IDSY 220 (Part I)
Spring 2004

Jan Solberg, Instructor
(solberg@kzoo.edu)
Dewing 203-F
(office: 337-7120; home: 383-1442)

In this course, you will learn:
1. To see culture as a medium in which we live, that shapes virtually every aspect of our thoughts, beliefs and behavior.
2. To identify some of the basic cultural tendencies of U.S. Americans, to articulate and experience (through simulations and self-tests, for example) some of the basic principles of intercultural communication, and to discover how differences in cultural style and background can lead to cultural misunderstandings.
3. To reflect on your own readiness to go abroad. In this endeavor, you will be aided by readings, writing assignments, in-class simulations, and discussions with your instructor and other students (those in this class, and those recently returned from study abroad.

Texts:

Before coming to class for the first time, read The Art of Crossing Cultures.

Week I
Discussion of Storti; intro to course

Week II

Intercultural Competence, pp. 84-108; American Cultural Patterns, pp. 11-16; quiz
Sometime this week, meet with returning KPIC students, and fill out questionnaire (see separate assignment sheet).

Week III

Discussion of Ch. 4, 5, 6 & 7 of American Cultural Patterns + 192-195 of Intercultural Competence (groups of 2-3 students will each be responsible for the discussion of one chapter and the preparation of a handout for their classmates. They will organize our discussion for 30 minutes per group, and will contribute insights gleaned during their discussions with returning KPIC students [see separate assignment sheet].)
Bring a photo of yourself for the website.
Week IV

Visit of CIP staff and returning KPIC students, discussion of ICRP — DO NOT BE ABSENT TODAY ----- EVERYONE MUST ATTEND!
NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY — instead, attend Poster Session on ICRPs during Common Time, on Thursday, in Dewing Commons
Hand in four well-written paragraphs for posting on the KPIC website (see separate assignment sheet).

Week V

Discussion of pp. 110-137 of *Intercultural Competence*; quiz

Week VI

Monday: film + discussion of pp. 176-182, 186-192 (from “Regulators” through “Cultural differences in touch”), and 195-201 (from “Voice” on) in *Intercultural Competence*
For Wednesday, discussion of pp. 45-56, 149-160, 212, and 217-224 in *American Cultural Patterns*; quiz

Week VII

Discussion of Ch. 9 of *Intercultural Competence*; quiz

Week VIII

Monday: Discussion of Ch. 10 of *Intercultural Competence*; quiz
Wednesday: Discussion of pp. 163-172 of *Intercultural Competence* + photocopies (Culture Shock)

Week IX

Monday: Two short stories (photocopies) + short response paper (1 p. [see separate assignment sheet])
Wednesday: film — “Daughter from Da Nang” (Part I); one well-written paragraph for website (see separate assignment sheet).

Week X

Monday: Discussion of pp. 161-176 of *American Cultural Patterns* + 62-80 of *Intercultural Competence*; quiz; “Daughter from Da Nang” (Part II)
Wednesday: Preparations for departure; evaluations.
Your grade will be determined in the following way:

Attendance and participation (more than two absences will lower your grade) (20%)

5 quizzes on the readings (you’ll take 6, and your lowest grade will be dropped) (20%)

Group discussion assignment + handout (see Week III) (15%)

4 well-written paragraphs for the website (20%)

1 “dry run” ICRP prospectus (15%)

1 response paper about short stories (10%)

In addition, you must
1. participate in a discussion with returning KPIC students (see Week II)
2. attend the Poster Session (see Week IV)
3. find a group to report to while abroad. This could be a Scout troop, a church group, a civic organization, a professional organization, etc. It should not be a “K” class (as they only last 10 weeks), and I would prefer that it not be a “K” organization (just to broaden your horizons a bit), although that could be negotiated.
Literature AOS

The study of literature at Kalamazoo College comprises half-a-dozen departments, introducing students to texts from a wide-range of cultures and historical periods, and in a variety of genres and languages. The study of literature shares concerns and methods with a number of other disciplines ranging from anthropology and history to philosophy and religion, for each in its own way examines the variety of human experience. At the same time, what is distinctive to the study of literature is the examination of how language summons up imaginative worlds of experience.

Although the study of literature at K. College is by no means bound to a traditional notion of the canon, it remains that the study of literature is a means of introducing students to an ongoing community of writers and readers. Literary texts are the repository of ideas, visions, and sensibilities that societies across time have embraced, or just as tellingly, debated or even attempted to erase. It is often argued that texts are about other texts, and it is important for students to see themselves as the newest members of this intellectual community.

The study of literature enables students to enter into imaginative worlds of experiences other than his or her own. Literature is foreign languages or originating from other cultures may seem to fit such a description most readily, but even texts from our own culture, if they are of a different historical period, socio-economic group, gender identification, etc. provide students with the same experience of otherness. Mere exposure to otherness, however, is not sufficient. The study of literature should impart to students a means of dealing with difference and of recognizing the potential otherness of the self. All too easily students respond to such otherness either by naturalizing differences, i.e. diminishing differences in a desire to see a common humanity, or by mystifying the other as beyond our capacities for comprehension. The true goal of reading is met only when students discover the “logic” of the other, acknowledging that what he or she had taken as reality could be otherwise. For many students such a sense of “could be otherwise” will expand their empathy and understanding of the world; others will perhaps experience a sense of recognition, discovering in a textual world a self that had eluded them in their present reality. Those who love literature all share the experience of having texts to which they return again and again in their lives. At times, disappointingly, we outgrow the vision of a text, finding what once excited us to be puerile, but just as often, we turn to listen once more to the words and worlds that gave voice to the wisdom we had sought.

The otherness found in literature is not merely a matter of its content, however, for literature is never a transparent window into the past or another culture. First, students must be encouraged to consider the context of textual production—who is allowed to write and publish, what is publishable, who is permitted to read—as well as the relationship of a particular author/text to the dominant culture and its discourse. Second, the nature of a piece of literature as text may be even more profoundly alien to students. Students are asked to confront such matters as what for us and for others constitutes a significant story, i.e. what experiences or feelings have been chosen to be significant enough to be put into textual form and how do they unfold in a text? When students fail to find the self-actualizing protagonist of the traditional Western novel moving from conflict to resolution in a text, whether of another time or culture, or experimentally postmodern, they must be encouraged, through careful reading and discussion, to seek out alternative structures of meaning that shape the text.

Thus the study of literature, fundamentally, prepares students to be readers of texts, introducing them to the questions and strategies that are appropriate to the medium and to specific genres. This leads to the broader consideration of the inevitable gap between language
and what is in a day-to-day fashion accepted as reality. It is hoped that in the end, students will become aware and wary of the stories that have fashioned and which others offer them as reality.