

Hessen:IWU / Winter University Program 2025 – Course Outline

<https://wup.h-da.de/>

Digital Transformation and Intercultural Communication: The transformative power of digital communication in and on culture

ACADEMIC DIRECTOR

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1) INFORMATION ON THE COURSE CONTENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In today's digitalized society the constant flow of communication is regarded as a fundamental and integral part of everyday life. Rapid developments in media technologies engender digitalized transformation on all levels of society.

Especially in these times, how can we grasp the multifold international perspectives within these rapidly evolving transformative processes? To answer this question, this class will take a closer look at the diverse perspectives involved.

- How does each country and culture tackle the digital challenges?
- Is there a common ground?
- What is the impact of different forms of digital media on our daily life: Our work, our spare-time, the ways of communication, the ways we relax, the ways we interact?
- How do we make use of different media for emotion regulation, for exchange of ideas, for opinion-building? And – on the other side – how do the diverse forms of digital media affect us?

This class will explore these questions and discuss the challenges on all levels of society. On an individual level, working from home leads to challenges for parents and children. Boundaries of private and public domain are blurring. We struggle with digital burn out. On a mezzo level, our social environment has been transferred into the digital realm, forming digital communities in working and learning environments for some and potentially excluding others, leading to challenges for all who are involved. On a macro level, we are constantly connected.

This class will investigate the processes of mutual shaping of digital media and social life and discuss how new media technologies influence and infiltrate social practices and cultural life. We will extend this discussion of media's role in transforming the everyday life by including in the discussion the individual groups of society. We draw on existing research to illustrate how digital cultures manifest all levels and elaborate on the constitutive characteristics. We conclude with implications of this conceptualization for the understanding of our everyday life as intermixed with technologies.

Additionally, the seminar will introduce students to fundamental concepts, theories, and topics in the study of intercultural communication.

Students will focus on differences between intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication, and inter-discourse communication.

We will discuss societal, economical, and governmental structures and how these are shaped and formed by culture and how these, in turn, affect us.

Lastly, students will also describe their own cultural background, and additionally share personal incidents of intercultural interactions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Based on current analysis, students learn not only how digital communication influences individual communication but all levels of society. Research results will be presented, pertaining to the different areas of digital communication.

Students will also learn about dimensions of culture, intercultural communication strategies in their daily life and how to utilize said strategies, to be aware of their own cultural background and biases and critical thinking and problem-solving skills through analyzing critical cultural incidents.

COURSE MATERIALS

Students will receive a list of literature, which will be accessible online on Moodle (online learning system).

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Class hours: 75 contact hours

Self-study: 60 contact hours

(1 contact hour = 45 minutes)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Type of Seminar</i>
Dec. 07, 2024	Virtual Pre-Arrival Session	Online
Dec. 09, 2024	Getting to know each other. Introduction to the course, what it is about. Class structure and organization	Online
Dec. 16, 2024	How can we define culture?	Online
Jan. 06, 2025	How do we define communication? Forms of Communication: Verbal communication	Darmstadt
Jan. 07, 2025	Forms of Communication: Non-verbal communication	Darmstadt
Jan. 08, 2025	How does culture affect the way we communicate and our identity?	Darmstadt
Jan. 09, 2025	How do the media change our way of communicating?	Darmstadt
Jan. 10, 2025	Excursion to Munich: 1) Museum of 5 Continents 2) tba	Munich
Jan. 13, 2025	tba	Darmstadt
Jan. 14, 2025	Excursion: Museum for Communication	Frankfurt

Jan. 15, 2025	How do digital media change our daily lives?	Darmstadt
Jan. 16, 2025	How have digital media changed our ways of working?	Darmstadt
Jan. 17, 2025	Excursion: ZDF (tv station)	Mainz
Jan. 20, 2025	How does culture affect the way we work and our society?	Darmstadt
Jan. 21, 2025	The effects of digital communication on culture and culture in turn on digital communication.	Darmstadt
Jan. 22, 2025	Final presentations/exam	Darmstadt

2) INFORMATION ON CLASS PARTICIPATION, ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

ASSIGNMENTS

Active participation, presentation on one topic (see course material on Moodle)

EXAMS

Oral presentation, including Power Point, interaction and discussion with audience, reflection on the topic

PRACTICE MATERIALS

Literature will be made available on Moodle

PROFESSIONALISM & CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend the classes and dedicate 1-2 hours a day for preparation through reading and self-study. The participation and self-study will enable the students to answer questions, lead discussions and contribute with their own ideas and opinions.

MISSED CLASSES

No more than 10% of the contact hours can be missed for successful completion of the course module. If students miss a lecture, it is their own responsibility to obtain information on the topics. In the event of sickness, a medical certificate must be presented to program coordinator.

3) INFORMATION ON GRADING AND ECTS

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Upon successful completion, 6 ECTS will be awarded for the class.

According to the rules of ECTS, one credit is equivalent to 25-30 hours student workload.

GRADING SCALE

Percentage	Grade		Description
90-100%	15 points	1.0	very good: an outstanding achievement
	14 points		
	13 points	1.3	
80-90%	12 points	1.7	good: an achievement substantially above average requirements
	11 points	2.0	
	10 points	2.3	
70-80%	9 points	2.7	satisfactory: an achievement which corresponds to average requirements
	8 points	3.0	
	7 points	3.3	
60-70%	6 points	3.7	

	5 points	4.0	sufficient: an achievement which barely meets the requirements
0-60%	4 points	5.0	not sufficient / failed: an achievement which does not meet the requirements
	3 points		
	2 points		
	1 point		
	0 points		

This course description was issued on May 22, 2024. The program is subject to change.

Preliminary schedule at a glance:

International Winter University Program 2025



Week 1		Thursday, Jan 02, 2025	Friday, Jan 03, 2025	Saturday, Jan 04, 2025	Sunday, Jan 05, 2025
9:00 - 12:00	Virtual sessions: December 2024 On-site in Darmstadt: Jan. 02-23, 2025	ARRIVAL DAY	Welcome Ceremony	Intercultural training	
12:00 - 13:00			Lunch break		
13:00 - 16:30			Campus tour, city tour		
Evening			Welcome Dinner		

Week 2	Monday, Jan 06, 2025	Tuesday, Jan 07, 2025	Wednesday, Jan 08, 2025	Thursday, Jan 09, 2025	Friday, Jan 10, 2025	Saturday, Jan 11, 2025	Sunday, Jan 12, 2025
9:00 - 12:00	German language course	Academic seminar	German language course	Academic seminar	Academic excursion in Munich	Free time in Munich or visiting Neuschwanstein Castle	Transfer to Darmstadt
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break			
13:00 - 16:30	German language course	Academic seminar	German language course	Transfer to Munich			
Evening			Optional: Indoor rock climbing				

Week 3	Monday, Jan 13, 2025	Tuesday, Jan 14, 2025	Wednesday, Jan 15, 2025	Thursday, Jan 16, 2025	Friday, Jan 17, 2025	Saturday, Jan 18, 2025	Sunday, Jan 19, 2025
9:00 - 12:00	Academic seminar	Academic seminar	Academic seminar	Academic seminar	Academic seminar	Optional: Visiting Heidelberg	Optional: Visiting Frankfurt a.M.
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break			
13:00 - 16:30	German language course	Academic seminar	German language course	German language course			
Evening	Optional: Trivia night		Study in Hessen Info session				

Week 4	Monday, Jan 20, 2025	Tuesday, Jan 21, 2025	Wednesday, Jan 22, 2025	Thursday, Jan 23, 2025
9:00 - 12:00	Academic seminar	Academic seminar	Academic seminar	DEPARTURE DAY
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break	
13:00 - 16:30	German language course	German language course	Closing Ceremony	
Evening				

Optional activities/cultural program: participation is optional, sign up is required

Mandatory events

Mandatory: academic seminar

Mandatory: Intercultural training / German language course