)	Thursday, October 29
Test Four	50 points (12.5%)	Thursday, December 3
U.S. American Culture and Communication Scrapbook	50 points (12.5%)	Tuesday, September 9
Co-Culture and Communication Group Presentation	50 points (12.5%)	Tuesday, November 17 and Thursday, November 19
Subculture Communication Research Report	100 points (25%)	Tuesday, December 1

The grading scale is as follows:

- A = 372 – 400 points
- A- = 360 – 371 points
- B+ = 348 – 359 points
- B = 332 – 347 points
- B- = 320 – 331 points
- C+ = 308 – 319 points
- C = 292 – 307 points
- C- = 280 – 291 points
- D+ = 268 – 279 points
- D = 252 – 267 points
- D- = 240 – 251 points
- F = less than 240 points

There is a 24-hour mandatory waiting period after you receive grades during which I do not discuss them. I also do not discuss grades over the phone or via e-mail. Make an appointment with me if you want to discuss a grade issue of any kind.

Course policy:

Attendance - Because this class involves discussion and activities, participation is a vital part of the learning process. More than simply being physically present in class,

participation includes asking questions about readings, answering questions, engaging in class discussion, and demonstrating a professional and positive attitude.

Students have two "free" absences. For every absence beyond two, a student's total score will decrease by ten points for each successive absence. It is the responsibility of a student, when absent, to keep up with information discussed in class (do not call me for missing information). Absences will be excused for family emergencies, medical conditions, etc.; however, regularly scheduled physicians' appointments will not be excused. Documentation regarding an absence must be brought to my attention no later than two class days after the absence for it to be excused. In addition, students must come to class on time; tardies are discouraged. For every tardy beyond two, a student's total score will decrease by five points for each successive tardy. It is a student's responsibility if tardy to inform me of her/his presence so that points will not be lost. An absence will remain in my grade book if a student doesn't notify me the day the infraction occurs. Students who arrive after the first 20 minutes class has been in session will lose ten points from their total score. Students are also expected to remain in class for the entire period; points will be deducted from the participation grade at my discretion for "early departures." If an early departure is unavoidable, please let me know in advance so we can work together to minimize any potential class disruption.

Late work and extra credit – Late written assignments are not accepted. In addition, students are expected to deliver their oral presentations on the days that they are assigned. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.** Extra credit assignments are not available.

Technology Use and Classroom equipment – Classroom equipment should be used as directed by the instructor. Furthermore, classroom printers are not available for use. "Netiquette" is also an important class requirement. Cell phones, pagers, or other electronic messaging devices may not be used in the classroom unless students have cleared it with the professor first and only on an emergency basis. Do not use class time to engage in text messaging, "surf the 'Net," check email, "tweet," or access You Tube or Second Life, etc. Be sure to play with your electronic devices on your own time, not class time! Any "technology-oriented" interruption, distraction, or 'Net-based expression of disinterest in class activity will result in the deduction of points at my discretion from a student's total score.

Course citizenship – **Civil in-class communication is required at all times!** This course is challenging and may be perceived as threatening for a variety of reasons. For example, the course may cause discomfort because it may illustrate that what is considered "normal" or "natural" beliefs, values, and behaviors that we take for granted are in reality, *not* normal or natural. Additionally, we will discuss controversial topics and emotional issues during which students may disclose sensitive, personal information. While in-class passionate debate is acceptable, negative comments about students, other individuals, or people who are grouped into categories based on gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, etc. is not acceptable. I will stop a discussion and ask a student to leave the class if I perceive that her/his communication is

prejudicial, disrespectful, and/or “over-the-top.” Furthermore, any student who engages in behavior that disrupts the teaching-learning process (e.g., ignoring the classroom equipment policy, whispering and talking to others, engaging in behaviors not related to discussion, etc.) will be asked to leave the class and will have points deducted at my discretion. Additionally, eating and drinking in the classroom is prohibited. Students who exhibit any of the aforementioned behaviors will be referred to the Dean of Students.

Assignments, Tests, and Academic Calendar:

Although it is highly improbable that we will discuss every required book chapter and journal article in class, students may be tested on any or all required readings. Students may also be tested on topics of class discussion that aren't included in assigned readings.

Please note that the following schedule is tentative and changes will be announced if necessary.

UNIT I: INTRO TO CULTURE	
Wk 1 - R 8/20	Course introduction
Wk 2 - T 8/25	Culture: The Basics
Stewart, Edward C. and Bennett, Milton J. <i>American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective</i> . Revised Edition. ME: Intercultural Press, 1991. "Introduction," pp. ix-xii and Chapter 1 - "Conceptualization of the Cross-Cultural Problem," pp. 1-16.	
McDaniel, E.R., Samovar, L.A., and Porter, R.E. "Understanding Intercultural Communication: The Working Principles." In L.A. Samovar, R.E. Porter, and E.R. McDaniel (Eds.), <i>Intercultural Communication: A Reader</i> (12th ed.). MA: Cengage, 2009, pp. 6-17.	
Wk 2 - R 8/27	Culture: The Basics
Weaver, Gary R. "Comparing and Contrasting Cultures." In Gary R. Weaver (Ed.), <i>Culture, Communication, and Conflict: Readings in Intercultural Relations</i> (2nd ed.) MA: Simon and Schuster, 1998, pp.72-77.	
Wk 2 - T 9/1	How Culture is Studied
Lustig, Myron W. and Koester, Jolene <i>Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication across Cultures</i> . (6th ed.). MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2010. Chapter 5 - "Cultural Patterns and Taxonomies," pp. 107-140.	
Wk 3 - R 9/3	How Culture is Studied
Yep, Gust A. Encounters with the "Other:" Personal Notes for a Reconceptualization of Intercultural Communication Competence. <i>The CATESOL Journal</i> 12(1), (2000): 117-144.	
Scrapbook assignment assigned	
Wk 3 - T 9/8	TEST ONE
UNIT II: INTRO TO U.S. AMERICAN CULTURE	
Wk 4 - R 9/10	U.S. American Culture: The Basics
Althen, Gary (with Amanda R. Doran and Susan J. Szmania), <i>American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States</i> (2nd ed.). ME: Intercultural Press, 2003. "Introduction," pp. xix-xxxii and Chapter 1 - "American Assumptions and Values," pp. 3-	

31.	
Wk 4 - T 9/15	U.S. American Culture: The Basics
Kim, Eun Y. <i>The Yin and Yang of American Culture: A Paradox</i> . ME: Intercultural Press, 2001. "Introduction: America in the 21st Century," pp. 1-15.	
Wk 5 - R 9/17	Perception and Patterns of Thought
Althen, Gary (with Amanda R. Doran and Susan J. Szmania), <i>American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States</i> (2nd ed.). ME: Intercultural Press, 2003. Chapter 3 - "Ways of Reasoning," pp. 55-65. Singer, Marshall R. "Culture: A Perceptual Approach." In Milton J. Bennett (Ed.), <i>Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings</i> . ME: Intercultural Press, 1998, pp. 97-109.	
Wk 5 - T 9/22	Perception and Patterns of Thought
Lieberman, Devorah "Culture, Problem-Solving, and Pedagogical Style." In Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter (Eds.), <i>Intercultural Communication: A Reader</i> (8th ed.). CA: Wadsworth, 1997, pp. 191-207.	
Wk 6 - R 9/24	Identity and Self-Concept
Martin, Judith N. and Nakayama, Thomas K. <i>Experiencing Intercultural Communication: An Introduction</i> (2nd ed.). MA: McGraw-Hill, 2005. Chapter 4 - "Identity and Intercultural Communication," pp. 79-113.	
Wk 6 - T 9/29	Identity and Self-Concept
Kim, Min-Sun <i>Non-Western Perspectives on Human Communication: Implications for Theory and Practice</i> . CA: Sage, 2002. Chapter 1 - "Who am I?" pp. 7-14; Chapter 2 - "Independent and Interdependent Models of the Self as Cultural Frame," pp. 15-20; and Chapter 10 - "Internal Control Ideology and Interpersonal Communication," pp. 99-108. SCRAPBOOK ASSIGNMENT DUE	
Wk 7 - R 10/1	White Privilege
Kendall, Frances E. <i>Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships across Race</i> . NY: Routledge, 2006. Chapter 3 - "What Does it Mean to be White?" pp. 41-59 and Chapter 4 - "Understanding White Privilege," pp. 61-78.	
Wk 7 - T 10/6	TEST TWO
UNIT III: U.S. AMERICAN CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION	
Wk 8 - R 10/8	Verbal Communication
Lustig, Myron W. and Koester, Jolene <i>Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication across Cultures</i> (6th ed.). MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2010. Chapter 7 - "Verbal Intercultural Communication," pp. 165-196.	
Wk 8 - T 10/13	U.S. American Verbal Communication
Johnson, Fern <i>Speaking Culturally: Language Diversity in the United States</i> . CA: Sage, 2000. Chapter 2 - "The Language System in its Communicative Contexts," pp. 24-44 and Chapter 3 - "Cultural Dimensions of Discourse," pp. 45-68.	
Wk 9 - R 10/15	Doublespeak, Euphemisms, Slang, and Idioms
Lutz, William "The World of Doublespeak." In Paul Escholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark (Eds.), <i>Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers</i> (8th ed.). MA: Bedford St. Martins, 2000, pp. 498-510. Murphy, Cullen "The E Word." In Paul Escholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark (Eds.), <i>Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers</i> (8th ed.). MA: Bedford St. Martins, 2000, pp. 511-517	

<p><i>Do You Speak American?</i> websites: http://www.pbs.org/speak/ahead/globalamerican/slang/ “Global American: Born in the USA” http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/sezwho/slang/ “Sez Who? The Power of Slang” http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/sezwho/campustalk/ “Sez Who? Campus Talk”</p>	
Wk 9 - T 10/20	Nonverbal Communication
<p>Andersen, Peter A. and Wang, Hua "Beyond Language: Nonverbal Communication across Cultures." In L.A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, and Edwin R. McDaniel (Eds.), <i>Intercultural Communication: A Reader</i> (12th ed.). CA: Wadsworth/Cengage, 2009, pp. 264-284.</p> <p>Hall, Edward T. "The Power of Hidden Differences." In Milton J. Bennett (Ed.), <i>Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings</i>. ME: Intercultural Press, 1998, pp. 53-67.</p>	
Wk 10 - R 10/22	U.S. American Nonverbal Communication
<p>Giri, Vijai N. Culture and Communication Style. <i>The Review of Communication</i>, 6(12), (January-April 2006): 124-130.</p>	
Wk 10 - T 10/27	Communication Style
<p>Althen, Gary (with Amanda R. Doran and Susan J. Szmania), <i>American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States</i> (2nd ed). ME: Intercultural Press, 2002. Chapter 2 (portion) – “The Communication Style of Americans,” pp. 33-42.</p> <p>Kim, Min-Sun <i>Non-Western Perspectives on Human Communication: Implications for Theory and Research</i>. CA: Sage, 2002. Chapter 5 – “Motivation to Approach Verbal Communication,” pp. 45-55.</p> <p>Subculture Communication Research Report assigned</p>	
Wk 11 - R 10/29	TEST THREE
UNIT IV: CO-CULTURES, SUBCULTURES, AND REGIONAL DIALECTS	
Wk 11 - T 11/3	U.S. American Co-Cultures and Communication
<p>Johnson, Fern <i>Speaking Culturally: Language Diversity in the United States</i>. CA: Sage, 2000. Chapter 1 - "The Linguistic Environment in the United States," pp. 3-23 and an additional chapter based upon the co-culture group presentation.</p> <p>Wolfram, Walt and Schilling-Estes, Natalie <i>American English: Dialects and Variation</i>. MA: Blackwell, 1998. Chapter 6 (portion) - "Social and Ethnic Dialects," pp. 125-150.</p> <p>Co-Culture and Communication Group Presentation assigned</p>	
Wk 12 - R 11/5	Co-Cultures and Hate Speech
<p>Neilson, Laura Beth Subtle, Pervasive, Harmful: Racist and Sexist Remarks in Public as Hate Speech. <i>Journal of Social Issues</i>, 58(2) (2002): 265-280.</p> <p>Leets, Laura Experiencing Hate Speech: Perceptions and Responses to Ant-Semitism and Antigay Speech. <i>Journal of Social Issues</i>, 58(2), (2002): 341-361.</p>	
Wk 12 - T 11/10	U.S. American Subcultures and Communication
<p>Greenberg, Arielle (Ed.), <i>Youth Subcultures: Exploring Underground America</i>. MA: Pearson Longman, 2007. "Preface," pp. xv-xvii and "Introduction," pp. 1-4.</p> <p>Bennett, Andy "Virtual Subculture? Youth, Identity, and the Internet." In Andy Bennett</p>	

and Keith Kahn-Harris (Eds.), <i>After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture</i> . NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004, pp. 62-172.	
McArthur, J.A. Digital Subculture: A Geek Meaning of Style. <i>Journal of Communication Inquiry</i> , 33 (2008): 58-70.	
Wk 13 - R 11/12	<i>National Communication Association Conference, Chicago, IL</i> Use class time to work on Co-Culture Group Presentations
Wk 13 - T 11/17	CO-CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION GROUP PRESENTATIONS DUE
Wk 14 - R 11/19	CO-CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION GROUP PRESENTATIONS DUE
Wk 14 - T 11/24	U.S. American Regional Dialects
Wolfram, Walt and Schilling-Estes, Natalie "Language Evolution or Dying Traditions? The State of American Dialects." In Walt Wolfram and Ben Ward (Eds.), <i>American Voices: How Dialects Differ from Coast to Coast</i> . MA: Blackwell, 2006, pp. 1-7.	
Wk 15 - R 11/26	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
Wk 15 - T 12/1	U.S. American Regional Dialects
Wolfram, Walt and Schilling-Estes, Natalie <i>American English: Dialects and Variation</i> . MA: Blackwell, 1998. Chapter 5 - "Regional Dialects," pp. 125-150.	
SUBCULTURE COMMUNICATION RESEARCH REPORT DUE	
Wk 16 - R 12/3	TEST FOUR

Student Conduct & Discipline:

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part I, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to

discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity:

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use:

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class:

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures:

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy:

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

Disability Services:

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22
PO Box 830688
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals

(in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days:

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities:

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address given below. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. (http://www.utdallas.edu/Business_Affairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm)

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.