

Keio University Syllabus and Timetable

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT CULTURES

Subtitle	What the Author Says, What the Teacher Says, and What I Say.
Lecturer(s)	NAGASU, MIWAKO
Credit(s)	2
Academic Year/Semester	2026 Spring
Day/Period	Fri.5
Campus	Mita
Classroom	453
Class Format	Face-to-face classes (conducted mainly in-person)
Registration Number	35476
Faculty/Graduate School	INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Year Level	2, 3, 4
Grade Type	S, A, B, C, D
Course Description	A course to aim to foster intercultural understanding, with a focus on addressing challenges that arise when living and working in foreign cultural environments.
K-Number	CIN-CO-00133-212-86

▼ Detail

Course Contents/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome

The goal of this course is to foster intercultural understanding, with a focus on addressing challenges that arise when living and working in foreign cultural environments. Students will compare their home culture with Japanese culture and reflect on similarities and differences. Through interactive discussions, group activities, and presentations, students will explore strategies for adapting to intercultural contexts. In addition to The Culture Map by Erin Meyer, supplementary readings and case studies will be introduced. The ultimate aim is for students to acquire the skills to live and work respectfully in diverse cultural settings, while valuing and respecting the perspectives of others.

Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *Reflect on and articulate their own cultural values and perspectives.
- *Analyse similarities and differences among their home culture, Japanese culture, and other cultures.
- *Develop strategies for effective adaptation in intercultural settings.
- *Practice and demonstrate respectful communication and collaboration in multicultural group work.

Course Taught by Faculty Member with Professional Experience

Applicable

With over 20 years of professional experience in public health, nutrition, and occupational health, I have worked on international cooperation projects in more than ten countries across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. In collaboration with the ILO, UNIDO, JICA, and international NGOs, I have contributed to the full project cycle, including issue identification, gap analysis, needs assessment, solution design, training material development, and the delivery of proposals and training.

Drawing on these diverse international experiences, the Cross-Cultural Understanding course uses Erin Meyer’s The Culture Map as a framework for learning. Through guided discussions and interactive activities, students will explore the eight cultural scales and examine how communication styles, leadership expectations, and workplace norms differ across cultures. The course emphasizes developing practical strategies for understanding and working effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, while recognizing that cultural norms may vary across generations, contexts, and time.

Active Learning Methods [Description](#)

Lab / Skill-development / On-site training
Presentations
Discussions, Debates
Group work
Problem-based learning

Preparatory Study

Please read the textbook in advance to prepare for the content we will cover in class. For Assignment 4 – Individual and Country Cultural Profile (based on The Culture Map), you are required to submit one PowerPoint slide each week before class. These weekly slides will be used as the basis for class discussions and will gradually build your final cultural profile, as well as support the preparation of Assignment 2 – Essay: Culture Map and Assignment 3 – Final Individual Presentation.

Course Plan

Lesson 1

Introduction of the course

Lesson 2

Discussion about Clothing, Food, and Housing

Lesson 3

Chapter 1. Listening to the Air: Communicating Across Cultures

Lesson 4

Chapter 2. The Many Faces of Polite: Evaluating Performance and Providing Negative Feedback

Lesson 5

Chapter 3. Why Versus How: The Art of Persuasion in a Multicultural World

Lesson 6

Chapter 4. How Much Respect Do You Want?: Leadership, Hierarchy, and Power

Lesson 7

Chapter 5. Big D or Little d: Who Decides, and How?

Lesson 8

Chapter 6. The Head or the Heart: Two Types of Trust and How They Grow

Lesson 9

Chapter 7. The Needle, Not the Knife: Disagreeing Productively and Chapter 8. How Late Is Late?: Scheduling and Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Time

Lesson 10

Epilogue: Putting the Culture Map, Preparation for the Presentation

Lesson 11

Final Individual Presentations

Lesson 12

Final Individual Presentations

Lesson 13

Final Individual Presentations

Lesson 14

Final Individual Presentations, Course Review

Other

Course Review

Method of Evaluation

【Method of Evaluation (100%)】

- *Class Participation + Individual Participation: 30%
- *Group Presentation: 10%
- *Assignment 1 – Essay: My Cross-Cultural Experiences in Japan: 15%
- *Assignment 2 – Essay: Culture Map: 15%
- *Assignment 3 – Final Individual Presentation: 15%
- *Assignment 4 – Individual and Country Cultural Profile (based on The Culture Map): 15%
- *Final grades will be calculated based on the above distribution and converted into Keio University’s official grading scale (S: 100–90, A: 89–80, B: 79–70, C: 69–60, D: 59–0). Deadlines and attendance requirements will be applied consistently for all students, in fairness to everyone.

【Policy on Attendance and Participation】

- *Class Participation: 20% (Attendance 10 points, punctuality 5 points, absence 0 points.)
 - *Individual Participation: 10% (10 points: active contribution in discussions and group work)
 - *Group Presentation: 10%(10 points: active contribution in discussions and group work)
- In accordance with the academic regulations of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and considering that this course is conducted in an active learning format, the following policy applies:
- This course consists of 14 class sessions. To be eligible for credit, students are expected to attend at least 10 sessions.
 - Students who accumulate 5 or more absences, or who have 4 absences combined with additional late arrivals or early departures, will not be able to earn credit for the course.
 - Three late arrivals or early departures will be counted as one absence.
 - In accordance with MEXT regulations, even excused absences (such as illness or official university activities) are included in the total absence count.
 - Because this course emphasizes active learning—including group discussions, presentations, and collaborative projects—regular attendance and punctuality are essential not only for your own learning but also for maintaining fairness and supporting your peers.
 - Students are responsible for monitoring and managing their own attendance records.

【Policy on Assignments】

- Assignments : 10 points for on-time submission, 5 points if submitted within 5 days with prior email notice, 0 points after 5 days.
- Detailed rubric will be provided. Please review it carefully to understand the evaluation criteria. Grades in this course will not be based on the quality of your cultural background or personal experiences. Instead, evaluation will focus on how well you can express your own ideas and reflections in English through assignments and discussions. Because the course involves sharing cultural experiences, you may sometimes discuss personal topics. Please be mindful of this and participate with respect for both your own privacy and that of your classmates.

***Note: In the Spring 2025 semester, more than 94.6% of students successfully earned credit. This shows that students who attended regularly, submitted assignments on time, and participated actively were able to succeed. This course is designed for students who want to learn new things, collaborate with others, and challenge themselves. To make the most of this opportunity, you must place your academic work as your top priority. Regardless of part-time jobs or travel, success in this course depends on coming prepared, meeting deadlines, and contributing actively to class activities.

Generative AI Policy for Classes

【AI Usage Policy (Conditional Permission)】

Generative AI tools may be used only for:

Brainstorming, outlining, or preliminary research (you must check accuracy).

Rules:

*Clearly state when and how AI was used. Example: “Drafted outline with ChatGPT (20%).”

*Do not copy AI text directly. Your work must show your own thinking.

*References must be verified by yourself.

*AI use must not exceed 50% of the work in total. More than 50% = “0 point: Not submitted.”

Textbooks

The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business, Erin Meyer, English.

Lecturer's Comments to Students

In this course, you are encouraged to actively share your unique experiences and ideas. By reflecting on your daily life in Japan, including cross-cultural encounters and challenges, you will compare similarities and differences between your own culture and Japanese culture. The goal is not to find the “right answer,” but to deepen your understanding of cultures through your own experiences and perspectives.

A student once reflected:

“I like that we were given the opportunity to speak freely in class. We were able to voice our opinions, even when they were different from other students' or more controversial. I also like that we were able to hear a lot from students from other countries as well. This helped me to look more introspectively into what my culture is actually like and why I act the way I do.”

This course is about learning to listen, reflect, and speak with respect. I hope you continue to use your voice freely, even when your opinions are different, and keep exploring both your own culture and others. That is what intercultural understanding truly means.

Question/Comments

I will be available to meet with students after class for questions and consultations. Additionally, I am available to answer questions via email: cm.ko.miwa.nagasu@gmail.com.

I will do my best to reply as soon as possible; however, please understand that in some cases a response may take longer.