Business Communication 2
Communicative Competence in International Business

Module Outline

Spring Semester 2021

Responsible FHNW lecturer:

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1. Course Content

The focus of this module is to gain competence in communication which takes place in international business.

Although communicating with persons all over the world is technically possible at a low cost, the challenges remain to communicate in a way that "creates mutual understanding" as Milton Bennett phrases it. Mutual understanding in an international business context means building trusting relationships, negotiating successfully, managing collaboration and conflict and doing business in a sustainable and profitable manner.

Emphasis will be placed on the following subjects:

- Perception and self-awareness in interaction
- Culture(s) and contexts (environments)
- Collaborative communication in international business settings
- Models and tools for skilled communication in face2face and virtual situations

2. Learning Objectives

Students should have the following competencies after completing this course:

Knowledge and understanding:
- Explain the communication process using communication models
- Explain the dimensions of culture and how they impact communication on all levels
- Identify barriers to successful interpersonal communication
- Describe skills in interpersonal and intercultural communication
- Identify and describe different perspectives in communication
- Explain the role of perception and interpretation on communication
- Be aware of different types and purposes of presentations

Application of knowledge and understanding:
- Apply interpersonal and intercultural communication frameworks to own communication
- Analyze intercultural communication settings using tools, models and frameworks
- Develop an effective strategy for a specific presentation, taking the needs of the audience into account

Ability to make judgements:
- Evaluate and choose an approach for successful taking the type of setting and audience needs into a consideration

Communication:
- Listen actively in order to respond appropriately
- Communicate with the clarity needed to convey the intended meaning
- Connect with audience successfully so they understand and are understood
- Collaborate in various cultural settings, achieving specific and desired results

Self-Learning skills:
- Reflect on own intercultural awareness, cultural orientation and own communication preferences
- Assess and potentially question previous personal communication attitudes and skills

3. Work Load and Format

The number of credits to be obtained is 5 ECTC, which equals 150 study hours.

This course is offered as an online module.
In order to gather and exchange information in the best possible way across countries, a wide variety of learning methods will be chosen:

- Synchronous lecture and live discussions
- Lectures and inputs offered as video file for self-study (asynchronous)
- Information retrieved online
- Casework and preparations for individual and group study
- Chats via internet
- Presentations (live or via video conference)
- Brief written reports, videos, worksheets and PowerPoint slides

4. Prior Knowledge and Entry Requirements

As this is a communication module, fluency in English is required.
English B2 minimum (self-assessment).
There are no further formal entry requirements for this course.

5. Course Content and Structure

Topics covered in the module are:

- My communication, my culture; my culture identity
- Understanding others: theoretic frameworks, terminology and concepts in culturally diverse settings
- Culture, language and intercultural communication
- Becoming interculturally competent
- Collaborative communication in international business settings

This course is organized as a half-day every week, running over a period of 15 weeks, including some self-study weeks, and ends with the submission deadline of the final assignment. The half-day sessions may be made up by synchronous and asynchronous lectures, guided self-study, consultations, group work and other ways of exchanging information via email and/or other communication media.

Course days: MON 1:15pm - 5pm   **OR**   TUE, 1:15pm – 5pm (Swiss time/CET)
Course start: 22/23 February 2021
Course end: 31 May / 1 June 2021

The detailed semester program will be available as of mid-January 2021.

Online lectures will be held on Zoom, WebEx or a similar platform and recorded for those students who are in time-zones that make attendance in the session difficult. Detailed information will be provided for each session in advance to facilitate planning and learning.

6. Assessment

In this course, students submit two main assignments to be assessed by the lecturers. Each assignment weighs equally; the final course grade is based on those two assessments. The first one is individual work (individual grade), the second team work (team grade).

Both assignments are submitted in form of video recorded presentations:

Assignment 1:
video log - presentation of 5-6 minutes (culture analysis of a specific course aspect).
Assignment 2:
video log - semi-spontaneous 10-min group presentation (intercultural business case analysis).

The 5 ECTS points for this course are awarded if the final grade is sufficient, i.e. at least a grade 4.0 in the Swiss grading system.

7. Responsible Lecturer

Mark Moser is an external lecturer at FHNW and consultant on intercultural competence. He was the Secretary General of an international health promotion organization working on substance abuse. He is privileged to have worked as an international leadership and development consultant for more than 15 years with experience in Europe, Asia and Africa. Seeing personal and social change come about is his passion. He teaches modules on 'Intercultural Management' and 'Intercultural Communication' at FHNW University of Applied Sciences & Arts Northwestern Switzerland as well as other institutions in Switzerland and abroad.
He has been awarded a post-graduate degree in 'Conflict Analysis and Resolution' from the Sociology faculty of Basel University in Switzerland, and trained as an executive and business coach at the Ashridge Business School in the UK.

The course is partly taught by other experienced FHNW lecturers, and it also draws on guest contributions from representatives of the industry.

8. Literature

A reading and video list will be provided at course start.