COURSE GOALS. Research that deals with or compares data from different countries, cultures, or subcultures confronts a special set of methodological issues and potential pitfalls due to variability in language, culture, geo-political orientation and more. Students should come away from this course with a firm grasp of specific issues to consider when designing or assessing research where the researcher is of a different culture than the object(s) of study.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS. This class is primarily a workshop format where students use class time to tackle various design problems and exercises assigned by the instructor. Students are expected to complete all readings prior to the assigned date. While most in-class work will be in teams, solutions will be submitted as individual short papers throughout the quarter. The primary requirement for the class is a final project that presents a methods design proposal for research involving more than one cultural group. This project may be done individually or in a team.

COURSE READINGS

Readings Packet. Available at Ram’s Copy, 4144 Univ. Ave., 206-632-6630

COURSE SCHEDULE

Mon March 30:

Overview of Course

Conducting International Research


Wed. April 1 and Mon. April 6:

Dimensions of Cultural Variability


Figure1: Some Dimensions of Cultural Variability
Figure2: Dynamics of an Intercultural Encounter

Wed. April 8

**Cultural Mindsets of the Researcher**


**Positioning**


**Decentering as methodology**


Mon. April 13

**Making meaningful comparisons**


Wed. April 15

**Issues of equivalence**


Mon. April 20

**Samples and classifications**


Marin and Marin ch. 2: Issues in Identifying Hispanics


Wed. April 22

**Instrument selection**


Marin and Marin, ch. 4: Development and Adaptation of Instruments


Mon. April 27

**Creative approaches to data collection**


Wed. April 29 and Mon. May 4

**Data Collection: interacting with respondents**


What Does it Take to be a Global Communicator?

General Guidelines for using Interpreters

Wed. May 6 and Mon. May 11

**Observation techniques and records**


Wed. May 13

**Working with Translation**


Marin and Marin, ch. 5: Translation of Data Collection Instruments.

Mon. May 18

**Administration and Access**

Marin and Marin, ch. 3: Enhancing Research Participation


Wed. May 20 and Mon. May 25

**NO CLASS MEETINGS  ICA / Memorial Day**


Wed. May 27

**Ethics**


Mon. June 1

**Budgets and Logistics**

Sample Budget Categories

Wed. June 3

**Data Analysis**

Marin and Marin ch. 6: Potential Problems in Interpreting Data

► FINAL PROJECT DUE: Tuesday, June 9
For this class you will develop the *methods section* of a research proposal describing a project where the cultural and language context is different from your own. We will assume that your proposal already has a comprehensive literature review, well grounded conceptual approach, and compelling reason why this research is so important. So, you may start the methods section with a reminder of the purpose and importance of this research and an introduction of your research questions or hypotheses. For the purposes of this class, the goals of this project are: 1) to demonstrate your understanding of the potential pitfalls and challenges of research design, administration, data collection, and data analysis related to international/intercultural projects, and 2) to identify ways to minimize them.

Your proposal audience is a peer group of international communications researchers reviewing your proposal for possible funding. Given a stack of equally compelling projects, they are looking for clues that your project has the highest likelihood of succeeding because of your knowledge of international research methods. While brevity is typically an asset in proposals, in this case you have a little more room to explain your methods approach and rationale. More specifically, your proposal should include:

- a statement of the purpose, central focus, and importance of this research;
- your research question(s) or hypotheses, along with the operationalization of key concepts and units of comparison in each target culture;
- a description and rationale of the specific method(s) chosen;
- a description and rationale for your sample;
- a description of the step-by-step plan for data collection;
- a sample instrument;
- a summary of special issues and concerns unique to the cultural contexts involved;
- a statement regarding anticipated results and the potential problems with their interpretation;
- a schedule (using specific dates) and proposed budget

You may do this project as an individual or team up with others in the class. *All projects must involve at least one culture/country where the primary language is not your own*. Individual projects may either be comparative in nature (e.g., set in two cultures, one of which may be U.S.-based) or entirely based in a cultural context different from your own. Teams must deal with more than one culture – at least the same number as team members.

*Important*: As part of your proposal development, you should speak with someone from the culture(s) of interest -- and preferably more than one person. This need not be a researcher or even someone familiar with communications study. Rather, the person (whether student, neighbor, or consulate staff person) might simply be able to offer some insights into working and communicating within that culture.