Course: Multilingualism and Intercultural Communication

Presenters: Prof. Christine Anthonissen (co-ordinator)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
The three main themes that will be covered during the course are:

- **Intercultural Communication as a field of academic reflection**: This theme will cover the historical background, and the reasons for scholarly and popular interest in the phenomenon of intercultural communication. It will also give definitions and general features as well as the main research themes currently covered in Intercultural Communication. In the course of introducing this theme, key concept in the field, such as ‘language’, ‘multilingualism’, ‘culture’, ‘communication’, ‘miscommunication’, ‘misunderstanding’, etc. will be introduced.

- **Theoretical approaches to the study of Intercultural Communication phenomena and methods of research in Intercultural Communication**: This theme will introduce a number of theoretical approaches and the associated methodologies within the field. These will include the contrastive approach, the interlanguage approach; the interactive-intercultural approach; pragmatic approaches; sociolinguistic approaches; ethnographic approaches, (critical) discourse analysis; linguistic analysis (e.g. structural features of code-switching; pragmatic features such as irony and truism).

- **Intercultural Communication in social interaction**: Here two broad themes will be covered, namely (i) Intercultural Communication which involves minority language groups, and (ii) Intercultural Communication in the workplace.
  This theme will be introduced by means of specific case studies which illustrate communicative features that mark multilingual contexts, as well as the linguistic effects of migration related to, for example,
  - global economic mobility
  - war and other forms of violence
  - provision of public health care in multilingual facilities
  - provision of educational opportunities to minority language groups.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES:

- To provide a comprehensive overview of Intercultural Communication as a contemporary field of linguistic interest;
- To introduce theoretical and methodological approaches to studying currently interesting aspects of multilingualism and intercultural communication;
- To raise awareness of the difference between popular (often over-generalised) conceptions of intercultural difference and real experiences of success and failure in what is described as “intercultural communication”;
- To encourage engagement with selected texts which count as core readings in the field of Intercultural Communication;
- To allow critical reflection on linguistic practices in various multilingual contexts, such as the workplace or public state facilities, in which intercultural communication is the only means of verbal interaction.

Presentation:
The course will take the form of lectures as well as participant presentations and discussion of texts. Social and linguistic practices highlighted in the course will be investigated and critically discussed with a view to improving understanding of current, evolving multiculturalism and suggestions for improved quality of services in selected contexts.
Evaluation:
Course evaluation will be based on:
- Class participation & presentation: 20%
- An open-book class test: 30%
- A written assignment: 50%

Programme outline:
We will meet for three sessions daily over the course of five days.

**Day 1:**
- Morning b: Definitions and key concepts in Intercultural Communication.
- Afternoon: Practical session: discussion of set readings, introduction of areas of application: division of topics for case study presentations on day 4 and 5.

**Day 2:**
- Morning a: Theme 2. Theoretical approaches to studying Intercultural Communication (I)
- Morning b: Theoretical approaches to studying Intercultural Communication (II)
- Afternoon: Practical session: discussion of set readings, applicability of various approaches in given contexts and for particular kinds of questions.

**Day 3:**
- Morning a: Theme 2. Methodology: introduction of suitable methods related to particular theories and research questions (I)
- Morning b: Methodology: introduction of suitable methods related to particular theories and research questions (II)

**Day 4:**
- Morning a: Theme 3. Case Study I: Global economic mobility – migration of the elite.
- Morning b: Case Study II: Migration related to war, internal strife, persecution.
- Afternoon: Workshop: Analysis of language biographies – application of Theme 2 content.

**Day 5:**
- Morning a: Theme 3. Case Study III: Multilingualism and intercultural communication in health care.
- Morning b: Case Study IV: Multilingualism and intercultural communication in education.
- Afternoon: Open-book class test.