

GS 1181 Breaking Ice and Building Bridges

Instructor: Ellada Gamreklidze, Ph.D.

Office: LIB 306H

Class meeting times and location: M/W 12 – 12:50 p.m. in LIB326

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 a.m. to noon and/or by appointment. If you want to schedule an appointment beyond office hours, please, email me at least a day in advance. If you prefer to have an online session, please email me, and we will schedule the time that is convenient for both of us.

E-mail: ellada.gamreklidze@angelo.edu

Course Objectives:

Angelo State University is a multicultural campus with over 200 students coming from over 20 countries, not counting faculty and staff. This course is designed to help you get to know them, not necessarily personally, but through learning about their cultures, traditions and lifestyles. For instance, what kind of food is authentic to what countries and what does it mean? What fashion is in style there and why? What is considered polite and what is considered rude? Broadening your horizons will help you become a more integral part of the Ram Fam and make your student life as well as future endeavors a more cosmopolitan experience.

With this in mind, the course objectives are:

To develop knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures.

To acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team.

To learn how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore a topic in depth.

To gain a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories).

Now, how are we going to accomplish this?

Course Structure

This is an introductory course that will involve reading, discussion, learning about other cultures, working in groups with students from a foreign country, research and some writing.

Responsibilities

We all have responsibilities and have to be active contributors and proactive inquisitors. My responsibility is to supply you with all the necessary knowledge, information and pedagogical support. Yours, on the other hand, is to attend the class regularly, listen carefully, participate actively, study diligently and complete your work according to instructions and on time. I will not make content accommodations for this course, so you need to be open-minded and respectful to diverse viewpoints and your peers.

Some more expectations

Because you are preparing to be professionals, you are also expected to demonstrate professional conduct. For example, professionals must timely, clearly and cordially communicate with others (the instructor, the classmates and other relevant individuals), complete assignments by the deadline, meet their obligations and effectively manage their time.

Your work does not end in class. I expect you to have read the assigned (if any) material prior to the respective class session and complete your take-home assignments and practice. As a rule, for each hour you are in class, you should plan to spend at least two hours on preparing for the next class and completing assignments.

I expect and encourage you to ask questions and let me know right away if you are having problems, do not understand something, are overwhelmed or just want to talk. I am always there to talk/listen/help. My goal is your success. See me after class, during the office hours or make an appointment. We will discuss your issue and think of a solution. I check and answer my emails from the time I wake up until the time I go to bed (with the exception of the times when I eat, drive, am in a meeting or in a store).

Email me. If I know the answer, I will email back right away. If I don't know the answer, I will email as soon as I do know it. Do not wait until it is too late to do something about anything (examples include but are not limited to waiting a day or several days to email me after you missed an assignment deadline or had technical issues either uploading or having access to an assignment; not getting back to me after I email you that we need to meet to discuss your current situation and find a solution; waiting until all the deadlines pass to meet with me; and other similar situations).

Keeping up with ALL the deadlines (including the ones for assignment makeup opportunities) is YOUR responsibility. The syllabus informs you about everything and provides instructions on when and how; your job will be to follow, accordingly. I will NOT be reminding you about the deadlines and the opportunities. This is why it is ESSENTIAL that you read the syllabus and all other instructions closely and carefully and check Blackboard regularly (several times a day). Having said that, I am ALWAYS open and available to answer any questions about both the opportunities and the instructions and find solutions (if possible) to your situation

Attendance:

As established by the university, this is a face-to-face class. It is in your best interest to attend each session. Attending the class, if you are not paying attention, engaging in discussions and completing assignments, however, is not going to earn you much knowledge.

Your attendance is graded. By default, at the beginning of the summer session, each of you has four extra credit points for attendance on top of your overall grade. Every time you are absent without excuse, you will lose one of these extra credit points. After you run out of extra points (four unexcused absences), every unexcused absence will result in a five-point deduction from your grade for this course.

If you are more than 10 minutes late to class or leave without warning before it is over, it will count as an unexcused absence. If you think you will be late for more than 10 minutes or have to leave early, you need to talk to me in advance. Depending on the reason, I will or will not excuse you.

If you are sick (see the relevant policy), or there is another excused reason listed in the University policy <https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/community-policies/class-absences.php>, you will not lose any points, but you are responsible for TIMELY informing me of your absence (based on the above policy), completing the assignments (if any are due at that time), catching up on the missed material, making up practice, and bringing yourself up to date with the class progress.

Having said that, I am here to help and guide you in this process. Catching up or keeping up can be overwhelming. You don't need to go through this alone. Let me know, ask for help, email me if you are in a tough spot. I am here for you. Please, also check the following webpage for the circumstance-specific university policies: <https://www.angelo.edu/covid-19/>

Please remember, I do not allow any makeup work unless you had an excused absence. For the deadline extensions connected with the excused absences, please, see/email me either prior to the date when (and if) you know you will be absent or immediately after you are back. There will be no extensions granted if you haven't requested one within seven days from the first day you are back.

The above policy is in place to help us all stay on track and successfully complete this course. We, however, are all facing challenging times, and the unfortunate reality is that individual circumstances can change in a day. I am here to see that your specific situation is accommodated as best as possible and you do not fall behind. If at any point during the semester you are unable to attend the class or will find yourself in a position where you cannot be "present" or complete other course requirements for some time, please, do let me know ASAP. I will do everything possible to help you and find a solution to your situation that will allow you to come out of it with best possible result.

Course Requirements

Assigned Readings

Although writing-intensive, this course does involve some reading. I will assign what to read as we go. You must complete the assigned reading before the day it is listed on the course schedule; therefore, ALWAYS check Blackboard.

Information Literacy Quizzes - 60 points

You will learn the importance of finding scholarly information and the ways you can access it using the Angelo State University library databases. You will review several videos and complete short quizzes.

Interview a Professor – 100 points

You will find and contact one ASU professor (from any department) who is from a country different from yours and interview them about their culture. You can be flexible in terms of what questions you ask, but you need to focus on one of the course topics (e.g., respect, food, etc.). You will write a summary of your interview based on the instructions I will provide for this assignment.

Group Project – 240 points

You will be working in groups with the students from Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya National

University, helping them with the project they have to complete for their course. Your joint task will be to select and watch a movie focused on a particular social issue (e.g., domestic violence, human rights, etc.) and research this issue through the joint American (and/or other)-Ukrainian perspective. As groups, you will answer a set of questions about the selected issue from the standpoint of your respective cultures. You will help Ukrainian students with the research specific to your country and learn about the state of these issues in Ukraine. You will participate in the discussions and the presentations of the project at the end of this course.

Reflections – 100 points

You will write a short reflection on your experience working with your peers from Ukraine.

Why are we doing this?

To develop knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures.

To acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team.

To learn how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore a topic in depth.

To gain a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories).

I will distribute detailed instructions for each assignment on Blackboard.

Unless I tell you otherwise, ALL completed assignments need to be uploaded on Blackboard. I will NOT accept assignments over the email. If you experienced technical difficulties and thus failed to upload your assignment, you need to let me know right when it happened. You also need to call the eLearning Center as soon as you can after the problem occurred and ask for the proof of your upload attempt. Send it to me, and I will accept your assignment for full credit.

My general advice is to try to upload a file (even if your assignment is not yet complete) before the eLearning closes on the day when your assignment is due. You will have unlimited upload attempts until the deadline, so your new file will just override the one already uploaded. If you have problems during your trial upload, you will be able to call eLearning and get help before the deadline hits and it is too late to do anything about it.

Opportunities:

Throughout the semester, you will have an opportunity to “revise and resubmit” one take-home assignment of your choice. You will have a week from the day you let me know you want to revise an assignment. The letting me know should take place via email and receive a clear “go ahead” from me in response. I will stop accepting requests for “revise and resubmit” at noon on December 6, 2021.

You may have some extra credit opportunities as well. There may be a few or one that will come as we go. One is discussed in one of the following sections.

There is no midterm and no final.

Some Important Policies (you do want to read them!):

Factual and spelling errors

You are expected to get your facts straight and spell the names correctly. Each factual mistake in your assignments will lower your grade for any given assignment by 20 percent. You will have one excused misspelling of a proper name (by excused, I mean it will only take your grade for a given assignment down 20 percent). After that, you will receive a zero if you spell any proper name incorrectly.

Cell phone and laptop use policy

Cell phones and laptops are not allowed at any time for any reason during class (with the exception of work during the in-class practice and if I say you need to use them). If necessary for an emergency, please slip out of the classroom to make or take a call. If you consistently violate this policy (I will be documenting), there will be no warnings, just a five-point reduction from your overall grade for this course at the end of the semester.

Tweeting, videotaping, audio recording, and more

Not allowed during class are the following: tweeting, blogging, vlogging, Snapchatting, Facebooking, Instagramming, video or audio recording, and/or anything remotely similar or dissimilar. Exceptions apply when any of the above is part of the coursework, and you receive instructions from me to do it. Violators, please, see the policy and the penalty above.

Class content

No recording (audio or video) of class content and distribution of those recordings or class notes is allowed without my permission. This is intellectual property.

Questions and/or concerns about a grade

I will be happy to answer questions about how you are doing in this course. That said, if you have any questions or concerns about a specific grade, contact me in person no earlier than 24 hours and no later than one week after receiving a grade and feedback. You must bring the assignment, due date, date it was turned in and the specific issue that warrants consideration.

Extra credit!

If more than 85% of students complete the student evaluation for this course, I will reward the entire class with a 1-point increase in the individual total grade. For example: if your overall grade averages out to an 89 (a B) and 85% of the whole class fills out the evaluation I award 1 point to your average, giving you a 90 and an A!

ASU Policies:

Student Disability Services

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.

The Office of Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting:

Dr. Dallas A. Swafford

Director of Student Disability Services 325-942-2047

dallas.swafford@angelo.edu

Houston Harte University Center

Title IX at Angelo State University

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. This is done in order to connect students with resources and options in addressing the allegations reported. As a student, you are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU's Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator. You may do so by contacting:

Michelle Boone, J.D.

Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator

Mayer Administration Building, Room 210

325-942-2022

michelle.boone@angelo.edu

You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the *University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173* or the *ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345*.

The Office of Title IX Compliance also provides accommodations related to pregnancy (such as communicating with your professors regarding medically necessary absences, modifications required because of pregnancy, etc.). If you are pregnant and need assistance or accommodations, please contact the Office of Title IX Compliance utilizing the information above.

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Days

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. See ASU Operating Policy 10.19 Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Day for more information.

Incomplete Grade Policy

It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 [Grading Procedures](#) for more information.

Student Conduct Policies

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all work. Any student found guilty of any form of dishonesty in academic work is subject of disciplinary action and possible expulsion from ASU.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU's [Academic Integrity policy](#) in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own. Plagiarism is literary theft.

In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list.

Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality via Turnitin. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the [ASU Writing Center](#).

Copyright Policy

Students officially enrolled in this course should make only one printed copy of the given articles and/or chapters. You are expressly prohibited from distributing or reproducing any portion of course readings in printed or electronic form without written permission from the copyright holders or publishers.

General Policies Related to This Course

All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in the syllabus and these documents:

[Angelo State University Student Handbook](#)

[Angelo State University Catalog](#)

Class Schedule (subject to adjustment according to circumstances)

Monday, August 23	<i>Course introduction; getting to know each other.</i>
Wednesday, August 25	Various Cultures and Their Differences
Monday, August 30	Say “Hi”
Wednesday, September 1	Social Issues Introduction to the Group Project (instructions distributed)
Monday, September 6	No class. Labor Day Holiday
Wednesday, September 8	Social Issues
Monday, September 13	Food
Wednesday, September 15	Food
Monday, September 20	Fashion Interview a Professor Instructions distributed
Wednesday, September 22	Fashion
Monday, September 27	Music Interview a Professor Summaries are due
Wednesday, September 29	Music Reflections instructions distributed
Monday, October 4	Etiquette
Wednesday, October 6	Etiquette Reflections are due
Monday, October 11	Grieving Group Project is due
Wednesday, October 13	Grieving Group Project Presentations

Grade Distribution:

Class total: 500 points

Information Literacy Quizzes – 60 points

Interview a Professor – 100 points

Group Project – 240 points

Reflections – 100 points