

INLS758 SYLLABUS

THE DESCRIPTION OF THIS CLASS STATES ...

Examines information in society for selected nations/cultures. Compares institutions, processes, and trends in the globalization of information management in the face of barriers of language and culture.

Yet as we approach the idea of "information in society for selected nations/cultures," we must first ask ourselves how we know, or think we know, other nations and cultures. Accordingly, in INLS758 this semester, we will spend a fair amount of time reading about and discussing how we even approach the intersection between the nations and cultures we are familiar with and the nations and cultures we may not be as familiar with.

This will be less a "how-to" class and more a "why" class. There are no pat answers, but there are topics that deserve wide-ranging exploration.

We will spend most of our time discussing topics related to the idea of information in society (by asking ourselves what that means).

INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS

Our first week will be an exploration of what we think we know of other nations and cultures. We will see if our understandings and perceptions are supported by facts.

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE OTHER?

We will then move into six sessions in which we consider the question above. To do this, we will consider how our image of "the other" is built and ponder if it is an accurate image. We will read about how our own culture defines other cultures for us. We will take this topic as an opening to several other cultural areas - the Middle East (a term which, in itself, is composed of cultural preferences and attitudes) and Europe.

DO WE OPERATE FROM THE SAME TERMS OF REFERENCE?

We will follow this with six sessions during which we will consider whether or not our cultures themselves have conditioned us to look at the world in different ways. We will use Richard Nisbitt's *The geography of thought: How Asians and Westerners think differently – and why* as our principal guide. We will take this topic as an opening to several other cultural areas such as East Asia and South Asia (two terms that, too, carry some cultural baggage).

IS CULTURE DEPENDENT ON OUR TONGUES?

With that as background, we will move into the consideration of the role of language in cross-national and cross-cultural information flow. We will use Nicolas Ostler's *Empires of the word: A language history of the world* as our principal guide. During this part of the semester, we will touch upon cultural and language areas such as East and South Asia, as well as the Francophone and Lusophone countries. We will also consider the impact of "Globish."

HOW DO WE RELATE TO PLACE & SPACE?

Here we will consider nationality and nationalism. We will use Yi-Fu Tuan's *Space and place: The perspective of experience* as our principal guide. Continuing on from our previous topics, we will look at Africa, Latin America, and other American nations/cultures. As part of this, we will also consider immigration within and immigration from without.

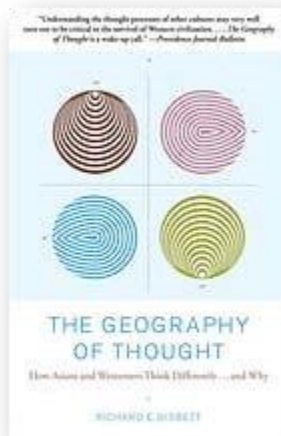
This will primarily be a reading, reflecting, lecture and discussion class. As will become very apparent, we all have backgrounds and knowledge that the rest of the group will benefit from. We will try to explore in class and online any relevant topic members of the group wish to pursue. Depending on other people's schedules, we may hold some classes outside of Manning Hall and we may well have some guest speakers.

READINGS

We will have readings to do prior to each class. The readings were selected to provide you a background to the topic to be discussed in each class, they are not a collection of facts to be memorized. Read them and reflect on them, but don't regard them as something you might have to repeat in an examination of some kind.

Be aware that the actual course of the class session may well deviate from the published schedule, and we may not spend a lot of time on the content of the assigned readings. However, the readings will still do you all good and should be done.

WE WILL HAVE THREE REQUIRED TEXTS FOR INLS758.

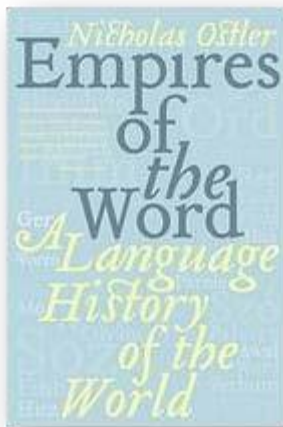


Nisbett, R. E. (2004). *The geography of thought: How Asians and Westerners think differently – and why*. New York: Free Press.

From the [catalog description](#):

*When psychologist Richard E. Nisbett showed an animated underwater scene to his American students, they zeroed in on a big fish swimming among smaller fish. Japanese observers instead commented on the background environment -- and the different "seeings" are a clue to profound cognitive differences between Westerners and East Asians. As Nisbett shows in *The Geography of Thought*, people think about -- and even see -- the world differently because of differing ecologies, social structures, philosophies, and educational systems that date back to ancient Greece and China. *The Geography of Thought* documents Professor Nisbett's groundbreaking research in cultural psychology, addressing questions such as: Why did*

*the ancient Chinese excel at algebra and arithmetic, but not geometry, the brilliant achievement of such Greeks as Euclid? Why do East Asians find it so difficult to disentangle an object from its surroundings? Why do Western infants learn nouns more rapidly than verbs, when it is the other way around in East Asia? At a moment in history when the need for cross-cultural understanding and collaboration have never been more important, *The Geography of Thought* offers both a map to that gulf and a blueprint for a bridge that might be able to span it. Content provided by Syndetic Solutions, Inc.*



Ostler, N. (2006). *Empires of the word: A language history of the world*. New York: Harper Perennial. From the [catalog description](#):

Head of the Foundation for Endangered Languages, Ostler draws on his extensive study and research, mostly into now dead languages, to trace the history of the world's major languages. Language is always linked to a particular time and place, he says, but at the same time it is a unbroken link to all people in all times, and has played a larger role in history than any prince or economy. First he considers early languages that became dominant in certain areas or by migration, then more recent ones that have spread throughout the world by colonialism. Annotation ©2004 Book News, Inc., Portland, OR (booknews.com)



Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. From the [catalog description](#):

In this book, geographer Yi-Fu Tuan considers the ways in which people feel and think about space and place. Place is security, he suggests, and space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other. Content provided by Syndetic Solutions, Inc.

There will be other readings as well, but all will be either electronically accessible or will be provided to you.

There will be no books placed on reserve, but there is a link to [an ever-expanding resource list](#) on each page of the class website. If

you are interested, you can find a copy via the links.

EVALUATION

The course grade will be based on class preparation, class participation and a final product

- 30% - preparation
- 30% - participation
- 40% - product

PREPARATION FOR EACH CLASS SESSION:

You will have readings for each session, starting with the second session. The readings will be made available online and you will find links to them on the class pages.

Do the readings to prepare yourselves for discussions in class and AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK, write a more-or-less single-page, double-spaced consideration of what you have read. There is no set format to what you write; it should just reflect your thoughts on the topic.

Post your consideration on the class blog at any time before the first session of the following week.

In conjunction with having done the readings and written a consideration of what you have read, plan to discuss what others have written by commenting on considerations postings made by your peers. There is no set format to what you write; it should just reflect your thoughts on the topic.

PARTICIPATION IN EACH CLASS SESSION:

We will consider the topic of the day in class by engaging in a free-form discussion. I will have a basic outline for the class which may include

- a review of what you were asked to think about in the readings
- perhaps some lecture notes
- perhaps a guest speaker
- perhaps a presentation to the class by one of you all
- and an idea of the day to think about

Your role in class will be to participate with questions, discussion, leadership, and curiosity. Discuss the topic of the day and/or topics of relevance that the daily topic caused you to think about.

We may also have outside experts to sit with us on occasion to discuss their areas of expertise.

Don't get too attached to the details of each class session as the dynamic of the session might take us in a new direction. Feel free to explore the topic in class.

FINAL PRODUCT:

There will be no final exam in this class, but there will be a final product due at the time the final exam would have been scheduled.

Your major product for this seminar will be a fuller exploration of your own interests. You will have a choice to make:

You may choose to create a review of 1-3 key books that would serve as a good, thorough introduction to an international or cultural area that you find interesting. Such a review should be about 5-10 pages long. I will provide you an example of what one might look like.

OR

If you want to stretch yourselves, you could create a draft outline of a book that you might write yourself. This outline would be composed of three things.

1. An introductory section that discusses the proposed book. This section could be the preface to the proposed book.
2. A fleshed-out table of contents, identifying the topics covered in each chapter of the book by use of sub-headings within each chapter.
3. An annotated bibliography of references that you would either use in the creation of said book, or that you think should serve as a listing of key documents readers of such a book should also read about the topic.

GRADING APPLYING THE GRADING SCHEMA TO THE EVALUATION COMPONENTS

PREPARATION		
Task	Condition	Standard
Considerations & comments	An excellent performance that showed real insight into the issue under consideration and a willingness to explore the concept beyond the bounds of the reading	H
Considerations & comments	A totally acceptable performance that reflected that one had read and thought about the topics in the weekly readings	P
Considerations & comments	A marginal performance that indicated that one had read the assigned readings	L

PARTICIPATION		
Task	Condition	Standard
Speaking up & doing some classroom presentations	A strong performance that showed interest in the topic and a willingness to share that interest with the group by offering additional information or insights (or that your consideration posting had attracted similar commentary from other students)	H
Engaging in discussion	A totally acceptable performance that reflected that one had thought about the topic (or that your consideration posting had attracted similar commentary from other students)	P
Remaining silent in class & in your blog comments	A marginal performance that indicated that one didn't have much to say about the topic	L

PRODUCT

Task	Condition	Standard
Draft book option	Clear excellence of insightful, illustrative, and reflective commentary on the topic, combined with thoughtful and well-researched resources - an effort that would make the proposed book an excellent reference for someone wishing to learn about another culture	H
Book review option	Entirely satisfactory selection of relevant books on the topic of your choice and an entirely satisfactory evaluation of them	P
Book review option	A marginal performance reflecting inadequate research and unimaginative evaluation of the selected resources	L

HONOR CODE

Faculty and students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill adhere to their Code of Student Conduct.

We can learn much from each other and we will do that. I expect each of you to help each other.

We'll discuss what we expect in terms of cooperative, collaborative, shared work and the honor code.

THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

HONOR CODE

It shall be the responsibility of every student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.

CAMPUS CODE

It shall be the further responsibility of every student to abide by the Campus Code; namely, to conduct oneself so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

I have a role to play as well, and I will fulfill these responsibilities.

WHAT IT MEANS TO US

THE SYSTEM RESTS ON SEVERAL CENTRAL TENETS:

- the university community, including faculty and students, share a commitment to the pursuit of truth, and the dissemination of knowledge to succeeding generations of citizens devoted to the high ideals of personal honor and respect for the rights of others
- these goals can only be achieved in a setting in which intellectual honesty and personal integrity are highly valued; other individuals are trusted, respected, and fairly treated; and the responsibility for articulating and maintaining high standards is widely shared
- both students and faculty must play active roles in fostering a culture in which honor is prized and acting to remedy violations of community norms relating to academic misconduct, injuries to members of the University community, and conduct that adversely affect University operations and resources

The principles of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship govern the performance of all academic work and student conduct at the University as they have during the long life of this institution

- your acceptance of enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in the Code of Student Conduct and a respect for the most significant Carolina tradition
- your reward is in the practice of these principles

YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS COURSE COMES WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT YOUR WORK WILL BE COMPLETED IN FULL OBSERVANCE OF THE HONOR CODE

- you are encouraged to work together with your fellow students and to share knowledge and learning
- however, academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable, because any breach in academic integrity, however small, strikes destructively at the University's life and work

What this faculty stands for

In support of the University's diversity goals and the mission of the School of Information and Library Science, SILS embraces diversity as an ethical and societal value.

We broadly define diversity to include race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation and physical and learning ability.

As an academic community committed to preparing our graduates to be leaders in an increasingly multicultural and global society we strive to:

- Ensure inclusive leadership, policies and practices;
- Integrate diversity into the curriculum and research;
- Foster a mutually respectful intellectual environment in which diverse opinions are valued;
- Recruit traditionally underrepresented groups of students, faculty and staff; and
- Participate in outreach to underserved groups in the State.

The statement represents a commitment of resources to the development and maintenance of an academic environment that is open, representative, reflective and committed to the concepts of equity and fairness.

What this means for this class

We will be attempting to look both within and without ourselves in this class. We hope to explore the diversity among us and around us, in the fullest, most positive manner.