

**COMM 4373: Interracial Communication**  
**Fall 2020, Online**  
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**University of Memphis**

**Course Description:** According to Orbe and Harris, interracial communication is the transactional process of message exchange between individuals in a situational context where racial difference is perceived as a salient factor by at least one person. Therefore, this class will examine on the social problems encountered in communication between people of different races. The class will consist of readings, discussion, and field study on how prejudice, stereotypes, racism, and self-concepts can affect communication. We will also explore ways to minimize these problems.

**Textbook and Required Materials:**

Mark Orbe and Tina Harris. [Interracial Communication: Theory Into Practice. \\*3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.](#) Sage Publishing, 2015.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize the importance interracial communication plays in a variety of contexts.
2. Explore the meaning of race from their own cultural identity and heritage.
3. Understand the relationship between race and communication.
4. Identify barriers to effective interracial communication and find effective solutions to those barriers.
5. Implement skills to communicate with people from races different than their own.

**National Communication Association Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOCs):**

*LOC #8: Utilize communication to embrace difference*

- Articulate the connection between communication and culture
- Recognize individual and cultural similarities and differences
- Appreciate individual and cultural similarities and differences
- Respect diverse perspectives and the ways they influence communication
- Articulate one's own cultural standpoint and how it affects communication and world view
- Demonstrate the ability to be culturally self-aware
- Adapt one's communication in diverse cultural contexts

**Description of Major Assignments**

**Reflection Questions: (20%):** Students are to write a 350-500 word essay on the assigned reflection questions.

**Essay Question (20%):** Students are to write a 600-800 word essay on the assigned essay question.

**Quizzes (20%):**

**Mid-term (20%):**

**Final Exam (20%)**

### **Tentative Course Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Week 1	Introductions, Importance of Interracial Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce yourself in the Discussion area</li><li>• Watch: Tina Harris on Interracial Communication</li><li>• Read Chapter 1</li><li>• Write Reflection paper 1</li></ul>
Week 2	1619 Project: History of Race in America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Chapter 2</li><li>• Watch: Rise and Fall of Jim Crow, Parts 1-2</li><li>• Write Reflection Paper #2</li></ul>
Week 3	"I Don't hear You, But I SEE What You Are Saying"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read chapter 3</li><li>• Watch Rise and Fall of Jim Crow, Part 3-4</li><li>• Take Quiz #1</li></ul>
Week 4	"Who Am I?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Chapter 4</li><li>• Answer Essay Question #1</li><li>• Discussion on whiteness</li></ul>
Week 5	Where the Different the Roads Meet Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Chapter 5</li><li>• Watch Kimberle' Crenshaw: Intersectionality</li><li>• Discussion: The Role of Intersectionality on Interracial Communication</li><li>• Write Reflection Paper #3</li></ul>
Week 6	"Is there a theory there??"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Chapter 6</li><li>• Answer Essay Question #2 a</li><li>• Discussion: Cultural Contracts and other theoretical approaches</li><li>• Take Quiz #2</li></ul>
Week 7	"Race Matters"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Chapter 7</li><li>• Write Reflection Paper #4 and #5</li><li>• Discussion: The Role Race has played in our own communication efforts.</li><li>• Take Midterm</li></ul>
Week 8	"You Friends with Who? You Are Dating Who?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Chapter 8</li><li>• Write Reflection Paper #6</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion: Interracial friendships and romances</li> </ul>
Week 9	"You About To Lose Your Job!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 9</li> <li>• Answer Essay Question #3</li> <li>• Discussion: Interracial Communication at the workplace</li> </ul>
Week 10	"Don't Catch These Hands!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 10</li> <li>• Write Reflection paper # 7</li> <li>• Discussion: Interracial Communication and Conflict</li> <li>• Take Quiz #4</li> </ul>
Week 11	"Don't Believe the Hype!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 11</li> <li>• Write Reflection Paper #8</li> <li>• Watch: John Oliver's Whitewashing in Hollywood</li> <li>• Discussion Race and the media</li> <li>• Answer Essay Question #4</li> </ul>
Week 12	Making All of this Work in the Real World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 12</li> <li>• Answer Essay Question #5</li> <li>• Write Reflection paper #9 (Note: The word count is 800-1000 and worth 20 points).</li> <li>• Take Quiz # 5</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Week 13	Final Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take Final Exam</li> </ul>