HU 3880: Communication and Community

Meeting: MWF 1:05 - 1:55 pm in Fisher 127
Professor: Jnan Blau
Email: jablau@mtu.edu
Office: Walker 344
Office Hours: MW 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Telephone: Office, 487-1084; Dept. of Humanities, 487-2008

Required Texts:

Additional readings, including web-based readings, will be assigned

Course Description:
Together, we will focus on two interrelated words/ideas/practices, as revealed in the course title: communication and community.

We will think about communication in terms of inter/cultural communication. In other words, we will learn what it means to think of ourselves as cultural beings who are always already in communication with others whose cultural backgrounds, experiences, and worldviews are both similar and different than our own. Some questions we will ponder include... What is meant by the word "culture"? Why is it important for us to become aware of the presence and influence of culture in our life? How does our own cultural background affect the way we think, work, communicate, prioritize, value, believe, act, interrelate, perceive? Why and how is intercultural communication an unavoidable fact of life, especially in this day and age? What are the conditions for the possibility of effective, positive intercultural communication?

We will think about community primarily in terms of global community. We will give serious thought to what it means to live in a globalized world, in a time and place in which local communities and global community are very much intertwined. Some questions we will ponder include... What is a "community"? What does it mean to live in, be a citizen of, a global community? How does what happens in local communities affect what happens globally, and vice versa? What effects and responsibilities does globalization entail for each of us? What are the economical, cultural, social, and political considerations we must bear in mind with regards to local/global community?
Final Grade Scale

921-1000=A
870-920=AB
821-869=B
770-820=BC
700-770=CD
670-720=CD
600-669=D
599-0=F

Course Graded Requirements:

There are three components that factor into the grade you can earn in this course:

1. Three Keyword Meditations in which you thoughtfully engage key concepts/terms from the course, demonstrating understanding of the readings and the issues raised.

2. One Personal Philosophical Statement Paper in which you bring all your thinking and writing skills to bear, demonstrating a well-honed understanding and appreciation of the overall lessons of the course.

3. APPTitude: Attending class; being well Prepared for class by closely reading and thinking about the assigned materials; Participating in class discussions and activities; and being Thoughtful both in class discussions and in written work

Points Breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keyword Meditations</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>(45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Philosophical Statement Paper</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>(45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPTitude</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
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Note: More information regarding the Keyword Meditations and the Personal Philosophical Statement Papers are forthcoming, in nifty, detailed, and timely handouts.

Attendance and Participation Policy (more on APPTitude)

Attendance:

Punctual, consistent attendance is essential for your success in this class—and, more importantly, for a fully realized learning environment from which we can all benefit.

Attendance will be taken daily.

You are allowed two "free" absences throughout the semester. Additional absences not officially excused by the Dean of Students Office will negatively impact your APPTitude grade.

Participation:

I understand that, for personal and/or cultural reasons, different people participate differently in a class. I will try to account for this as much as possible. Nevertheless, I am quite aware that attendance does not necessarily equal participation. In order to derive the best learning experience from/for our class, it is absolutely essential that you always come to class having read the assigned material and prepared to engage it in the classroom.

I am a pretty good judge of participation in my classes—by which I mean, I can usually tell, from your in-class participation, writing assignments, etc., if you are putting the necessary energy into this class.
Ultimately, it is in your best interest to take this class and its content seriously. Your grade—and our experience together as learners—will be strongest if you attend and participate to the fullest extent of your abilities.

A Note on Assignments and Make-Up Work

All assignments will be described and distributed before they are due. Make-up work will only be allowed under special circumstances, as discussed with me (beforehand, if at all possible). Communication is always key: communicating with me about any problems or delays that interfere with your work in this class will be crucial, and absolutely necessary, when it comes to any make-up work. PLEASE NOTE: All of the assignments (including handouts, readings, etc.) will be made available online at http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~jablau/hu3880. There will also be a class listserv (an email address that allows automatic communication with the whole class), which I will be used for communication purposes: commcomm-I@mtu.edu. Be sure to check your mtu.edu email account often. If you do not receive, or lose, a handout or reading, you will always be able to find and retrieve it online at the web space indicated above.

Another (Important) Note:

The best way to do well in this class is to not only read all the materials assigned but to take notes as you do so. This will certainly help you greatly as you work on your Keyword Meditations and your Personal Philosophical Statements. Write down important points and interesting ideas. Also note anything that may be unclear to you (what is not clear can actually be as useful to your learning as what is clear). Be sure to bring these notes to class every day. Please, do not be shy: share with us in class both what excites you and what confuses you—chances are you will help more than just yourself!

A Few Other Notes

All writing assignments are due by their due date, at the start of the class period. If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please inform me and contact the Student Affairs Office (their phone: 487-2212) so that we may make appropriate arrangements. Please do this early in the semester; do not wait until problems arise.

A Note On Academic Integrity (i.e., please, no plagiarism!)

Presenting others' work as your own or failing to properly credit and cite any and all resources used in your work is dishonest and is considered plagiarism in U.S. academic culture. Plagiarizing will very likely be detected by me and can lead to serious consequences for you, including, but not limited to, academic probation. If you ever have any questions about this issue, please do not hesitate to talk to me or to consult a writing coach at the Writing Center (at 487-2007).

The Last (and An Important) Note

Unless you come and talk to me and indicate otherwise, I will assume that you have carefully read this syllabus and that you have understood and are willing and able to abide by its content.