Learning Goals and Activities

1. Improve your Academic Writing Skills in German (see materials for Writing Workshops)
2. Intercultural Communicative Competence

What is Intercultural Communicative Competence?

In short, Intercultural Communicative Competence is the ability to communicate effectively in the target language with someone from the host culture while knowing

what to say,

how to say it to whom,

when and why (not).

('Das verkannte Sitzkissen' In: Jean Effel, Der kleine Engel. Heiteres zwischen Himmel und Erde. Rowohlt, 1971, n.p. [Mistaking a seat cushion for a hat.])

In more scholarly terms:

„Building Intercultural Competence involves increasing cultural self-awareness; deepening understanding of the experiences, values, perceptions, and behaviors of people
from diverse cultural communities; and expanding the capability to shift cultural perspective and adapt behavior to bridge across cultural differences. (Hammer, 2009 a, 2010, 2011)." (Hammer, 2012)

Intercultural Communicative Competence entails the ability to „decenter and take the perspective of the listener“, in order to engage in successful communication „focused on establishing and maintaining relationships“ by demonstrating one’s „willingness to relate.“ (Byram, 1997)

Unless one puts conscious effort into acquiring Intercultural Competence, neither spending time abroad as a student, nor working in an international setting for years, automatically brings about graspable in-depth understanding of both one's own and other cultures. Indeed, continuous focused involvement and extended practice are required if you mean to successfully navigate cultural difference in real time encounters, no matter whether at home or abroad.

If you intentionally and consistently engage in the following activities, you may acquire the knowledge and learn to practice a set of skills that is essential for intercultural learning:

1) Learn how to interpret and compare cultures by acquiring factual knowledge about the cultures you want to compare, by becoming familiar with the specialized terminology of cultural analysis and by close observation, documentation and interpretation of your experiences inside and outside the classroom.

2) Practice strategies of discovery that allow you to acquire and apply new intercultural knowledge in real time, so that you may identify and explain areas of misunderstanding in intercultural interactions.

3) Make it a habit to not just notice differences and similarities, but to explore your own and the others' perspectives behind whatever you/they say, think, do, appreciate / dislike.

4) Critically reflect on your own and others' beliefs, values, and behaviors, so that you may become able to mediate between conflicting interpretations of the 'same' phenomena.

Course Assignments

All assignments in this course are designed to engage you in the 4 aspects of intercultural learning defined above:

1) Task(s) ask you to acquire factual knowledge about your own and the host cultures, to familiarize yourself with the specialized terminology of cultural analysis and to apply this knowledge when answering the questions of the task(s).

2) Essay asks you to integrate the results of your intercultural learning (theoretical and
experiential) into a piece of academic writing in a format that models the texts you’re supposed to write for your mainstream courses.

3) **Analytical Notebook** asks you to closely observe, document, and reflect upon your experiences inside and outside the classroom, and to also collect your responses to the IDP.

At mid-term and at the end of the term, notebook-reviews ask you to assess the reflection levels of your entries.

4) **IDI-Test, feedback sessions and your personalized IDP** provide a common framework that helps us to develop individualized hands-on strategies to help you get the most out of your experience abroad.

Please note that tasks and essay-topics differ in dependence on whether this is your first or your second semester in the program.

**Co-Curricular Activities:**

- Participation in **Bi-Weekly individual coffee-and-culture sessions** with Heike and/or Barbara will allow you to increase and deepen intercultural dialogue on a personal level.

- Participation in **regular activities with native speakers** will increase your intercultural learning via effective immersion.

- Participation in our **group-excursion** will give you the chance to familiarize yourself with the German train-system and will provide ample opportunities to learn about crucial events and culturally/historically significant figures in Germany’s history.

- **Travelling individually** to points of historical/linguistic/cultural interest will help you put your knowledge into a wider context.

**Course Requirements (Fall 2015-2016)**

1. Complete the entrance- and exit IDI and attend both the group- and your own individual feedback-sessions.

2. **Analytical Notebook/IDP (590 Points total)**

Beginning with the third of week of class (Oct. 26, 2015), you're expected to write 2 entries total per week for 14 weeks.

   a) 1 entry per week (20 p.) should be dedicated to a topic/question on your IDP you'll receive during your Individual IDI-Feedback Session. (Total...
b) Pick an activity you like and that you can engage in with a (group of) native speaker(s). Attend the group-meetings for five consecutive weeks and report on your experience in your notebook to make your experience count! (You may continue doing that after the first five weeks are over, of course.) (Total points: 100) You cannot replace these entries with other entries, but they replace the entry you would have otherwise written on your experience in general.

c) 1 entry per term (worth 50 points) should consist of your report on your individual culture-excursion to a German City. In that week, you only have to add an entry on your IDP. Before you start your trip, submit a written, structured proposal explaining how this place should answer your questions related to a specific cultural, literary, historical, or linguistic point of interest and get your teacher's approval.

Once you're back, report on how the trip answered your questions defined in the proposal and describe your discoveries in your notebook to make your experience count! This entry should give a lively picture of what you've experienced during your trip. Pictures welcome! Collect all receipts for train-tickets, overnight stays and entrance fees because we'll be reimbursing you for a total of 120€ of travel expenses once you've posted your report.

d) One entry per week should deal with your experience inside and outside the classroom. (See the 'Anleitung für das Analytische Notzibuch' on the course website for triggers.) You can replace one of those entries per week by answering a question Heike & Barbara posed as a response to your entries. (Total points: 120)

e) 2 Reviews of Entries (40 points for each review = 80 points total)

Familiarize yourself with the examples on the Training Sheet and the rubrics for Self-Reflection.

Revisit the entries you have written up to the review week. Write one comment per entry that specifies the highest level of reflection (D, DSR, DR or CR) that you detect and give reasons for your choice. Finish the first review by Dec 6th, so you can discuss the results in the next coffee and culture sessions and the second review by Feb 12th. You do not have to write additional entries (neither IDP nor regular entries) in the review weeks!
3. **Active Participation in 16 Writing Workshops (320 points)**

4. **Writing Assignment (130 points., two drafts. The better grade will be the final grade. If you earn an A in your first draft, you don't have to write a second draft!)**

   Read the course-materials on German and American Culture Standards and take notes that answer three specific essay-questions about them:
   A) Was sind die Unterschiede zwischen Kulturstandard und Stereotyp?
   B) Welche der deutschen und amerikanischen Kulturstandards können eventuell zu interkulturellen Missverständnissen führen und warum?
   C) Haben Sie in Ihrem ersten Monat etwas erlebt, dass sich durch unterschiedliche Standards erklären lassen könnte?

   The **first draft** is due on **November 15, 2015**.

   Sie sollten an dieser Aufgabe vor der Abgabe regelmäßig mit Ihren TutorInnen arbeiten. Besprechen Sie zwischendurch ihre Arbeit auch mit Heike und Barbara, falls Sie Fragen haben. Qualitätskriterien finden Sie in der Skala zum Akademischen Schreiben auf der Tutoriumsplattform.

   After having discussed your first draft with Heike and Barbara, use the feedback you received and hand in your **final draft by Dec. 6, 2015**.

5. **Short Analytical Essay**

   6 pages minimum. (400 p, two drafts. The better grade will be your final grade. If you earn an A on your first draft, you don't have to write a second draft!)


   Die letzte Version ist dann am letzten Tag der Kurse dieses Semesters fällig, i.e. am **12.02.2016**.

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**Late work will not be accepted and will result in a failing grade for the course. Please note that travelling, and or visiting (with) friends or family does not count as a compelling condition justifying to miss deadlines or appointments.**