Cognition of Conversation, Miscommunication, & Learning

SPA 44089; EPSY5/70093

Session: July
Days: Monday - Thursday
Time: 9:00am-11:30am
Location: Palazzo Vettori

Contact

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Roche (Jenny)
Contact: SLACK

Course Format: Communication is the seat of social interaction, and to truly understand the intricacies of communication - we will communicate. Therefore, this course will not be like a traditional lecture-based course, but will include three types of immersive learning contexts: field exploration, rich in-class discussions, and lectures about communicating. There will be four planned field exploration activities, in which we will learn about pragmatics as we people watch at famous locations in Florence, like Ponte Vecchio, discover the city as we use language to navigate maps, and practice our perspective taking skills in local shops or restaurants. In-class discussion will come from discussions of personal experience and review of assigned readings, while the lecture content and knowledge checks will help you learn specific concepts related to communication. These activities will allow us to engage in rich dialogue about topics related to cognition, communication, miscommunication, and learning — with the hope to improve personal and cultural communication practices.

Textbook & Reading Materials

Kreuz, R. & Roberts, R. (2017). *Getting Through: The Pleasures and Perils of Cross-Cultural Communication.* MIT Press.

Electronic reserves of research and review articles will be made available and will be posted on the LMS.

Course Description: Communication is as much about successful communication as it is about miscommunication. One of the richest aspects of traveling is learning about ourselves and new cultures through interaction — which often happens from miscommunications and cultural differences. Therefore, this course will provide you with knowledge that drives our understanding of the theoretical foundations of cognition, communication, miscommunication, and learning. We will learn about the importance of ambiguity and reference to promote learning through communication and miscommunication. Content learned in this course will increase students interests in communication and cognition, but will also provide insight about how to be better communicators in personal and global communication settings.

Course Overview & Objectives:

1. Topics related to psycholinguistics will be represented by the discussion of the cognitive factors that impact language production, perception, and interactive communication through collaborative dialogue.
2. The material presented will be used to strengthen your own knowledge about communication and cognition and associated behaviors as it relates to theory.
3. Activities required for this class will be used to strengthen your own knowledge about communication in general, as well as your ability to critically assess cognitive, psychological, social, and psycholinguistic research.

Assignments & Grading

Undergraduate Assignments

In-class Activities: 35% of Final Grade

Field Activities: 35% of Final Grade

Knowledge Checks: 30% of Final Grade

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Graduate Student Assignments

In-class Activities: 25% of Final Grade

Field Activities: 30% of Final Grade

Knowledge Checks: 20% of Final Grade

Reflection Paper: 25% of Final grade

Grading Scale (+/-)

Grade	**Range**
A	**100-94.5**
A-	**94.4 - 89.5**
B+	**89.4 - 85.5**
B	**85.4 - 81.5**
B-	**81.4 - 77.5**
C+	**77.4 - 73.5**
C	**73.4 - 69.5**
C-	**69.4 - 65.5**
D+	**65.4 - 61.5**
D	**61.4 - 57.5**
F	**57.4-0**

Descriptions of Course Assignments

(please refer to the LMS for specifics)

In-class activities

Miscommunication Reflection. On days that we meet in class, we will open the discussion with each member of the class disclosing an instance of successful or unsuccessful communication they experienced (personally or vicariously) that day or the day before. Students should come prepared to discuss an instance of cross-cultural miscommunication, why it happened, and what they learned from the interaction.

Application Question. Upon completion of the knowledge check, we will we will break out into small groups, to answer an application based on the concepts discussed in lecture. The question will be applied in nature, and the students will work on the answer to the question using google docs, working together to provide an answer. Time permitting, we will have a discussion about the application questions with the small groups discussing what they come up with in the class.

Article Discussions. Twice during the course, learners will be given no more than 2 short articles to read prior to the start of the class, on the day schedule to discuss the articles. On this day, small groups will be given a worksheet that asks targeted questions about the article. One group will be assigned the summary, in which they will summarize the article for the class, prior to discussion. This summary will include the introduction of the theoretical framework, how the paper relates to what we have learned in class so far, the methods, findings, and meaning of the article. Details are provided for this summary on the LMS. Other members of the class will work on an additional worksheet, to be filled out online, in the LMS — in class. The first half an hour of class, students will be required to fill out the worksheet for one of the articles. We will then spend about 15 minutes listening to the article summary from the small group, then as a class, we will discuss the implications of the manuscript as it relates to science and the real-world. After a short break, we will return to repeat the article discussion for the second paper. All students are expected to have read the articles prior to coming to class.

Knowledge Checks

On lecture days, that we discuss content in the Kreuz & Roberts (2017) book, there will be a knowledge check. The purpose of the knowledge checks will be to allow you to assess how much you learned and where you might need to reassess your understanding. In this assignment, you will be asked questions about key concepts in class — 5 - 10 questions, all multiple choice. This will be done online, in the LMS system, in class. Any answers a learner missed, they will be permitted to submit a knowledge check correction for full points back (to be completed outside of class) in which the include the following information:

1. The question
2. The response options
3. Incorrect answer
4. Correct answer

5. Explanation of why the correct answer was correct, and the incorrect answer was incorrect. This should be a substantial response that shows you have tried to understand the concept.

Out of Class Activities - Field Activities

Students will be broken into groups of 2-3 students for the field experience. Four field activities are planned and aligned with course modules on cross-cultural communication. At the end of each field activity, you will be provided with a prompt to answer targeted questions about how the experience informed your approach to cross-cultural communication and miscommunication, and how what you learned.

Grocery Store (module 1). In this activity, you and your group will take a trip to a local grocery store — your choice. The purpose of this field experience will be to have you explicitly acknowledge differences and similarities in grocery shopping, and how advertising practices impact your understanding. How does this relate to communication? We advertise through symbols, symbols are language, language impacts understanding. Therefore, how we buy and shop is impacted by language! But also, how we eat is very much related to our cultural identity. In this task, you will be required to identify one thing in the grocery store that is similar to your own personal cultural identity, and then find something that is different. You will then talk about how the advertisement practices in the US shaped how you interpreted things in an Italian grocery store.

People Watching (module 2). In this activity, your group will visit a well-known or popular location (e.g., Ponte Vecchio, Duomo, etc - small group choice) in which you will spend time people watching. Your group will be asked to let me know where you plan on going for your excursion, prior to going. Once your location is approved, you and your group will venture out to the specific location. You will spend time interacting with the environment, observing the people around you by watching their facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice. In this task, you will need to be able to describe how pragmatics are expressed by the individuals you observed, how we do not need verbal language to understand intent, and tie these observations to the theories we discuss in class and/or lecture.

Cafe culture (module 3). There are many cultural differences in how we have meals, including when to eat, tipping practices, and even how to order food. We will break out into our small groups to find a café or restaurant. You may enter and order something, or you can simply watch from afar — it is more fun to go in though. The small groups job will be to make note of the cultural differences and similarities in the dining/cafe experience (e.g., why do people stand at a counter to have coffee, and not sit down?). During this experience, you will make note of any miscommunications between yourself, your group, the other patrons, or even the café staff, and if/how the miscommunication was resolved. You will need to be able to describe the interaction, the things you found surprising, and even comforting (or uncomfortable) — but all discussions must be situated in theory as related to the content we discuss in class and in lecture.

Scavenger hunt (module 4). The scavenger hunt will occur over the last 2 days of class. There will be approximately 8 clues and cultural landmarks/icons (4 on the first day; 4 on the second day) that you and your group will find. You will have roughly 38 minutes to find each

landmark. Your group may team up with another group in class, it will make it more fun. To do this, the group will start off at a specified location (see the assignment). You all will follow the clues that I give you — they are all cryptic and non-literal. Non-literal language is used more than literal language, and the language skills we develop in our lives help us decipher meaning to add richness and often enjoyment to communication. You will be looking for cultural icons in the city of Florence. In this task, groups will engage in a scavenger hunt using a crude map of Florence to find landmarks in the city. In order to find these locations, you and your group members will work together, attempting to communicate well (e.g., deciphering non-literal language and establishing common ground). Once you find the landmark, you and your group will take a selfie. These selfies will be uploaded to Canvas and the group will be required to name the landmark - this can be done after the scavenger hunt is over. The important take aways from this assignment are that miscommunication is crucial for communication, and I hope you all miscommunicate well - because it is fun to resolve! Upon completion of the scavenger hunt, the groups that find all the landmarks, will receive a +1 point bonus to their final grade in class.

Graduate Student Assignment

Undergraduate students enrolled in this class are not required to complete this assignment.

Reflection Paper. Perspective taking is a key component of successful communication because communication is a highly social process. At the end of the course, you will turn in a 2 page (double-spaced) reflection paper that describes your experience in Florence from the perspective of communication, miscommunication, learning, cross-cultural impact, and social interaction. You should use theory to explain specific examples from your personal experience and how the things you learned in this course has helped you become a better global citizen. This narrative must include a discussion of theory as it relates to the examples you include, only primary sources are acceptable, and the use of APA is required.

Tentative Course Schedule

Below is the tentative course schedule of topics, readings, and activities. Any changes to this schedule will be announced to the class. All students are expected to keep track of changes in the course schedule. All pdf articles required for class will be provided to the student via Canvas and/or the library course reserves.

Date	Topic	Reading	Activity
1-Jul^{M}	Introduction	Syllabus	Syllabus, MR, Intro, KC, AQ
2-Jul^{T}	Cultural Competence Test & Scoring	Ang et al. (2007)	Article Discussion, Cultural Competence Survey, Scoring, & Implications
3-Jul^{W}	Culture & It's Consequences	Chapter 1, K & R	MR, AQ, KC
4-Jul^{R}	Grocery Store		Field Activity Assignment

8-Jul[M]	Pragmatics & It's Principles	Chapter 2, K & R	MR, AQ, KC
9-Jul[T]	How Speech Acts	Chapter 3, K & R	MR, AQ, KC
10-Jul[W]	Article Discussion	Fay et al. (2018); Reynolds et al. (2017)	Article Discussions
11-Jul[R]	People Watching		Field Activity Assignment
15-Jul[M]	The Elements of Pragmatic Style	Chapter 4, K & R	MR, AQ, KC
16-Jul[T]	The Mechanics of Cross-Cultural Communication	Chapter 5, K & R	MR, AQ, KC
17-Jul[W]	Article Discussion	Lowerse et al. (2006); Coco et al. (2017)	Article Discussions
18-Jul[R]	Café Culture		Field Activity Assignment
22-Jul[M]	Pragmatics in Action	Chapter 6, K & R	MR, AQ, KC
23-Jul[T]	Pragmatics in a Changing World	Chapter 7, K & R	MR, AQ, KC
24-Jul[W]	Scavenger Hunt - Part I		Field Activity Assignment
25-Jul[R]	Scavenger Hunt - Part II		Field Activity Assignment

Course Policies

Make-up Policies & Religious Accommodations. Assignment dates are posted, please be mindful of them. I try really hard to be flexible - if you are falling behind, get a meeting with me so that I may be able to help you.

Additionally, The University welcomes individuals from all different faiths, philosophies, religious traditions, and other systems of belief, and supports their respective practices. In compliance with University policy and the Ohio Revised Code, the University permits students to request class absences for up to three (3) days, per term, in order to participate in organized activities

conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. Students will not be penalized as a result of any of these excused absences. The request for excusal must be made, in writing, no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of instruction in a particular course and include the date(s) of each proposed absence or request for alternative religious accommodation. The request must clearly state that the proposed absence is to participate in religious activities. The request must also provide the particular accommodation(s) you desire.

You will be notified by me if your request for accommodation is approved, or, if it is approved with modification. I will work with you in an effort to arrange a mutually agreeable alternative arrangement. For more information regarding this Policy you may contact the Student Ombuds (ombuds@kent.edu).

Academic Honesty, Cheating & Plagiarism. All materials turned in for this class must be created by you for this course; this includes crediting creators of the content you are presenting. Reference all work you are referencing, and never copy and paste directly from someone else's work. When summarizing, you must paraphrase in your own words. It is never acceptable to copy and paste content from another person's work, even when you provide the reference - unless you are using a direct quote. Direct quotes should be reserved for information that should not be summarized or paraphrased (e.g., Dr. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream..." speech). Additionally, materials submitted as assignments in other courses cannot be used for a grade in this course.

Please consider reviewing the Cheating and Plagiarism content on the KSU policy Regulation Page — because cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. These are KSU policies. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Also, the term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. The term “academic misconduct” includes, but is not limited to, all acts of cheating and plagiarism as defined herein. Please refer to Kent State University’s Code of Academic Honesty, for the treatment of related offenses. You are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty.

Student Accessibility Services. Kent State University is committed to inclusive and accessible education experiences for all students. University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. Students with disabilities are encouraged to connect with Student Accessibility Services (330-672-3391; www.kent.edu/sas) as early as possible to establish accommodations. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic medical conditions, or injuries), please let me know immediately.