

MBA 590 Cross Cultural Management

Professor Warner Woodworth, OB Dept.
Office: 568 Tanner Bldg.
Email: warner_woodworth@byu.edu

Winter Semester
Office Hours: Wed. 10-11:00 AM
Class Times: Tue./Thur. 9:00-10:30 AM

“No culture has ever developed all human potentialities; it has always selected certain capacities, mental and emotional and moral, and shifted others. Each culture is a system of values which may well complement the values in another”

— Ruth Benedict, President of the American Anthropological Association

Context for MBA 590:

This Marriott School course on Cross Cultural Management will explore the amazing rise of business as it has expanded internationally. When I first started teaching at BYU, the University of Michigan, and at other schools, there were no such courses. My having lived abroad, consulted with not only U.S. firms, but many in Asia, Europe, and Latin America gave me insights into how companies operate around the globe, their differences and their increasing success. Yet deans and department heads resisted the idea for a new course, assuming America had all the answers and we only needed to teach MBA students the traditional U.S. approach to enterprise success. Cultural myopia prevailed for decades even as globalization began to rise.

Eventually, my colleague, Dr. Chris Meek and I were able to convince BYU's MBA program to offer an international travel and business educational experience. Because of our work in Korea and Japan, we convinced officials to do a “one shot” study abroad to see how it would go. We took some 25 students, plus some of their spouses, and a dozen faculty on a two-week venture. Because of our relationships with Asian colleagues, we were able to visit the headquarters of Toyota where Mr. Toyoda, the chairman himself, spoke after the firm hosted us for a luncheon and factory tour. We also visited the giant LG Co. in Seoul, Korea where because of Chris' work, in particular, we were honored with top level officials speaking, answering faculty questions, and enjoying an honorary dinner.

We learned a great deal, and upon returning home, BYU faculty became interested in global management. At the time, of course, both Japan and Korean firms were greatly excelling over U.S. corporations and their shoddy products. So we led more study abroad trips for MBAs in the next several years, eventually turning the work over to other professors. That little experiment grew such that today, many business schools offer such programs. And at BYU, there are now MBA trips to Asia and Europe, several undergraduate business travel studies to Europe, Accounting School long-term internships with African businesses, and more.

This course is a campus-based offering to prepare BYU business students for global careers, if so desired. It is also relevant for students working in U.S. firms here at home because they too will need to understand and work with colleagues from around the world. A primary purpose is to develop awareness and intercultural appreciation for various organizational methods, leadership, and the complexity of working in or with other cultures with different management systems, varying values, unique team in multiple settings.

Hopefully, students in MBA 590 have a desire to work with people across cultures. Introduction: In a globalized world characterized by the integration of business and markets, the increasing flow of people and capital around the world, the ability to work, manage and to communicate in culturally diverse settings has become a key pre-requisite for college graduates of all majors and fields of personal and professional interests. While learning to identify cultural aspects of verbal and nonverbal behavior of persons from different cultures and themselves, students come to recognize cultural differences that can cause difficulties in management situations. Participants will acquire expertise in dealing with a wide variety of cultural situations, challenges and paradigms, thus learning practical skills that will be useful for their own personal and professional development on an international level.

“Everybody believes that their reality is the real real reality”

– Paul Watzlawick, Austrian psychologist, Stanford Professor

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to: 1. To understand the implications of the globalization of business for effective management 2. Exhibit a high degree of cultural intelligence and cross-cultural communication skills applicable to the real world of business and travel 3. Acquire a sharper understand of their own culture and how it impacts their behavior in a multicultural setting 4. Interpret behavior, attitudes and communication styles of people from different cultures correctly 5. Become familiarized with the key cultural characteristics of the main countries they may be interested in understanding better 6. Use a repertoire of behavioral skills appropriate for different intercultural situations 7. Deal with ambiguity in an ever-changing and unpredictable context that results from the globalization of business and people 8. Exhibit a high degree of effectiveness when working in culturally diverse groups.

MBA 590 requires active student participation. Students are expected to read the assigned textbook chapters, cases and articles before every class. There will be a midterm exam, a final exam, case studies and a team project.

Teaching Procedures:

Teaching methods in this course include lectures, case discussions, and group assignments. Learning in this course requires the student's constructive participation and active involvement in both class discussions and small group discussions. Small group discussions are a key mechanism for facilitating learning from other team members. Thus, it is essential to attend all group activities inside and outside classes.

"One of the most effective ways to learn about yourself is by taking seriously the cultures of others. It forces you to pay attention to those details of life which differentiate them from you" – Edward T. Hall, American anthropologist

Readings:

We will draw on chapters from several books for insightful knowledge:

International Assignments: An Integration of Strategy, Research, and Practice by my former student, Mark E. Mendenhall who holds the Chair of Excellence in Business Leadership at the University of Tennessee.

Global Leadership by Allan Bird, Mark E. Mendenhall, Joyce S. Osland, Allan Bird, and Gary R. Oddou, three of who are my past students.

We will also use supplementary readings to supplement the required material may include: "Privatization in Belarussia: Organizational Change in the Former USSR," by Warner Woodworth in *The Organizational Development Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1993, pp. 53-59; *Creating Labor-Management Partnerships*, excerpts from Christopher Meek and Warner Woodworth Addison-Wesley volume, 1997, Seoul, Korea translation publication of its OD Series; "Natural Capitalism: A New Prototype Business Sector that Values Sustainability, the Environment, and Financial Returns," by Warner Woodworth presented at the EOA Conference, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, *Eastern Academy of Management Proceedings*, 06/11/2009; "Headhunting Goes Cross-Cultural" by Joseph Daniel McCool, *Business Week*, 06/05/2008; "Why America Can't Innovate," by W. G. Dyer, C. Meek, and W. Woodworth) *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 01/1988, pp. 17-33; "Five Global Leadership Forces," by Marshall Goldsmith, *Bloomberg Business Week*, 10/2009; "Managing Differences: The Central Challenge of Global Strategy," by Pankaj Ghemawat, *Harvard Business Review*, 03/2007; "Eliminado el Elitismo en el Desarrollo Organizacional," by Warner Woodworth in *Experiencias de Participacion en Organizaciones*, Monterrey, Mexico: University of Monterrey, 07/04/1985, pp. 27-42; "Managing Multicultural Teams," by Jeanne Brett, Kristin Behfar and Mary C. Ker, *Harvard Business Review*, 11/2006; "Information in Latin American Organizations: Some Cautions," by Reed Nelson and Warner Woodworth, *Management International Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1980, pp. 61-70; "Short-term Overseas Assignments," by Bronwyn Fryer, *Harvard Business Online*, 07/2009; "The Rise of the Social Sector: Job Creation and Civil

Society,” by Warner Woodworth, *Management & Civil Society Association Proceedings*, Seoul, South Korea, 01/15/2009.

“Peace is not in unity in similarity but unity in diversity, in the comparison and conciliation of differences” — Mikhail Gorbachev

Major Course Themes:

- Introduction to cross-cultural management
- The globalization of business and people in the 21st century
- Key cultural values and concepts
- Decision-making models across cultures
- Understanding culture and cultural differences around the globe
- Ethical dilemmas of international executives
- Cross-border business agreements
- Components of cultural intelligence
- Developing cultural intelligence: Stages, process and supporting activities
- Negotiating styles in Europe, Latin America and Asia management
- Other issues

Team Projects: Working in multi-cultural teams, students will develop a training manual for business executives preparing for expatriate assignments in Asia, Africa, Europe, or Latin America and Brazil. The training manual will be based on cross-cultural concepts discussed in class and tailored to the communication environment of global markets. The objective is that groups produce a manual of practical applications in the real world of business and communication globally in 8-10 pages.

Grading:

Final exam 30%

Class Participation 30%

Team project 20%

Assignments 20%

The stranger sees only what he knows — African Proverb