

KING'S  
*College*

LONDON



**Donata Puntil**  
**Silvia Colaiacomo**  
Modern Language Centre  
King's College London

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**Learning to be Intercultural**  
**CERCLES 2016**

# Modern Language Centre

## Assessed Modules:

- Arabic, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Brazilian Portuguese, Russian, Spanish
- From complete beginners to near native speakers
- 2 hours face-to face tuition over 20 weeks + e-learning
- Native and PG qualified tutors
- Intensive one-term modules also available
- Linguistics for PG students
- **Intercultural Learning Module**
- **Intercultural Awareness Training Events**
- FREE for eligible students

[kcl.ac.uk/mlc/study/modules](http://kcl.ac.uk/mlc/study/modules)



# Intercultural Learning Module

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## Background Information I

- **Credit Level 4 – UG students**
- **One –Term Module** (2hrs a week X 10 weeks + 1 Reading Week)
- **FA during Reading Week: 1,500 words essay** based on an article, or literary/film extract to be analysed following Intercultural theories
- **Summative Assessment: a 4,000 words essay** based on a small-scale ethnographic project (4-5 interviews to be recorded + analysed on a topic chose by candidate)

# Intercultural Learning Module

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## Background Information II

- The Module was part of a **BA in Modern Languages and Education** taught in collaboration between **MLC** and **DEPS**;
- The Module had been designed for preparing students spending their **Year Abroad** as part of their degree;
- The aim was to foster **reflection** and **awareness** on cultural differences and to develop **critical thinking skills** in relation to language learning and intercultural-related issues;
- Students had to write a **4,000 words essay** based on an ethnographic project carried out during their year abroad;
- The module **was reshaped in 2013-14** to respond to King's incoming Year Abroad Students; the Module runs 4 times a year and attracts a high number of students.

# Intercultural Learning Module

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## Rationale for the Module as a part of a Period Abroad:

“Students do not necessarily need courses in intercultural communication or learning. But they do benefit from both intellectual and practical preparation before they go abroad, so that their encounters with ‘**others**’ and with ‘**otherness**’ can contribute to their understanding conceptually, analytically and emotionally. Learning to be ethnographic about these encounters offers students some ways of **structuring their experiences while still encountering their sense of themselves as active agents in managing their period abroad.**”

Roberts, C., “Ethnography and Cultural Practice: Ways of Learning During Residence Abroad” in Alred, G., Byram, M., Fleming, M. *Intercultural Experience and Education*, Multilingual Matters, 2003, p.114.

# Intercultural Learning Module

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“So using ethnography is to use common sense ways of learning. Through **observation** and **interaction** we gradually build up an understanding of how things get done, what meanings they have and how there is coherence and indeed patterns in the flux and apparent random aspects of ordinary life. This way of learning is a process we go through from our earliest days and it is a process students live through when they are confronted with new social and cultural practices. **In experiencing ‘the other’, they are also having to think about their own identity and its social and cultural basis.** In engaging with themselves as cultural beings at the same time as meeting what is ‘strange’ and not yet understood in others, they are forced to be reflexive – to acknowledge their role in understanding others. [...] So, ethnography is not just useful for the period of residence abroad. It has a more lasting effect.”

# Course syllabus and organization

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- Each week a different topic is discussed in class either on **theories of culture, interculturality** and **second language acquisition**, or focusing on methodology for the **ethnographic project**;
- During Reading Week students are asked to work on a **Formative Assessment task**. This is structured as a theoretically informed analysis of an intercultural encounter given as a sample (film extract);
- At the end of the course students carry out a **small-scale ethnographic project** focusing on a cultural aspect of their interest; topics to be agreed with lecturers.



# Course syllabus and organization

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## **Week 2 Perceptions of Foreign Cultures & Intercultural Encounters**

- A view of the 'other' and cultural stereotypes
- 'Cultural grammar', mental programme, cultural standards and cultural shock
- Cultural and behavioural patterns
- Intercultural encounters: ways of reacting to another culture
- **Portfolio-blog: task II – an intercultural encounter**

## **Week 3 The Hidden Dimension (E. T. Hall) & Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture**

- What is intercultural communication?
- Proxemics, high context cultures and low context cultures
- Hofstede's indexes
- **Portfolio-blog: task III – interviewing one friend/student**

## **Week 4 Introduction to the Ethnographic Project**

- What is ethnography?
- How to choose a topic
- How to make a topic ethnographically relevant
- How to collect data
- **Portfolio-blog: task III B – collecting field-notes**

## **Week 5 Language and Culture**

- Learning a language as an intercultural experience
- SLA notions
- Byram's notions of Intercultural Learning
- **Portfolio-blog: task IV – describing a language-learning experience**
- **Assignment of the Formative assessment**

## **Week 6 READING WEEK: Formative assessment: essay (1,500 words)**

# E-Portfolio - blog

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- Every week students are asked to carry out **weekly tasks** on the **group blog** (available on Keats);
- These tasks are often posted in the form of **reflection** on a given topic, **self-narratives** or short samples of **field observations**; students can use different media;
- Students can **interact with each other**;
- **Lecturers** are monitoring tasks and provide **on-line feedback**.

# Blog sample I

- Example: first week task: “My culture-myself”



# Blog sample II

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[Permalink](#) [Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Export to portfolio](#) [1 comment](#) (latest by Silvia Colaiacono, Thursday, 12 February 2015, 12:54 PM)



## Commute Time Observation

Thursday, 12 February 2015, 11:27 AM

by Betsy Wang

Attachments: 12022015-Commute-Obs.docx

attached

[Permalink](#) [Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Export to portfolio](#) [1 comment](#) (latest by Silvia Colaiacono, Thursday, 12 February 2015, 11:52 AM)



## Field Observation

Thursday, 12 February 2015, 11:06 AM

by Eleni Skoutakis

Attachments: Observations

Attached as a Word Doc!

[Permalink](#) [Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Export to portfolio](#) [1 comment](#) (latest by Silvia Colaiacono, Thursday, 12 February 2015, 11:44 AM)



## Staying fit in London

Wednesday, 11 February 2015, 11:06 PM

# Rationale for the E-Portfolio

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## The E-Portfolio serves three main purposes:

- To foster the habits of **reflection** and **reflexivity** which would be needed for carrying out ethnographic work;
- To provide students with an opportunity to **give their own account** of their experience and **share** with their peers;
- To provide some **ongoing feedback** on the course and allow us lecturers to make modifications or additions throughout the course.

# Formative Assessment

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## TASK BRIEF

### BRIEF:

Watch the extract from the film **Lost in Translation** by Sofia Coppola (2003).

- Treat the film extract as a case study of a cultural/intercultural encounter (taking into account the (small) culture(s) the different characters would have come from) and write a 1500-word analysis of it.
- Make reference to the theoretical background covered in class, quoting the appropriate literature.
- You can choose to support your arguments also by drawing on examples from your personal experience, or that of acquaintances. You may also use examples from other literary works, the press, TV, arts, etc.

Make sure you:

- Hand in your essay **via KEATS** by the deadline; be sure you use the official cover page, the essay is word-processed, double-spaced and stating the word count.
- Put your candidate number on each page. **Do NOT put your name on your essay.**

# Final project

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You are going to do an ethnographic project (approximately 4,000 words) on an aspect of contemporary culture. Base your analysis on the interviews you have conducted, on your own experience and on the reading you have done about the topic.

## INTERVIEW PROJECT

The objective of the project is for you to research an aspect of culture as represented by some members of society and present a written analysis of your findings.

## STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT

Your project should include the following:

### *Focus of the project:*

Explain the topic you chose, the people you chose to interview and why you were interested in researching the topic.

### *Discussion of relevant reading:*

Review some of the literature related to the chosen topic.

### *Data collection and analysis:*

This will be the longest section. Your interviews will be the main source of data, but you can also refer to any observations (non-verbal communication, description of the setting and circumstances, likely typology of the respondents) you've made. The discussion should be reflective rather than purely descriptive, and you should link it to the literature where appropriate. Avoid ethnic, gender, age, class and national stereotyping. Your analysis should be informed by theoretical notions as studied in the IL module or from your own learning.

### *Conclusion:*

This should include a summary of what you feel you have learnt about the chosen topic and a reflection on yo

# Final project

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- There are a number of **student exchange programmes** where an element of the **ethnographic approach** can be included both in the preparation for and activities during the stay abroad (Dark et al., 1997; Snow and Byram, 1997)
- “Schieffelin and Ochs’ (1986) notion of language socialisation, as well as assuming the capacity to interact in socially appropriate ways within a specific community, also involves the indirect means of **developing sociocultural knowledge**. This process of socialization describes well ‘what ethnography’ means. Ethnographers, by participating in the everyday lives of a group, gradually **acquire an understanding of what meanings** are associated with the ways of talking and behaving that they both observe and are involved in.” (Roberts, C. *et al.*, 2001: 10)



# Working on the final project

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“Once students have started to think ethnographically and can begin to relate **detailed observation to cultural patterns**, they need to develop a conceptual understanding of the cultural patterns observed, and an awareness of the culturally constructed nature of social practices. They also need to address the questions of what evidence, collected through **ethnographic methods**, can be considered to be valid knowledge of a particular cultural scene and how it might be written up in a project.”

(Roberts, C. *et al.*, 2001: 128)

# Examples of essay titles

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- “US and UK Cultural Viewpoints on International Volunteerism.”
- “Analysing the Differences and Similarities in UK and US University Drinking Cultures.”
- “Ethnographic Project: The impact of the presence of a big international body of King’s College London on students’ fashion perceptions.”
- “Cultural influences on students’ perceptions of doctors in different countries.”
- “An Ethnographic Study: Student experience on ‘Tea’ (Meal) in Hong Kong and England.”
- “What is a Professor? An Ethnographic Study of Students’ Perceptions of Professors in UK and US.”
- “Different perceptions on Feminism in the UK and US.”

# Assessing the projects/essays I

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- Projects/essays are divided by chapters and follow the stipulated **UK UG academic standards**;
- They are **personal reports/reflections** with a strong sense of reflexivity;
- They need to be above all **academic reports** based on original **data collection and analysis** following **ethnographic methodological criteria** + informed by **relevant literature**.

# Assessing the projects/essays II

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“It is important to have some relatively objective way of assessing cultural learning and **the ethnography** represents the best way that we have found of doing this. It is possible to assess how much cultural knowledge has been learnt in more traditional ways, through essays or tests, if by that we mean positive facts about the school system, trends in popular music or aspects of a society’s history of myths, for example. But, when cultural learning concerns the everyday and the values and beliefs of a particular group and also involves an awareness of the student’s own cultural being, **hence an ethnographic study provides the intellectual and emotional space to display such learning.**”

(Roberts, C. *et al.*, 2001: 208)

# Students' Feedback

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“I hope you both have had a wonderful break and have had a chance to see some warm weather! I wanted to email both of you, thanking you for an incredible semester. Your class was, without a doubt, **the most tangible and applicable class that I have ever taken**, as it was able **to permeate through the classroom and into my daily life**. I was excited by the way in which our in class discussions would manifest themselves in my daily interactions with my British peers. “

“I have just submitted my final paper via Keats, despite being about five days early and have also attached interview clips to the body of this email. I genuinely loved the discussions that this project's structure allowed me to explore, **as my topic was something I really found fascinating and was happy I got the chance to look further into at such a deep level.**”

“I believe that I thoroughly enjoyed your course and taking your class was very enjoyable as a study abroad student! Through taking your class, **I was able to research a lot more in the UK, and would love to return for graduate school.**”

“Thank you for a great semester. Very good at leading class and prompting **discussion.**”

“I really enjoyed the discussion style class and **efforts to encourage students to see things from different points of view didn't go unappreciated.**”

# Lecturers' perspective

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- Lecturers as **ethnographers**;
- New teaching dimension: parameters of **unusual teaching situation**;
- Lecturers as “**cultural mediators**”: not simply a matter of understanding the other, but creating **reflexivity + self-awareness**;
- **Mutual perception** (lecturers/students) + critical professional awareness;
- Lecturers as **agents of change** for themselves, as well as for students;
- **Professional development**: from teaching FL to teaching cultural/intercultural studies;
- **Training colleagues** to develop critical intercultural awareness.

# Intercultural Awareness Training Provision

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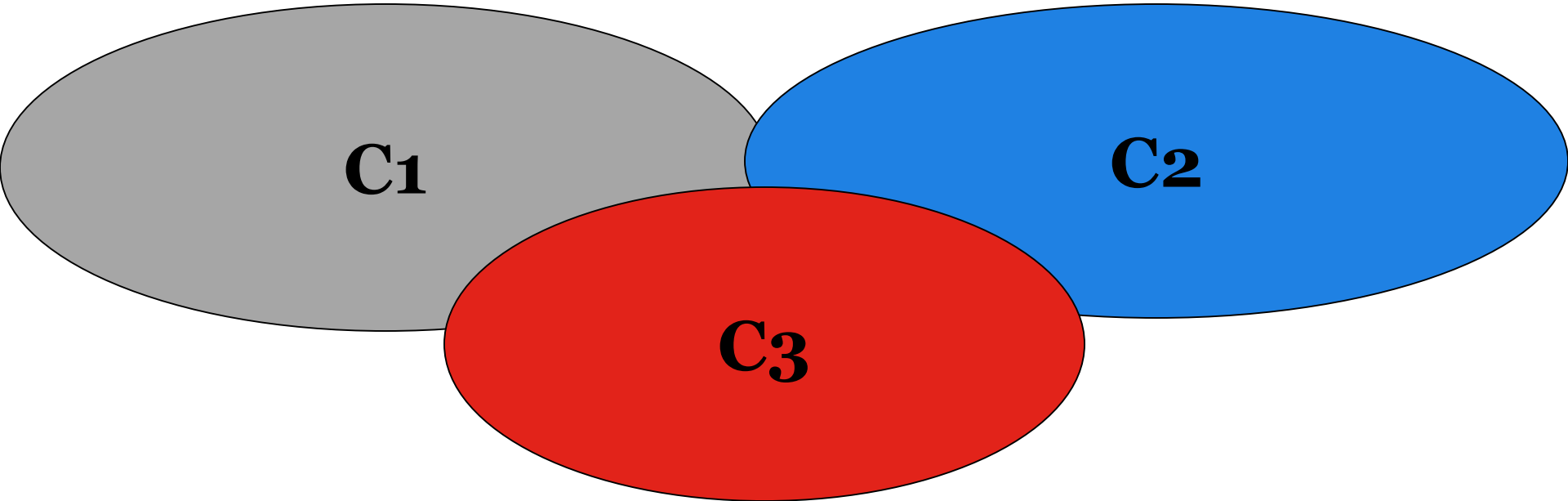
- **Dissemination** of competence across **different Departments** within the College;
- Training provision both for **students** (UG + PG) and **staff**;
- **tailor-made training in line with King's International Policy:**



- **King's Worldwide;**
- **Study Abroad Centre;**
- **Career and Employability Centre;**
- **KLI (King's Learning Institute);**
- **Medical School;**
- **Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience;**
- **Language Departments;**
- **School of Management and Business.**

# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

The model based on developing a Third Space (C3) inside and outside our own culture (C1) and the target culture (C2) is not enough.....



Kramsch, C., *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993.



## INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

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“This metaphor of cultures as relatively stable spaces led to the conception of a third, in-between space that language learners and others who occupy liminal linguistic and cultural territory, operate in. The third space metaphor crossed from Bhabha (in Rutherford, 1990) in post-colonial cultural studies and was taken up by Kramsch (1993, 1998). It is an attractive idea to imbue foreign language speakers with the quality of intermediary, and as such, multilinguals correspond to Simmel’s stranger (described below), acting as conciliatory agents with a privileged perspective on different cultures. **However, such an attribution strips the foreign language speaker, as intercultural mediator, of her own struggles, passions and fears.** Furthermore, recent demographic mixing has shown the model of discrete cultures to be inadequate. Foreigners are no longer (only) others beyond the horizon who ‘do not exist for us’ (1950, p. 402) in Simmel’s sense who we trade with, get to know on holiday, learn about for our intellectual satisfaction. **The intensification of globalisation requires different models of intercultural subjectivity which acknowledge our fears of difference and which encourage these to be confronted in local home spaces.** The concept of third space and associated metaphors of bridging (e.g. Kramsch’s ‘cultural faultlines’, 1993, p. 205) have ceded to a theorising of the individual (language learner, migrant) as a navigator in complex landscapes, and metaphors have been refined to reflect this complexity. [...] **This goes beyond the pragmatics of learning different cultural habits and patterns towards an interrogation of one’s own symbolic interactions.**”

Coffey, S., “Strangehood and Intercultural Subjectivity”, in *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 2013, 13:3,p.268-269.

# References

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**THANK YOU!!!!!!**

[donata.punttil@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:donata.punttil@kcl.ac.uk)  
[silvia.colaiacomo@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:silvia.colaiacomo@kcl.ac.uk)