“This broad introduction to intercultural communication, uncommon for its inclusion of ethics, civic engagement, and global media, also integrates popular culture examples likely to appeal to students.”

Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, Villanova University, USA

“Well written, lively, and practical, Intercultural Communication for Everyday Life is the first intercultural communication textbook to challenge students to think critically about civic and political engagement in intercultural contexts. Bravo!”

Robert Shuter, Diederich College of Communication, Marquette University, USA

“Baldwin, Means Coleman, González, and Shenoy-Packer have written an intercultural communication text that starts with a rich conceptualization of culture while, at the same time, focusing students on basic concepts, key terms, and frameworks in a rigorous but approachable style.”

Michael Hecht, The Pennsylvania State University, USA

“Even if you never leave your own country, you cannot help but cross paths with people of different cultures in our connected and fast-paced world. Written for students studying intercultural communication for the first time, this textbook gives a thorough introduction to inter- and cross-cultural concepts with a focus on practical application and social action. The book brings together a group of authors from diverse backgrounds (rhetoric, media studies, organizational approaches, and interpersonal communication) to present a broad view of “communication” that incorporates scientific, humanistic, and critical theories.

The text highlights and critiques key theory and research in an accessible and engaging manner but is written with a complex version of culture in mind. It incorporates examples from around the world that represent a variety of differences, including age, sex, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Pedagogy is woven throughout the text with student-centered examples, applications, critical thinking questions, and a glossary of key terms, and it extends beyond the book with online resources for both students and instructors. The text not only helps students understand other cultures, but it also encourages them to be more aware of and civically engaged in their own culture with suggestions for individual intercultural effectiveness and giving back to the community in socially relevant ways.

Online resources for students and instructors can be found at www.wiley.com/go/baldwin.

John R. Baldwin is Professor of Communication at Illinois State University.

Robin R. Means Coleman is Associate Professor in the Departments of Communication Studies and Afroamerican and African Studies at the University of Michigan.

Alberto González is Professor of Communication at Bowling Green State University.

Suchitra Shenoy-Packer is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at DePaul University.
Intercultural Communication for Everyday Life
Brief contents

Preface xi
Acknowledgements xv
About the website xvi
Walk through xvii

Part one Foundations 1
1 A rationale for studying intercultural communication
   Why should we know about other cultures? 3
2 Action, ethics, and research
   How can I make a difference? 24
3 Origins
   Where does our “culture” come from? 47

Part two Elements 69
4 Subjective culture
   What is the base upon which cultural communication is built? 71
5 Identity: Struggle, resistance, and solidarity
   How can I think about my identity and that of others? 91
6 Intolerance–acceptance–appreciation
   How can we make the world a more tolerant place? 114

Part three Messages 135
7 Verbal communication
   How can I reduce cultural misunderstandings in my verbal communication? 137

8 Nonverbal communication
   Can I make nonverbal blunders and not even know it? 159
9 Rhetoric and culture
   How does my culture relate to persuasive writing and speaking? 180
10 Culture, communication, and media
    How do media shape our views of others? 203

Part four Contexts 225
11 Global media, global cultures
   How do culture and globalization influence each other? 227
12 Adaptation and intercultural competence
    How can I be effective in a new culture? 249
13 Relationships and conflict
    How can I have better cross-cultural relationships? 269
14 The political context
    How can we use communication to shape politics and culture? 290
15 Intercultural communication in international organizational contexts
    How does culture shape business, and how is business culture changing? 306

Conclusion 329
Glossary 331
Index 343
Preface xi
Acknowledgements xv
About the website xvi
Walk through xvii

Part one Foundations

1 A rationale for studying intercultural communication: Why should we know about other cultures? 3
   Building a rationale: Why do we need to know about intercultural communication? 5
   The personal growth motive 5
   The social responsibility motive 6
   The economic motive 8
   The cross-cultural travel motive 10
   The media motive 13
   Challenges of studying intercultural communication 15

   The history and focus of intercultural communication: Where did we come from? 16
   Summary 19
   Key terms 19
   Discussion questions 20
   Action points 20
   For more information 20

2 Action, ethics, and research: How can I make a difference? 24
   Muslim veils in French schools: How can we determine right from wrong in intercultural situations? 26
   Ethics and morality 27
   Determining a universal ethical stance 28
   Ethical relativism 29

   “Not in our town:” What is the role of intercultural communication in civic engagement? 30
   Political and civic engagement 31
   Defending civic and political engagement among college students 32
   Doing civic engagement 34

   How can we do responsible cultural research? 35
   Assumptions that guide cultural research 36
   Approaches to studying culture and communication 36
   Differences of focus in culture-and-communication studies 41

   Summary 42
   Key terms 43
   Discussion questions 43
   Action points 44
   For more information 44

3 Origins: Where does our “culture” come from? 47
   The relationship between communication and culture: How do they inform each other? 49
   Defining communication 49
   The relationship between communication and culture 51

   Defining culture: How can we define culture—and what are the implications of our definition? 52
   Aspects and elements of culture:
   What is culture like? 55
   Aspects of culture 55
   Characteristics of culture 56
A model of interaction: How can we best understand intercultural and intergroup communication? 61

Summary 63
Key terms 64
Discussion questions 64
Action points 65
For more information 65

Part two Elements 69

4 Subjective culture: What is the base upon which cultural communication is built? 71

Basic building blocks of culture: What are the most important things to know? 72

Cultural values: What are some useful frameworks for understanding culture? 75
  - High- and low-context cultures 76
  - Hofstede’s cultural dimensions 77
  - Culture-specific (emic) approaches 81

World view: What are the beliefs at the center of our “world”? 84

Summary 87
Key terms 87
Discussion questions 88
Action points 88
For more information 89

5 Identity: Struggle, resistance, and solidarity: How can I think about my identity and that of others? 91

An introduction to identity: Who am I, really? 92

Identity and communication: How do we communicate our identities? 95
  - Social identity theory and stages of identity development 95
  - Identity is created through communication 95
  - You are what you eat: Food as an example of identity 96

Identity and politics: How can our identities be political? 97
  - Identity politics 98
  - Punk rock and identity politics: A case study in brief 98
  - Ideology, the KKK, and subtle White power 100
  - Hegemony: National-regional and sexual orientation power plays 102

Identity in intercultural communication: What are some problematic ways to think about the identities of other groups? 103
  - Orientalism 103
  - The symbolic annihilation of race 105

Identity, solidarity, and civic action: Can I make a difference? 108

Summary 109
Key terms 110
Discussion questions 110
Action points 111
For more information 111

6 Intolerance–acceptance–appreciation: How can we make the world a more tolerant place? 114

Framing the problem: Where can we recognize intolerance? 116
  - Terms: What are some different types of intolerance? 116
  - Debates: Where does racism lie, and who can be racist? 123

Looking to a better future: What are some causes of and solutions for intolerance? 126
  - Understanding the problem: Possible causes of intolerance 126
  - Addressing the problem: Possible solutions to intolerance 128

Summary 130
Key terms 131
Discussion questions 132
Action points 132
For more information 132
Part three Messages 135

7 Verbal communication: How can I reduce cultural misunderstandings in my verbal communication? 137

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems of language and culture: Why is talking across cultures so difficult?</th>
<th>138</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systems of meaning</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech acts and cultural communication</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting things done with language</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining the details: Seeking ways to explain differences across cultures</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discursive elements of cultures: What happens when we join the elements of language? 147

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural myth</th>
<th>147</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversational episodes</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social dramas</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural metaphor</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theories of conversation and culture: What happens when we actually talk to each other? 151

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication accommodation theory</th>
<th>152</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication and sites of dominance</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary 154
Key terms 154
Discussion questions 155
Action points 155
For more information 156

8 Nonverbal communication: Can I make nonverbal blunders and not even know it? 159

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms and functions: How should we act nonverbally when in another culture?</th>
<th>161</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Channels (forms) of nonverbal communication</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions of nonverbal communication and relations to verbal communication</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Issues in nonverbal communication: How can I compare several cultures at the same time? 166

Issue number 1: I can understand your facial expression—but does it mean what I think it means? 166
Issue number 2: Why are you standing so close to me? Space and other aspects of contact 167
Issue number 3: Does anybody really know what time it is? 169
Issue number 4: Why are you being so quiet? Cultural understandings of silence 170

Nonverbal expectancy violations: What does your nonverbal behavior mean? 171

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture and the expectancy violations model</th>
<th>172</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture and meaning: Semiotics</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary 175
Key terms 176
Discussion questions 176
Action points 177
For more information 177

9 Rhetoric and culture: How does my culture relate to persuasive writing and speaking? 180

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical communication: How does culture inform persuasion?</th>
<th>181</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical traditions: How do people in different cultures try to persuade?</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American tradition: Rooted in resistance</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese tradition: Rooted in social reflection</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a tradition: Rooted in revolution</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American tradition: Rooted in nature</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western tradition: Rooted in argument</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations when considering rhetorical traditions</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vernacular rhetoric: How does everyday communication seek to persuade? 193

| Vernacular rhetoric in Africa | 193 |
| Vernacular rhetoric in South Toledo, Ohio | 195 |

Intercultural rhetoric: What are the implications for civic engagement? 197

Summary 199
Key terms 199
Discussion questions 200
Action points 200
For more information 200
10 Culture, communication, and media: How do media shape our views of others? 203

Effects and rituals: What role do media play in our lives? 204
- Lasswell’s model of (mediated) communication 204
- The transmission view versus the ritual view 205
- The role of media in intercultural communication 206

Democratic discourse and diversity: What issues do media present to me as a citizen? 207

Media and cultural identities: Who are “we” now? 210
- Digital media and social movements 210
- Gender media frames: The social acceptability of showing breasts 212
- Representational absences as an impediment to intercultural communication 217

Beyond traditional media: How do new media and culture shape each other? 218

Summary 220
Key terms 221
Discussion questions 221
Action points 221
For more information 222

Part four Contexts 225

11 Global media, global cultures: How do culture and globalization influence each other? 227

Culture on the global media stage: How does the global flow of information impact culture? 230
- The global media experience 232
- Satellite television: The progenitor of global media 234
- Instantaneous cultural exchange: When time becomes timeless 236
- The inequality of global media flow 237
- Power and globalization: What drives the global media? 239
- Global media from above and below: Hip hop 240
- The challenges of global media flows 242

Summary 245
Key terms 246
Discussion questions 246
Action points 246
For more information 247

12 Adaptation and intercultural competence: How can I be effective in a new culture? 249

Cross-cultural adaptation: How can I better adjust to a new culture? 250
- Adjustment and culture shock: Defining the terms 251
- Models of cultural adjustment 251

Rethinking acculturation: What happens when cultural groups live side by side? 256

Coming home: Will it be as easy as it sounds? 258
- The process and nature of return cultural adjustment 258
- Making the going and coming home easier 261

Intercultural communication competence: How can I get the job done... and still be liked? 262
- Understanding intercultural competence 262
- Beyond the multicultural person: Intergroup effectiveness 264

Summary 265
Key terms 265
Discussion questions 266
Action points 266
For more information 267

13 Relationships and conflict: How can I have better cross-cultural relationships? 269

Culture and communication in relationship: How do intercultural relationships grow and thrive? 271
14 The political context: How can we use communication to shape politics and culture? 290

Politics, culture, and communication: How do politics relate to culture? 292

Making change happen: What are some examples of successful social movements? 294
The Green Belt Movement 294
The immigrant rights movement 296

Intercultural political leadership: What strategies can we use to bring about change? 298
Majora Carter and the Bronx River Alliance 298
Servant leadership and TOMS shoes 300

Summary 302
Key terms 303
Discussion questions 303
Action points 303
For more information 304

15 Intercultural communication in international organizational contexts: How does culture shape business, and how is business culture changing? 306

A new contract: How are technology and information changing the culture of work and workplaces? 308
New workers, new contracts 308
Globalization and corporate and local cultures 309

Cultural variability: How does culture shape the organization? 312
Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s cultural orientations 312
Orientation toward time 316

A new world: What are the impact of globalization on business? 317
Convergent and divergent hypotheses of business in a globalizing world 318
Types of organization 319
National/corporate cultures 321

Corporate responsibility: How can my company make a difference? 322
Case studies of corporate social responsibility 322
Intercultural organizing and communication for civic engagement 323

Summary 325
Key terms 325
Discussion questions 326
Action points 326
For more information 327

Conclusion 329
Glossary 331
Index 343
Global needs meet an engaged community

There are increased interconnections in the world at large—from international business and education opportunities to domestic and international crises. There is open conflict in Syria, Burma, Somalia, and Colombia, and dormant conflicts, quiet but never quite resolved, in Palestine, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, and many other places. Recent natural disasters of cataclysmic proportions have struck Indonesia (2004), Japan (2011), and Haiti (2012), each demanding forces of collaborating international and domestic workers. Governments work across cultures and across nations (concepts we will treat separately in this book) to fight against the international flow of the drug trade, human trafficking, and other issues. And, at the same time, we have seen great changes within and across societies, from the “Arab Spring” and the overthrow of several totalitarian governments to the renewed debate over same-sex marriage in the United States in 2013.

Grand-scale problems require complex solutions; and these solutions require the synergy of efforts of people with different cultural perspectives. But even if we do not see the connection of global issues to our own lives or ever travel abroad, culture touches our lives. We live in a multicultural, global economy, where, to survive, most large businesses employ, buy, and sell across cultural and national lines. Many of us, regardless of our country of residence, have doctors, teachers, bosses, students, or employees from “cultures” besides our own. With new and interactive media, we might play online games, chat, or develop friendships or romances with people in other lands without leaving our own borders. Besides this, we each live within and are influenced and sometimes constrained by our own cultures. The more we know about our own culture, the more effective we will be where we live, the more we can engage in issues and problems within our own community (which have cultural elements), and the more we will see the strengths and limits of our own culture. As we see these strengths and limits, we will have more likelihood of being able to make choices and change those cultures.

Whether we are discussing world-level crises or community issues, there is a bright spot as we talk about social issues, and that is the rise of involvement of citizens in the public sphere—at least in some ways. Russell Dalton (2009) reports statistics showing that while the younger generation (Gen Y) has a decreased sense of citizen “duty” in terms of things such as following the law without thought, or voting, they have an increased sense of citizen “engagement”, which includes seeking to understand opinions of others, “direct action, and elite-challenging activities” (p. 32). Engagement and duty are both impacted by things such as level of education, racial background, and religiosity. Increasingly, companies are encouraging their employees to participate in the community, and universities are promoting civic and political engagement.
There seems to be a fresh wind in the air as students in secondary schools, colleges, and universities seek to give back to the community. After a post-2005 decline, voluntarism increased to a high-point in 2011 (“Volunteering and Civic Life,” 2012; Volunteering/Community Service, 2010), and service learning opportunities at universities abound. Some have said that one of the characteristics of the up-and-coming generation is a sense of social responsibility, though one study suggests that the Millennial Generation “may not be the caring, socially conscious environmentalists some have portrayed them to be” (Chau, 2012). Instead, they might be focusing more on “money, image, and fame”. Statistics suggest that, at least in terms of volunteering, 16–18 year olds and those aged 25 and older historically volunteer more than the 18–25 set (Volunteering/Community Service, 2010). Students (especially in Western cultures like the United States, where “pragmatism” or “practicality” is a core value) have always wanted to study “what works”—what leads to better message production and consumption, better workplace practices, better relationships. But many students today often also seek ideas to help them engage better with the community. And knowledge of culture is central to such engagement.

Why another intercultural text? (Features of this book)

The need for solutions for community, as well as the growing interest in community engagement, is a driving force for the present book. We have three main goals in writing this text. First, we want to provide responsible knowledge of things cultural. Many introductory textbooks present simple explanations of things for the student new to cultural issues. We believe students are capable of deep thought, so, where possible, we introduce basic ideas, but then challenge students to critical thought about those ideas. Our second goal is for readers to be able to take something practical from the text for their own workplaces, relationships, and schooling, the traditional focus of intercultural studies. But the third goal is to bring an imagination of possibilities for community engagement—civic or political. We want to encourage readers, and ourselves as authors, to find ways to make the knowledge practical for making people’s lives better, to address social issues, to meet the personal needs of people in our lives and in our classrooms. With this in mind, this book has several distinctive features:

➔ The authors write for introductory readers, with clear definition of terms, but use original frameworks and introduce theories in a way that does not condescend to the reader.

➔ We treat culture complexly. While we sometimes discuss national cultures, through most of the book we see cultures as distinct from national boundaries. Some cultures cross national boundaries, and a single city might have people of many different cultures within it. There are regional, urban–rural, or other cultural differences within nations; even organizations have cultures.

➔ We construct a vision of culture that uses examples from around the world as much as possible, seeking to remove some of our own U.S.-centric bias as authors, and we use examples that relate to a variety of types of diversity, including age, sex, race,
Focus and direction of this book

With these goals in mind, our text begins with a discussion of the foundations of intercultural communication. In chapter 1, we introduce several reasons why it is important to study intercultural communication, with updated situations and examples of world and community diversity. In chapter 2, we introduce our central concepts of political and civic engagement and discuss the importance and nature of ethical intercultural communication and cultural research. We then turn to different ways to define culture (chapter 3).

The second portion of the book focuses on elements that inform the intercultural communication process, starting with the foundation upon which all communication rests—values, beliefs, and world view (chapter 4). We consider the view we have of ourselves as that relates to the groups to which we belong—identity (chapter 5)—and then look at our attitudes towards those of other identities (chapter 6).

In the third part of our book, we look at the exchange of messages through different channels. We begin with verbal communication—that is, face-to-face communication as it relates to the use of words in interaction (chapter 7). We next consider the various channels of face-to-face communication that do not use words—nonverbal communication (chapter 8). This includes discussion of things such as space, time, touch, eye contact, and gesture. We examine messages given by speakers or in texts to persuade—rhetoric (chapter 9). Finally, we look at aspects of mediated communication, in terms of how we mediate identity and culture (chapter 10).

Our final section contains issues and contexts of intercultural communication, starting with the impacts of globalization, especially on media (chapter 11), then moving to cross-cultural adaptation and intercultural communication competence (chapter 12), intercultural relations, conflict, and negotiation (chapter 13), political communication (chapter 14), and finally the organizational context (chapter 15).
The order is intended to be flexible for the instructor. As we have used drafts of this text in our own teaching, we find that, after the foundational chapters, each chapter stands on its own; we can choose the chapters that best meet our needs, for example, with a special unit on media (or leaving media out), or skipping over the section on personal relationships. We encourage the student reading this preface to start each chapter you read by looking at the objectives at the top of each chapter—those are things that we, the authors, felt were most important as we wrote. Then read the discussion questions at the end. As you read, start with an understanding of the larger structure and bolded terms in the chapter, before you try to learn specific details.

In each area, there are areas for practical applications of culture to work and school, ways in which knowledge of culture will teach us about ourselves and give us more freedom over our choices, and aspects that will allow us to be more effective and engaged citizens in our communities.

References


Each of the co-authors thanks the other authors for their contributions and feedback on chapters. But we are especially grateful to the people we have worked with at Wiley, especially Deirdre Ilkson, Elizabeth Swayze, Sarah Tracy, and Julia Kirk (our image wizard). We would also like to thank Jane Taylor (photos and permissions), Grace Fairley (website/instructor’s manual), and Nora Naughton (final page proofs) for their countless hours of work on the project. These fine people have been a constant encouragement to us in the writing of this book, a process that, in the end, took four years. They believed in us and checked on us, sometimes with polite reminders to “get it in gear”. We also thank the many anonymous reviewers that have provided comments on earlier versions of this text. You have made this a better text than it would have been with only our own efforts.

As it has come to revisions, we thank those who have helped us with different concepts. We appreciate the help of Professor Zhong Xin (professor of the School of Journalism and Communication, and Deputy Director of Public Communication Research Institute, Renmin University) and Professor Chen Xuan (School of Journalism, Journalism and Social Development Research Center, Renmin University) for their help understanding China’s media policy, and to our colleagues Sandra Metts, Joe Blaney, Lance Lippert, and Steve Hunt for giving us insight on different aspects of the book, from face to media to civic engagement. A special thanks to Joe Zompetti, who has given us constant insight on everything semiotic, postmodern, postcolonial, and otherwise critical. And we thank our students, from whom we always learn so much, as we ourselves continue to be “students” of culture. Thanks especially to Liz Miller, graduate student at Illinois State, for giving a close read of much of the manuscript.

Finally, we thank our families and partners for putting up with the hours of work that the task has entailed, and for their support in the process. With family and connection in mind, John dedicates this book to his mom, Linda Jensen-Speight, who passed from this life quietly, during the final revisions of the text.

Robin wishes to thank Prof. William Laf Youmans, George Washington University, for his sage advice and contributions to the “globalization” chapter. She thanks John Baldwin for his vision and leadership on this project. And, a job well done to Alberto González and Suchitra Shenoy-Packer—“It was my pleasure working with you”.

Al acknowledges the assistance of Eun Young Lee. He dedicates this book to the undergraduate and graduate student interculturalists at BGSU.

Suchitra dedicates this book to her students at Purdue University and DePaul University.
This text has a comprehensive companion website which features the following resources for instructors:

- Powerpoint slides to accompany each chapter
- Sample syllabi for both undergraduate and graduate courses
- Testbank, containing problems for each chapter, along with answers
- Glossary
- Exercises for all chapters, along with a resource list and some general assignments.

Please visit www.wiley.com/go/baldwin to access the materials.
Walk through

Part opening page The book is divided into four parts. Each part opens with a list of the chapters it contains, followed by a short introduction summarizing the purposes of each chapter.

Chapter opening page Each chapter opens with a list of the main chapter objectives and the chapter table of contents.

Summary

Questions for the chapter that arise in a classroom setting may be a useful springboard for discussion. We recommend that some of the language options be used to open up a dialogue with students about the experiences of the main chapter objectives and the chapter table of contents.

Chapter objectives

- What is the difference between cultural and nonverbal communication?
- What are the functions of nonverbal communication?
- How does nonverbal communication differ from verbal communication?

End-of-chapter pedagogy Each chapter ends with a summary, a listing of the key terms in the chapter, discussion questions, action points, and details of further resources under the heading “For More Information,” and references.

KEY TERMS

- Nonverbal communication
- Cultural values
- Body language
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Paralanguage
- Proxemics
- Kinesics
- Chronemics
- Haptics
- Oculesics

References

Walk through

Walk through the urban environment. Your assignment is to create a map showing the location of key landmarks and points of interest. Consider factors such as the layout of streets, the presence of public transportation, and the availability of amenities like parks and playgrounds. This exercise will help you better understand the dynamics of urban planning and design.

Key terms and glossary

Key terms are introduced in bold and clearly defined both in the text and in a complete glossary at the end of the book.

ON THE NET

For more information on the topics discussed in the chapter, visit the following websites:

- [Website 1](http://example.com)
- [Website 2](http://example.com)
- [Website 3](http://example.com)

Vernacular rhetoric: How does everyday communication seek to persuade?

Vernacular rhetoric is the use of language and communication practices that are specific to a particular cultural or social group. It involves the use of everyday language and expressions that are unique to a particular community or region. Vernacular rhetoric can play a significant role in shaping people's attitudes and beliefs, and can be used to persuade others to adopt certain viewpoints or actions.

Vernacular rhetoric: In Africa

In the late 1990s, the UN Convention against Impunity forairs (UNODC) and the African Union launched the Afrobics project. This initiative aimed to promote the use of vernacular languages in education and development. The goal was to ensure that African languages were given the same recognition and support as English and French.

On the net

This feature provides students with an activity based on visiting a website that ties into the text discussion.

Break it down

These exercises encourage students to engage in civic action and apply their knowledge to the world at large.

On the net

This feature provides students with an activity based on visiting a website that ties into the text discussion.
Walk through

What do you think? These boxes ask the reader to think critically on an issue or examine their own opinions on a subject.

Pop culture This feature uses examples from the media and pop culture as jumping off points for the reader to apply their knowledge.

The DIS behavior change is aimed at changing the way people think about, interact with, and manage their emotions. It starts with the idea that people have different ways of coping with stress and that these ways can affect their health. The behavior change component aims to help people develop healthier ways of coping with stress, such as exercising, talking to a friend, or taking a break.

What do you think? These boxes ask the reader to think critically on an issue or examine their own opinions on a subject.

Pop culture This feature uses examples from the media and pop culture as jumping off points for the reader to apply their knowledge.
If you try to build a structure of some sort, you know that you need certain materials to make it—bricks, wood, plastic, metal—and some plan for the structure—a blueprint. As you consider these things, you will need to think of how the building will be used. Will it be a restaurant? A bank? A hockey rink? But before you lay the first brick, you must make sure that your building is on firm footing: you need a good foundation.

In the same way, we will soon describe the things that make up intercultural communication (part two), the ways we use it (part three), and the different functions we can use it for (part four). We provided a general road map to the book at the end of the Preface. But before we do any of that, we need to lay a groundwork—a foundation—of some basic principles. That is the purpose of the first part of the book.

In chapter 1, we provide a rationale for studying intercultural communication. Many companies and students no longer require a reason for studying intercultural communication, as the need for skills in this area are part of conventional wisdom. Still, you may find the facts in the section interesting, and as you talk to future employers of your skills in intercultural communication, some of them may still need convincing of the need to consider culture. Even though there are many benefits of studying intercultural communication, there are also some limitations, which we also address. Finally, we speak briefly about the history of the study of intercultural communication. We speak of it because it gives us context for what we study, and context is important to understanding what we do and why we do it. We treat it briefly, as we want to keep our focus primarily practical.

Chapter 2 introduces what we feel are the most important principles for practicing and researching intercultural communication. We could, here, discuss what it means to be a
“competent” communicator across cultures, but we need to know more about sending and receiving messages first. It is important that we be aware of what it means to be ethical in our communication, so we discuss different ethical approaches in depth. It is an ethical position by the authors that leads us to feel that communication—and intercultural communication especially—should be related to civic and political action, so we introduce these terms and their relationship to intercultural communication. Finally, as much of what we understand about culture involves research of some sort, we introduce different ways of seeing the world as they relate to studying culture and communication.

Finally, in chapter 3, we are ready to introduce a definition of culture; but we notice that defining culture is not that easy, because people from different disciplines often see culture in different and opposing ways. We discuss some of these ways and provide our own tentative definition. We describe some of the key components of culture, such as values, norms, and beliefs, and then provide a model to help explain the influences that might be present, to greater or lesser degrees, in any communication, but especially in intercultural or intergroup communication.

With these foundations—a reason to study culture and communication, an understanding of ethical communication and civic engagement, and an view of the nature of culture—we will be able to look more closely at the components that impact the creation and interpretation of messages between and within cultures.
Chapter 1

A rationale for studying intercultural communication: Why should we know about other cultures?

Chapter objectives

After this chapter, you should be able to:

➔ Provide several reasons, with evidence, as to why it is important to study intercultural communication

➔ Describe possible limitations of studying intercultural communication

➔ Summarize briefly the history of intercultural communication as a field of research

Building a rationale: Why do we need to know about intercultural communication?

The history and focus of intercultural communication: Where did we come from?
In 1994, a tsunami hit countries in the Indian Ocean, triggered by an earthquake measuring 9.1 on the Richter scale—the power of about 23,000 atomic bombs (*National Geographic News*, 2005). The tsunami destroyed whole cities and vast tracts of farmland and made many formerly occupied islands uninhabitable. It killed more than 225,000 people in countries including Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the Maldives (Brunner, 2007). The World Bank Fact Sheet (Tsunami recovery in Indonesia, Dec, 2006) listed the need for 80–100,000 homes and noted the destruction of more than 2000 schools and 100 health facilities. The World Bank enlisted the help of 15 nations and international agencies (the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the European Commission) to help with the repair and restoration of the region (Aceh Post-Tsunami Reconstruction, 2006). Many such disasters have occurred since, including the 2011 earthquake and resulting tsunami in Japan (see Figure 1.1).

In this story, we see a major international crisis that required multicultural and multinational cooperation. While this case reflects an obvious need for intercultural communication, individuals can also benefit from such an education, even if they never travel outside of their hometown. Many students around the world today are re-investing in their community, with a sense of social responsibility that surpasses that of their parents. Many readers of this book are members of that generation, but even those of different ages may find themselves increasingly aware of the world around them. In this chapter, we highlight the importance of understanding intercultural communication. We then turn our attention to the reasons that we should bring that understanding back to the communities—local, regional, and world—in which we live.

![Figure 1.1](image_url) International workers cooperate after the Japanese Tsunami of 2011. What role could you have in international cooperation to solve world problems?

Source: YONHAP/EPA.
Building a rationale: Why do we need to know about intercultural communication?

Many university researchers, journalists, business leaders, civic leaders, and bloggers around the world have begun to call our attention to the need to understand cultures and intercultural communication. Whereas at one time, one had to justify the need for an organization or individual to study other cultures, in today’s globalized world such a need seems simply to be assumed. The reasons and benefits of studying intercultural communication are broad, from personal growth to community investment to financial incentives. We review these and other motives here.

But before we begin, we should probably define some key terms. Each of these is complex, and we will discuss them in more detail in chapter 3. We will define culture simply as the way of life of a group of people, including symbols, values, behaviors, artifacts, and other shared aspects. Culture continually evolves as people share messages, and, often, it is the result of struggle between different groups who share different perspectives, interests, and power relationships (Hecht et al., 2006). For our purposes, communication is the process of creating and sending symbolic behavior, and the interpretation of behavior between people. And intercultural communication occurs when culture impacts the communication between two or more people enough to make a difference. This differs from international communication, which focuses on media systems. Communication between diplomats and international politicians is intercultural, but this is a special type of communication as the communicators represent not only their own interests, but also those of larger organizations or nations. This last form of communication might take place for economic advancement or for the addressing of world problems. UNESCO, in its 2009 World Report executive summary, highlights the need for dialogue across many areas of social and global development. In its closing recommendations, it advocates the development of guidelines for cross-cultural dialogue, the creation and distribution of audio-visual (mediated) materials that are culturally sensitive, the promotion of (cross-cultural) media literacy, the development of minority–majority member dialogues within national cultures, and the creation of “real and virtual forums” for the development of “cultural intelligence” in the business and marketing world (UNESCO, 2009, p. 35). In fact, the name of the UNESCO report involves “cultural diversity” and “intercultural dialogue.” But as we shall see, addressing global problems is only one reason to study intercultural communication.

The personal growth motive

Many students live in the here and now—the world of room- or apartment-mates, school or sports organizations, and jobs. Our first motive has to do with the benefit to you, as a person, of learning about other cultures. While there are many personal benefits in learning about other cultures, we will focus on three: worldmindedness, self-awareness, and personal empowerment.

First, learning about cultures and intercultural communication can simply help us better understand others in the world. Bradford ‘J’ Hall (2003) lists “freedom from ignorance” as one of the benefits of studying intercultural communication (p. 22). Knowing about other cultures helps us to be more responsible employees, travelers, consumers and producers of media, and world citizens, bringing to each interaction
an increased awareness of others and competence. Hall states, “As we are freed from ignorance and negative attributions, we are able to build better relationships. . . with a wide variety of people” (p. 22). Communication and contact over time can bring us, in both our face-to-face and socially mediated interactions, from a state of ethnocentrism, where we feel that our way is best, to a state where we see the value in the perspectives and ways of living of others. The greatest benefit will come from both education and contact, as these can help us to appreciate cultural difference within our own nation and across borders (see chapter 5).

As we learn more about other cultures, we also learn more about our own cultures and about ourselves. The more people study other languages, the more they learn about their own language; much the same is true when studying cultures. If you grow up in a culture that makes arguments through deductive, linear logic (“If A is true, and B is true, then C must be true”), you may never be aware of that approach to argumentation until you study or live in a culture in which one makes an argument through an extended, even circular story.

Finally, knowledge of and extended experience with other cultures make us more flexible as individuals. Young Yun Kim and Brent Ruben (1988) suggest that learning new cultures gives us new ways to think, feel, and act. We might, over time, become “intercultural persons,” able to move freely between cultures, or at least understand different cultural perspectives more easily. This knowledge makes us aware that the things that we always took for granted as simply fact, or “natural,” are, in fact, cultural. We realize that what we always thought was friendship, success, beauty, family, or democracy is in fact something that our culture has defined for us, and often such forces are not simply the neutral flowing of culture from one construction of beauty to another, but are manipulated by corporations, advertisers, politicians, and citizens who benefit from particular views of the world. Knowledge of cultures gives us the agency to choose between different ways of being a friend or being successful. It “gives us a broader view of our own lives and the problems we face” (Hall, 2003, p. 22), even if our choices are constrained by social, political, and economic circumstances.

The social responsibility motive

We are not simply isolated individuals—we live in contact with others, and we have responsibility to live together peaceably and ethically (see chapter 2). But, as Marshall McLuhan’s (1962) metaphor of the Global Village illustrates, our communities become more interconnected because of increased technology, media, and ease of travel. In addition, more and more people share this planet with its limited space and resources. As well, a complex web of changing labor relations, social policies, tribal and international conflicts, religious fervor, and other things lead to an increase in social problems. Some of these come from the growing stress on the environment brought about by an increase both of people and of industry. As we face global environmental change (and debate the causes of that change), there is an increased need for global discussion among leaders for policies that are equitable to nations and that can seek to preserve and improve the environment. One such effort was the Kyoto Protocol (2012), an initiative by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, aimed at encouraging 37 industrialized nations to work more actively to reduce greenhouse gases.
Chapter 1   A rationale for studying intercultural communication: Why should we know about other cultures?

Of course, the environment is only one of the issues that demand global cooperation. A global population clock (Current world population, n.d.) gives the population of the world, at the writing of this paragraph, as 7,109,925,897. According to the World Bank (2013), about 20% of those live in poverty (defined here as less than $U.S. 1.25 income per person per day), or 1.22 billion in 2010. Although it is good news that poverty is down from 43% of the earth’s population in 1990, poverty still remains a pressing problem. But how we address it requires a “dialogic” approach (Martin, et al., 2002), in which we talk with people within the situation to understand their own view of poverty and how to address it (see chapter 2). A UNESCO World Report (2009) advises, “Cultural perspectives shape how poverty is understood and experienced” (p. 25). Developmental approaches must take into account local cultural perspectives to be successful. This holds true for issues such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, child soldiers, violence against women, and the search for cures for illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, or heart disease.

In addition to social issues, wars and armed conflicts are occurring throughout the world. One website, Wars in the World (2012) outlines “hotspots” involving 61 different nations and 313 militias and separatist groups. In many cases, struggles are not armed, but are battled over prestige, social status, and social capital within nations, as groups strive to gain recognition and equal opportunity within their own countries, from the Roma in Hungary and other European nations to the Ainu of Japan. This includes struggles for equality for groups of different races, sexes, sexual orientations, and religious affiliations. Some might include within this discussion social class inequalities. For example, Global Finance’s online magazine (Global Finance, n.d.) ranks counties based on how great the difference is between poorest and richest families, with Chile, Turkey, Mexico, and the United States being at the unequal end of the spectrum, and Slovenia, Denmark, and Norway having the most equality in incomes. Difference in worker pay may be another indicator of inequality. A popular Internet image (see Figure 1.2) points out supposed disparity among CEOs and average employees in certain countries. However, a Tampa Bay Times online news article links to reports that show that the U.S. figure has no basis in research (Tampa Bay Times, 2012). The article cites several reputable organizations like the Institute for Policy Studies and the Economic Policy Institute to note that the current ratio is probably only somewhere between 185 to 1 and 325 to 1. Such discrepancies led to the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement and the protest for economic justice for the “99%.” U.S. American CEOs don’t consider the contrast to worker pay or even to their cross-national peers, to be important. Rather, they consider their pay comparable to peers in other high-producing industries.

ON THE NET

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change lists 191 nations that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol, established in 1997 to reduce greenhouse emissions: http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/status_of_ratification/items/2613.php. Is your nation among those that have ratified it? Go onto websites such as http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/jan/31/world-carbon-dioxide-emissions-country-data-co2 or http://www.carbonplanet.com/country_emissions to see where your country ranks in total and per capita emissions. What are some of the reasons that some of the countries with the highest production of greenhouse gases might not ratify an agreement such as the Kyoto Protocol? What are the implications for such choices for citizens of the countries involved?
Even though movements like Occupy Wall Street claim economic injustice, in part, at the hands of big business, we could not exist without corporations, and they have made contributions to societies worldwide. Most students work for some organization at some point in their lives, and it is the business context that provides our next motive for the study of intercultural communication. An E-How Money Internet site (Nelson, n.d.) suggests corporate profitability as the first motive for knowing how to communicate well across cultures. The article cites Wal-Mart’s failed $US 1 billion expansion to Germany, led by an American manager who sought to import American practices and clerk–customer relations that just did not make sense in Germany. The company eventually withdrew from Germany.

It should come as no surprise to us that such difficulties would occur, with an ever-expanding and ever-more-interconnected international economy. Multinational corporations continue to grow, constituting an ever-increasing piece of the world economy. Several writers have argued that some multinational corporations (MNCs), such as Wal-Mart, Exxon Mobil, General Motors, and British Petroleum (BP), surpass many nations when comparing company revenues to gross domestic product (de Grauwe & Camerman, 2002). The International Trade Administration, in the United States, reports that manufactured exports support six million jobs, or nearly one out of five manufacturing jobs in the United States (Ward, 2009). Such statistics represent trends around the world. A joint study by the International Labour Office and the World Trade Organization reports that in the mid-1980s, 30% of world GDP was related to global trade; that figure had risen to 60% of world GDP by 2007.

Both the OECD and current CEOs (in an interview study of 1500 CEOs worldwide by an IBM “CEO Study”) see a coming shift in global economic power from developed nations to developing nations (Radjou & Kalpa, 6 Aug, 2010). This is evidenced by world events, such as when the nation island of Samoa changed time zones from one side of the dateline to the other, skipping Friday, December 30, 2011, altogether. This changed its alignment from the United States to Japan.