



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Berlin-Barcelona Program, Summer 2027

COMM 365: Intercultural Communication

Instructor: Julie Snyder-Yuly, Ph.d.

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: Using Berlin and Barcelona as living classrooms, this course explores intercultural communication from a critical, experiential perspective. Students will examine how communication is shaped by culture, identity, power, language, and global contexts. Through field observations, cultural interactions, and engagement with public spaces such as museums and monuments, students will analyze differences within and across cultures. The course emphasizes reflective learning and the development of intercultural competence by encouraging students to critically examine their own assumptions while engaging thoughtfully with others.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Recognize contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Discuss other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

Course Objectives:

The primary objectives for this course are:

- To identify and apply the theories and practices associated with intercultural communication;
- To develop skills to research, observe, and analyze intercultural communication in interpersonal and mediated discourse;
- To discover the importance of the roles of context and power in studying intercultural communication;
- To develop skills to engage in mindful, reflexive, and accountable dialogue through difference;
- To acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that increase intercultural competence.
- To engage ethically and responsibly as a visitor in a global cultural context.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- Explain and apply key concepts and theories of intercultural communication in real-world contexts
- Observe and analyze intercultural interactions in natural settings (e.g., museums, public spaces, local communities)
- Demonstrate intercultural competence through respectful and effective communication with individuals from different cultural backgrounds
- Critically reflect on their own cultural identities, assumptions, and positionality in intercultural encounters
- Evaluate how power, history, and representation shape communication in cultural artifacts (e.g., museums, monuments, media)
- Adapt communication strategies in response to intercultural challenges or misunderstandings
- Synthesize experiential learning with course theory to interpret intercultural experiences

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

- Intercultural Communication in Context (Berlin & Barcelona)
- Cultural Identity, Power, and Representation
- Communication in Practice: Verbal, Nonverbal, and Interaction
- Language, Space, and Cultural Meaning (Art, Museums, Public Spaces)
- Intercultural Encounters: Adaptation, Misunderstanding, and Conflict
- Globalization, Migration, and Cultural Change

5. Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: This course will fulfill the Marshall University Multicultural/International requirement as it is equivalent to CMM 322.

6. Required Readings and Materials:

- Select readings will be assigned prior to departure and will be available in our Google Classroom. Recommended readings will be provided for those who wish to explore intercultural communication more in-depth.
- Students should bring with them a blank journal or notebook that they will carry with them throughout the course and a laptop or other device for homework and readings.

7. Graded Assignments:

Assignment	Points
Intercultural Field Journal (ongoing)	25 points
Museum Analysis / Scavenger Hunts (4 @ 5 points)	20 points
Intercultural Field Observations (2 @ 10 points)	20 points
Cultural Conversations (2 @ 10 points)	20 points
Spaces, Power, & Identity Reflections (2 @ 10 points)	20 points
Final Intercultural Encounters Portfolio & Presentation	35 points
Total	140 points

Work will be graded on this scale:

90 – 100 A

80 – 89 B

70 – 79 C

60 – 69 D

Below 60 E (F)

This course will be graded on this basis, without regard to other scales (i.e., plus-and-minus) which may apply at your college or university. Note KUIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.

8. Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can “hallucinate” (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- Brainstorming: You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- Citation Assistance: AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.

- Grammar and Style Checking: AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- Concept Understanding: Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- Research Assistance: AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- Data Manipulation: Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- Misrepresentation of Skills: Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Confidentiality Breach: Using AI tools that might violate KIIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Metacognitive Reflection. In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

"I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]."

9. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

10. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

11. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.

Assignment Descriptions

Intercultural Field Journal (25 points)

Students will maintain a daily or near-daily field journal documenting intercultural experiences, observations, and reflections throughout the program. This journal is a central component of the course and will support all other assignments.

Entries should go beyond description to include:

- Cultural observations
- Personal reactions and emotional responses
- Moments of confusion, discomfort, or connection
- Insight into intercultural differences and similarities
- Connections to course concepts (e.g., identity, power, communication styles)

Students will be provided with periodic guided prompts to support deeper reflection.

Museum Analysis / Scavenger Hunts (20 points total)

Students will complete four museum-based scavenger hunts (two in Berlin and two in Barcelona). These structured activities are designed to encourage critical engagement with cultural spaces and public narratives.

Across these visits, students will:

- Identify and analyze key artifacts or exhibits
- Examine cultural representation, identity, and storytelling
- Consider whose stories are centered—and whose are absent
- Reflect on how history, power, and context shape meaning

Students should document their observations and reflections for use in their final portfolio.

Intercultural Field Observations (20 points total | 10 points each)

Students will complete two structured field observations in public settings (e.g., cafés, markets, public transit, plazas).

For each observation, students should:

- Identify communication patterns (verbal and nonverbal)
- Analyze social norms and interaction styles
- Reflect on differences from their own cultural expectations
- Apply relevant intercultural communication concepts

Cultural Conversations (20 points total | 10 points each)

Students will engage in two structured cultural conversations, one in Berlin and one in Barcelona.

These conversations should:

- Take place in safe, public settings
- Involve respectful, non-invasive questions
- Focus on everyday experiences, perspectives, or cultural insights

Students will reflect on:

- Communication challenges and adaptations
- Assumptions they brought into the interaction
- Insights gained about local culture and perspectives

Students may complete this assignment individually or in pairs.

Spaces, Power, & Identity Reflections (20 points total | 10 points each)

Students will complete two place-based reflections, one in Berlin and one in Barcelona, analyzing a specific space (e.g., neighborhood, monument, market, museum, or plaza).

Each reflection should consider:

- Who occupies the space and how
- What cultural norms and behaviors are present
- How identity, power, and inclusion/exclusion are communicated
- What the space reveals about the broader culture

Final Intercultural Encounters Portfolio & Presentation (35 points)

Students will synthesize their intercultural experiences through a curated portfolio and final presentation that demonstrate their learning across the study abroad program. This assignment emphasizes the integration of fieldwork, reflection, and theory.

Portfolio Component

Students will compile a portfolio that includes selected artifacts from their coursework, such as:

- Field journal entries
- Museum analysis / scavenger hunt responses
- Intercultural field observations
- Local interaction reflection
- Reflection blog excerpts

For each included artifact, students should provide a brief analytical reflection (1–2 paragraphs) explaining:

- What the experience reveals about intercultural communication
- How it connects to course concepts (e.g., identity, power, discourse, adaptation)
- What the student learned about themselves and others

Synthesis Reflection

In addition to individual artifacts, students will include a final integrative reflection that:

- Demonstrates growth in intercultural competence
- Critically examines personal identity, assumptions, and positionality
- Identifies key moments of challenge, misunderstanding, or transformation
- Synthesizes experiential learning with course theories

Presentation Component

Students will deliver a short presentation sharing key insights from their portfolio. Presentations should:

- Highlight 2–3 meaningful intercultural experiences
- Connect those experiences to course concepts
- Reflect on personal growth and changing perspectives
- Engage the audience through visual or narrative storytelling (images, anecdotes, themes, etc.)

Learning Goals

This project should demonstrate students' ability to:

- Integrate field observations, interactions, and course concepts
- Apply intercultural communication theory to real-world contexts
- Reflect critically on identity, assumptions, and experiences
- Analyze intercultural encounters with attention to power, communication, and context

Note to Students

Your portfolio is not just a collection of assignments, it should tell a coherent story of your intercultural learning journey across Berlin and Barcelona.