

## The Cambridge Introduction to Intercultural Communication

Uniquely interdisciplinary and accessible, *The Cambridge Introduction to Intercultural Communication* is the ideal text for undergraduate introductory courses in Intercultural Communication, International Communication and Cross-cultural Communication. Suitable for students and practitioners alike, it encompasses the breadth of intercultural communication as an academic field and a day-to-day experience in work and private life, including international business, public services, schools and universities. This textbook touches on a range of themes in intercultural communication, such as evolutionary and positive psychology, key concepts from critical intercultural communication, postcolonial studies and transculturality, intercultural encounters in contemporary literature and film, and the application of contemporary intercultural communication research for the development of health services and military services. The concise, up-to-date overviews of key topics are accompanied by a wide variety of tasks and eighteen case studies for in-depth discussions, homework, and assessments.

**Guido Rings** is Emeritus Professor of Postcolonial Studies, co-director of the Anglia Ruskin Research Centre for Intercultural and Multilingual Studies (ARRCIMS), and co-founder of iMex and German as a Foreign Language, the first internet journals in Europe for their respective fields. Professor Rings has widely published within different areas of critical intercultural and postcolonial studies. This includes, as editor, the acclaimed *Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Communication* (with S. M. Rasinger, Cambridge University Press, 2020) and, as author, the world-leading scoring *The Other in Contemporary Migrant Cinema* (Routledge, 2016) and the celebrated *La Conquista desbaratada* (The Conquest upside down, Iberoamericana, 2010), next to more than fifty distinguished refereed articles.

**Sebastian M. Rasinger** is Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Anglia Ruskin University. His research focuses on language and identity, with a particular focus on multilingual and migration contexts. He has extensive experience in teaching courses in these areas at all levels. His textbook *Quantitative Research in Linguistics: An Introduction*, published in two editions (Bloomsbury 2008 and 2013), has sold several thousand copies and has been published in its Spanish translation by Ediciones Akal. Sebastian has a strong interest in equality and diversity in higher education, and is currently the vice chair of the QAA Advisory Group for linguistics, overseeing the review of the linguistics subject benchmarks in UK HE.

This interdisciplinary text offers valuable insight into a wide range of intercultural communication concepts and issues that are a concern in today's increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. The chapters underscore societal imperatives for intercultural competence and provide a useful survey of diverse approaches to the study of intercultural communication.

Professor Emerita Jane Jackson, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

This is an excellent textbook. It is comprehensive in approaching intercultural communication from different theoretical perspectives. It also pushes forward our understanding of intercultural communication in real life using the latest cases. It is a must-read for any training involving intercultural communication competence.

Dr Xin Zhao, Bournemouth University

The authors of this entry-level textbook are uniquely positioned to provide this comprehensive overview of intercultural communication. This cutting-edge and multi-disciplinary exploration of such a critical area of communication provides a strong foundation upon which to develop further.

Dr Darla K Deardorff, Duke University (Author and Founding President,  
World Council on Intercultural and Global Competence)

Coursebooks at their best provide a readable, thought-inviting, extensive, state-of-the-art and future-relevant introduction to a field. *The Cambridge Introduction to Intercultural Communication* convincingly meets all these requirements. The authors give insight into manifold subject-relevant theories and areas of application by inviting their readers to critically move beyond established notions of intercultural communication.

Professor Werner Delanoy, University of Klagenfurt

This beautiful book offers readers of all levels an excellent overview of research on intercultural communication, including its very latest, exciting developments. What Capability Brown once did for the British garden, Rings and Rasinger have done for intercultural communication.

Professor Jean-Marc Dewaele, Birkbeck, University of London

The textbook provides a lucid and refreshing introduction to intercultural communication. It has an impressive coverage of key and current practical and theoretical issues, from postcolonial studies to psychology perspectives and from digital spheres to military services. It is a must read for those new to the field.

Professor Zhu Hua, University College London

Rings and Rasinger bring a novel and nuanced transcultural approach to intercultural communication, addressing limitations of contrastive, essentialist perspectives, as well as critical research. They combine up-to-date issues (digital and gig work, hyper-nationalistic trends, social media) and new approaches (positive psychology, storytelling, film and narrative) with world-wide examples, to deeply consider intercultural communication within larger power, business, and political relations.

Professor John Baldwin, Illinois State University

This textbook offers a thorough overview of intercultural communication as a field of study that transcends geographical and academic borders. The authors track the development of intercultural approaches and applications across a wide variety of disciplines and contexts, showing the potential of a critical intercultural communication perspective to help us understand and act upon our everyday individual and communal experiences.

Professor Susana Martinez Guillem, University of New Mexico

A didactically excellently designed introductory volume in Intercultural Communication! Each chapter contains aims, key terms and tasks to introduce the subject matter as well as discussion questions and a case study to conclude. In terms of content, the book also meets all expectations: it introduces the current state of the most important theoretical and methodological discussions and provides a multidisciplinary overview of current research on the subject area.

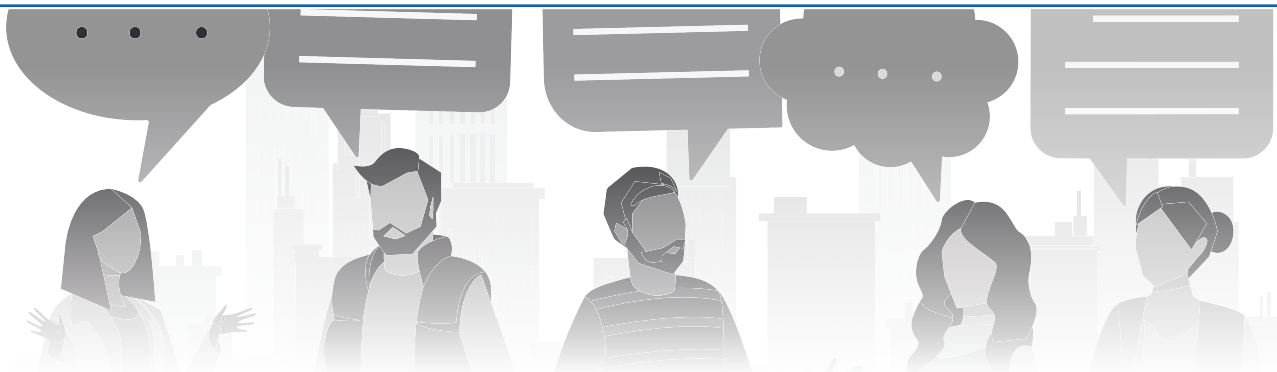
Professor Jürgen Bolten, Jena University

Presenting an integrative reorientation of intercultural communication, this book offers new and expansive interdisciplinary insights that reach beyond the commonly researched social domains. The book takes the reader on a journey that starts with discussing concepts, theories, and approaches in ways that are both provocative and accessible before introducing a wide range of contemporary applications with examples and discussions. It is beautifully written and it makes a vital and much-needed contribution to the teaching and research of intercultural communication.

Dr Khawla Badwan, Manchester Metropolitan University

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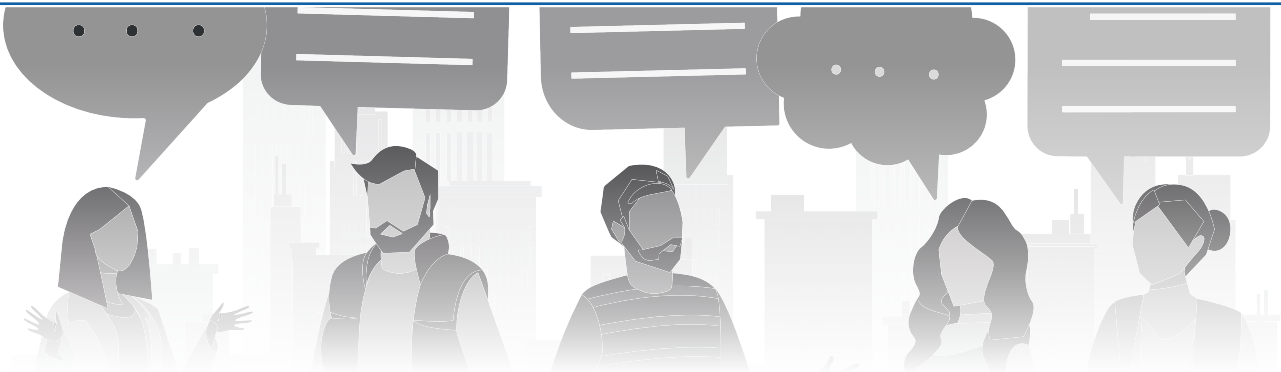
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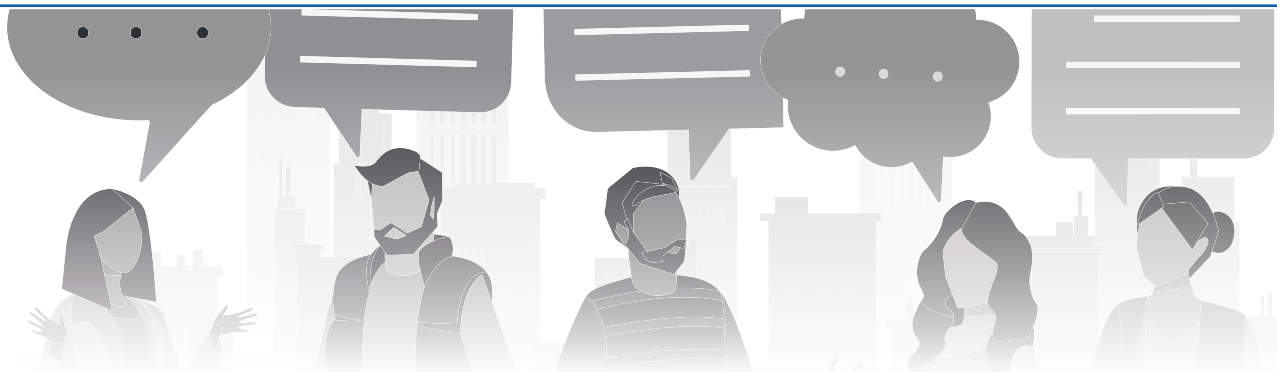
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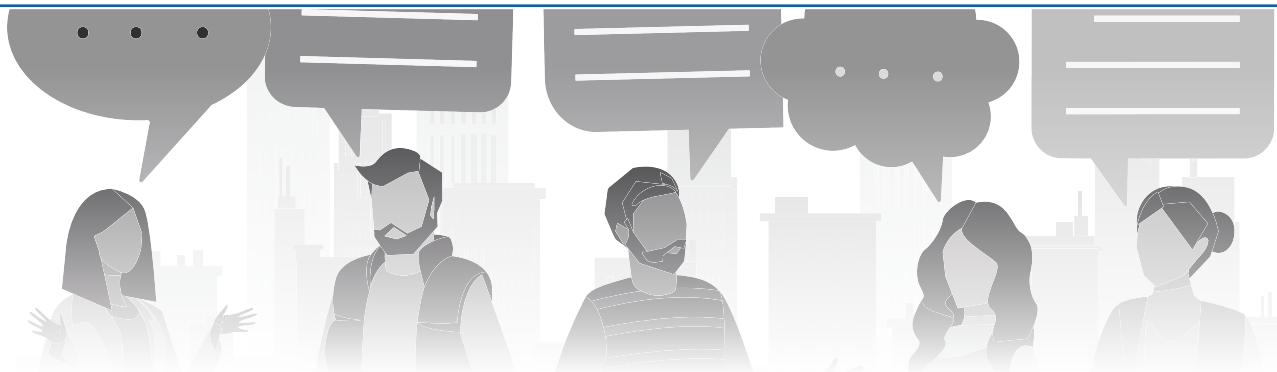




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## PREFACE

### Why Intercultural Communication?

In our increasingly globalised world, interactions with people from other cultures are on the rise. Particularly in cities, but increasingly also outside urban areas, schools, universities, workplaces, neighbourhoods and health services are becoming more culturally mixed, and there is significant interest from other public services such as police, firefighters and the military reflecting these demographic developments. In the virtual realm, we see a comparable growth in cultural encounters, for example in social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, while mass media confronts us daily with images of – and often also perspectives from – other cultures.

Interculturally competent people have a huge advantage in that context, because the ability to work in teams effectively is key to success in most social environments. The workplace is an obvious example, because most employers want outstanding team players, for which excellent communication skills are essential. In a culturally mixed workplace this means having intercultural communication skills, and employability may very much depend on them. However, ‘culture’ should be defined in a wider sense than ethnicity, race and nationality, to include, for example, educational differences and similarities, class, gender and age (see Chapters 1 and 2). In this context, intercultural competence must be discussed as a wider social competence (Chapter 3), which can be extremely helpful in the development of most personal relationships.

Interest in intercultural competence has led to the creation of new jobs, from intercultural coaches for international companies to intercultural trainers for the police and military, and many interculturalists have established their own companies, managing coaches and trainers. However, not everything should be seen through the lens of employability and job prospects, because great social contacts, friendships and partnerships might depend on intercultural communication skills too. Finally, the ability to experience the world through other perspectives

can be very enriching in the sense that it can help solve personal and social problems, identify better ways of living, or simply make people feel better. It is no coincidence that in intercultural business communication, there is now a strong movement towards including the emotional wellbeing of employees as a factor as important as economic aims, and that should certainly also be a goal outside corporate life.

## Why This Book?

We have both taught and supervised intercultural communication at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level, and have approached the topic from the perspectives of cultural studies, linguistics, postcolonial studies, psychology and other social sciences. Having edited *The Cambridge handbook of intercultural communication* (Rings & Rasinger, 2020) and published widely on cultural topics, we saw an opportunity to write an entry-level textbook that not only truly reflects the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of the field, but also provides a state-of-the art introduction to it. The book is designed to provide (i) a thorough discussion of key theoretical and conceptual discussions, (ii) a survey of the various methodological approaches to intercultural communication, and (iii) a multidisciplinary overview of current research in intercultural communication with a particular focus on intercultural theory in various domains of application. In particular, the book addresses the relationship between intercultural communication and power, and provides a balanced exploration of contrastive, interactional, imagological, psychological and digital aspects. The book can be used as either a standalone text or a companion to the collection of original research work in the *Handbook*.

Unlike existing introductions, the book encompasses the full breadth of the field of intercultural communication. It includes themes which to date have found comparatively little consideration in books of this type, such as evolutionary and positive psychology, key concepts from critical intercultural communication, postcolonial studies and transculturality, intercultural encounters in contemporary literature and film, and the application of contemporary intercultural communication research for the development of health services and military services. It therefore has the potential to be used in a wide variety of courses whether intercultural communication plays a central or only peripheral role in them.

Although there is a progressive narrative underlying the book, with parts and chapters well connected, each chapter can be used and understood in isolation, and there is no strict sequence that needs to be followed, allowing tutors to fit the book into their own syllabi and independent readers to select those chapters that are most appropriate for them.

## What Does This Book Offer?

The book contains eighteen chapters, which cover – as an introduction to intercultural communication – the programme of a full academic year or, alternatively, provide a substantial selection of key themes for specialist single-semester, trimester or intensive courses. Such courses could, for example, focus on intercultural awareness, competence or coaching and training, intercultural business communication, cultural diversity and integration, international assignment or year abroad preparation (and repatriation), as well as intercultural leadership and management, linguistics, literature or film.

Each chapter presents topics that could be covered in a single session or week. However, the first chapter in each of the three parts deserves to be given more time if available: in a one-year teaching programme, we would recommend devoting two sessions or weeks to the topics of Chapters 1, 4 and 12, because they serve as introductory chapters to their respective parts and cover more ground (e.g. Chapter 1 on culture and cultural identity constructs). Depending on the focus lecturers would like to give their courses, the relevant key chapters would also benefit from a slightly more generous time frame. For example, in a programme in which students are expected to apply contrastive, interactive and psychological approaches in different scenarios in full depth, it would be advisable to devote two sessions or weeks each to the topics of Chapters 5, 7 and 10, bearing in mind that lecturers might want to add a week for a general introduction and leave sessions for the preparation of assessments.

While the book presents all themes in a ‘natural progression’, from basic discussions of culture and cultural identity to specific applications of intercultural communication in business, health care and military settings, each chapter can also stand independently, potentially serving as the basis for specialist courses. For example, for a single-semester (or intensive) course in intercultural business communication, lecturers might want to choose the three chapters of Part I, followed by Chapter 14 and then 5, 7 and 10 as analysis chapters, before Chapter 17 provides preparation for course assessment. If more time is available, then intercultural communication in health and military settings would also deserve to feature in such a course, as publicly funded systems are very much interconnected with the private sector, in that they are important areas for many companies. There are also numerous structural parallels, for example, of an increasingly more culturally mixed workforce in intercultural leadership and management, or in the cultural integration and intercultural competence development of that workforce.

We have structured each chapter in such a way that it scaffolds students’ learning. Each chapter starts with clearly stated learning aims and a set of keywords. Early on in each chapter, there are tasks to set the scene and ease students into the topic. As the chapter progresses, tasks become more complex. These tasks might be points for discussion, small data collection and analysis pieces, or creative

elements, allowing students and tutors to check their understanding and critically reflect on their own personal experiences of the topic. We end each chapter with more complex discussion questions that draw the key issues of the chapter together, and an authentic case study that allows students to apply what they have learned in a clear and precise but challenging cultural encounter.

While the learning aims provide guidance, questions and case studies allow for an in-depth exploration of theoretical concepts or the application of newly acquired skills in an interactive learning environment. Each chapter also contains a brief summary of key issues, and reference lists are at the end of each chapter rather than the end of the book to facilitate further reading, which tutors might want to link to additional tasks and/or recommend as preparation for assessments. Key terms are explained and discussed in their respective chapters, but a glossary is also provided at the end of the book.

Part I introduces students to different key concepts of culture before discussing recent assumptions regarding developments from monocultural and traditional multicultural concepts to intercultural and transcultural perspectives. A working definition of intercultural communication is then provided and new dynamic and inclusive concepts of intercultural competence are explored.

In Part II, we guide students through key theories, concepts and approaches that have shaped the field of intercultural communication and continue to inform it. We start with concepts established in most recent research on ‘critical intercultural communication’, which correlate with postcolonial theory and can be traced to imagological explorations in literature and media studies. We compare such approaches with the contrastive theories that laid the ground for intercultural communication as an academic field and continue to shape intercultural training. Unlike other introductions to intercultural communication, our aim is not simply to reject contrastive approaches as outdated, but to examine their potential within the new framework set by critical intercultural communication.

Part II will also familiarise students with the different methodological approaches to studying intercultural communication, drawing upon the various disciplines that contribute to the field to reflect its diversity. From a linguistic angle, it will discuss issues such as politeness in an intercultural context, taking into account recent research on contrastive pragmatic work. Anthropological approaches trace the origins of intercultural communication as a discipline, with a focus on culture in everyday life. Sociological approaches will explore themes such as gender and feminist angles, but also highlight the concept of intersectionality, to allow students to understand the complexities of modern societies. Unlike many other introductory volumes, we then turn towards more recent developments in the field, by exploring how positive psychology concepts can be used to understand and develop intercultural relations better before moving to a discussion of how storytelling has the potential to create and enhance intercultural understanding.

Part III addresses the different communicative contexts, or domains, in which intercultural communication plays a substantial role. Chapter 12 starts the

discussion with the exponential expansion of digital technology and social media over the last two decades, and addresses intercultural encounters in the digital sphere. Chapter 13 explores intercultural communication in the context of migration, taking into account increases in global mobility where people live in more than one place and culture during their lifetimes. Chapters 14, 15 and 16 are dedicated to intercultural communication in three different professional contexts: the business world, medical and health services, and the military. Chapter 17 looks at a set of tools to assess intercultural competence, such as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). Chapter 18 concludes the book by discussing future developments in intercultural communication, and intercultural communication research.

