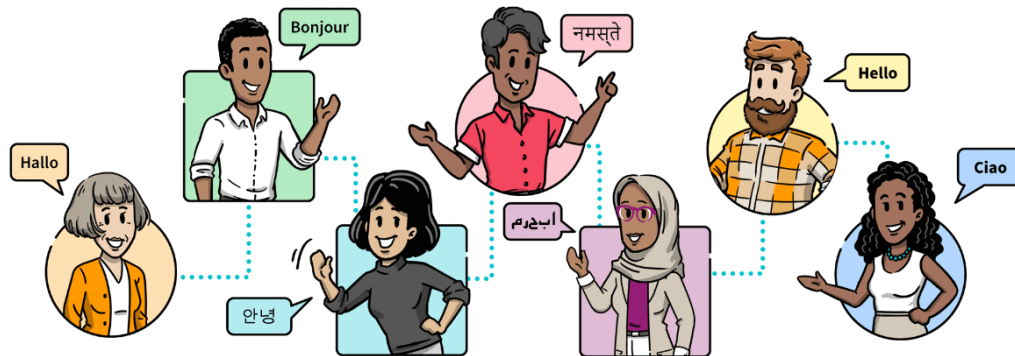


# International Strategic Communication

## Fall 2025

### MMC6936



Instructor: Bridget Grogan  
Email: [bgrogan@ufl.edu](mailto:bgrogan@ufl.edu)

## Course Description

Effective international strategic communication can elevate brands globally. Strategic communication failures can destroy them. In this course, students will learn the secrets to successful cross-cultural communication.

This course will focus on learning to appreciate the cultural similarities and differences between a new market and a brand's home market to develop effective and appropriate strategic communication and content marketing materials. Students will explore fun, engaging, successful brands that are cross-cultural rockstars. They will explore brands that have made intercultural mistakes. They will learn how to recover from intercultural missteps.

Students will study the influence of culture on behavior, values, and beliefs in order to create appropriate communication across cultures. This cultural sensitivity will also provide understanding of how students' own cultural experiences can positively or negatively determine their communication styles and methods.

Students will study the key concept of intercultural empathy from an intellectual and emotional point of view, with a focus on how content marketing materials are received across cultures. Demonstrating intercultural empathy includes the abilities to connect emotionally with people, show compassion, think from more than one perspective, and actively listen. By applying these abilities to the communication process, students will learn to better communicate their messages to audiences with different cultural ethnicities and backgrounds.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Students will develop cultural self-awareness and learn to respect and honor others' histories, cultures, traditions, and languages to become culturally competent.

Students will develop their ability to understand the situations and perspectives of others.

Students will learn to create communication that will be acceptable to other cultures.

Students will learn how to minimize the negative impact of cultural differences by establishing common frameworks for culturally diverse communication.

Students will be able to effectively critique intercultural content marketing messages and correct for insensitivities.

**Assignment 1: Cross-Cultural Marketing Strategy** – Students will choose two countries that are significantly dissimilar on some or all of Hofstede's dimensions. They will use the comparison tool to compare/contrast the two and report findings on the one most significant difference of the six.

They imagine/create a new product or service (not an existing product or service) to market in both countries and explain how to market it differently based on this most significant cultural difference.

**Assignment 2: Cultural Audit and Adaptation Plan** - Students will be assigned a company or organization looking to expand into a new international market. Each group will conduct a "cultural audit" of the target market (Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and other resources) and develop a strategic communication plan that adapts the organization's **messaging, channels, and tactics** to resonate with the local culture.

**Assignment 3: Hall's Cultural Dimensions** - This assignment requires students to apply Hall's dimensions to a scenario involving communication between the United States and Portugal, analyzing potential misunderstandings and developing strategic communication solutions.

They will answer a series of strategic marketing questions, following research paper best practices.

**Assignment 4: Hollywood Buddha** – Students will research the “Hollywood Buddha” disaster that was presented in class and discuss what could have been done differently. Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, and Burma protested the film because they said it degrades the religion's founder.

Takeaway - Cultural Sensitivity: The protests highlighted the importance of cultural sensitivity and respect in media representation.

**Assignment 5: Walmart in Germany** – Students will use the Walmart in Germany case study to develop alternate communication strategies to avoid the brand failure in the German market. They will develop several options and explain why these would have changed the outcome.

**Assignment 6: Hofstede Assignment (Mid-Term)** - Students will act as a marketing consultant for a new fashion brand, tasked with developing culturally sensitive launch strategies for two distinct markets: Germany and India. They will apply Hofstede's dimensions to understand consumer behavior and propose effective promotional campaigns.

They will answer a series of strategic marketing questions, following research paper best practices.

**Assignment 7: Meta Ad Creation Using AI** – Students will read an assigned article and answer a series of questions that relate the reading to cross-cultural communication. Students will turn in a paper reflecting their critical analysis of the concept and also prepare their thoughts to discuss in class.

**Assignment 8: The Nomad Soul Crisis** – Students will be assigned roles that represent different priorities in a brand communication crisis. They will identify stakeholders, analyze strategic options and create deliverables including an internal crisis strategy memo, an official public statement, and government engagement talking points. They will also answer a series of questions after creating and presenting their deliverables.

**Assignment 9: Final Project/Presentation** – Students will choose and explore an international brand that is considered a leader in paving the way for culturally sensitive communication. They will research the company's intercultural communication strategy and methods. They will present a slide deck analysis in class that covers the following criteria:

Part 1: They will analyze the company's overall, current international approach and present evidence that it is appropriate.

Part 2: They will critique any aspects of the company's brand that should be modified to enhance its intercultural communication success. A minimum of 6 relevant points/observations is required.

Part 3: They will create a plan to launch a new product in a country of their choice, that is culturally dissimilar from the company's home country. They will use specific examples and defend their ideas based on what they have learned about effective intercultural communication and marketing. This will include designing a specific product or service for their campaign and a plan for tying it to the campaign's chosen country. This should be a robust plan.

## Grade Scale

Points		Points		Points		Points	
A	1000-930	B	860-830	C	760-730	D	660-630
A-	920-900	B-	820-800	C-	720-700	D-	620-600
B+	890-870	C+	790-770	D+	690-670	E	599-0

## Late Assignments

Assignments will lose 20 percent per day that it is late. For example, if a 100-point assignment is two days late, you will lose 40 points for the late submission. After four days, late work will not be accepted.

## Academic Integrity

You are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. Any violation of the academic integrity expected of you will result in a minimum academic sanction of a failing grade on the assignment and possibly a failing grade for the course. Any alleged violations of the Student Honor Code will result in a referral to Student Conduct and Conflict resolution. Please review the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/> <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/08/The-Orange-Book-Web.pdf>

## Help With Coping

The UF [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) is a terrific, free resource for any student who could use help managing stress or coping with life. The center, at 3190 Radio Road on campus, is open for appointments and emergency walk-ins from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make an appointment or receive after-hours assistance, call 352-392-1575. You can also contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu). The U Matter, We Care team can also help

connect students to the many other helping resources including, but not limited to Victim Advocates, housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1. If you need assistance while abroad, call on any faculty member or AIFS staff member.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](https://www.ufl.edu/disability-resource-center/) (352-392-8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the professor when requesting accommodation.

## **Course Evaluations**

“Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.”

## **Student Complaint Process**

Students who have complaints about any course can use the links below for information about filing a complaint:

Residential Course: <https://www.sfa.ufl.edu/written-student-complaints/>.

Online Course: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>