Cross-Cultural Dispute Resolution
Hamline University School of Law
Dispute Resolution Institute
Sukhsimranjit Singh, Adv., LL.M. (Dispute Resolution)
January 12-13, 2008
Ssingh01@hamline.edu

Course Syllabus

January 12 & 13 9:00 am- 4:30 pm 1 law school credit
Room: 106 (Conference Room, Law/Graduate Building)

Course Description

As globalization continues to transform our world, effective cross-cultural dispute resolution is a necessity. However, cross-cultural relationships are often characterized by uncertainty and miscommunication. To succeed in the face of profound difference, parties in conflict must work especially hard to effectively communicate and seek understanding. This course examines how obvious and not-so-obvious cultural difference impacts resolution of inter-personal and inter-state (international) disputes. Specifically, the course will bring an international perspective to understanding the impact of culture in the most commonly used international and domestic dispute resolution processes (negotiation, mediation and arbitration).

The course will follow a three-step approach to know and understand the influence of culture on decision-making, including: awareness and knowledge of one's own culture; knowledge and understanding of another party's culture; and knowledge and impact of either on the desired goal/outcome of the dispute. This course will help students be more culturally aware and better equipped for effective participation in dispute resolution processes that increasingly involve different languages, customs, values, nationalities, and states of origin.

Course Reading Materials:

Course Textbook
Cross-Cultural Negotiation and Dispute Resolution: Reading and Cases, edited by Grant R. Ackerman

Supplemental Reader


**Class Contents and Schedule:**

**Saturday, January 12, 2008**
9:00 am – 4:30 pm

**Reading Assignment**
Course Textbook, pp. 1-64
Supplemental Reader, pp. 1-45

MORNING SESSION:
Course Overview and Goals
Culture: Definitions and Perspectives
“World view”: Interaction of Cultures
Context, Time, and Attribution Theory
Negotiation Exercise

AFTERNOON SESSION:
Culture and Values
Cultural Dimensions: Universalism/particularism
Perceptions and Actions
Culture and Emotions
Cross-cultural Rapport

**Sunday, January 13, 2008**
9:00 am – 4:30 pm

**Reading Assignment**
Course Textbook, pp. 65-154
Supplemental Reader, pp. 46-110

MORNING SESSION:
Cultural Dimensions: Culture and Apology
Culture and Organizations
Culture and Dispute Resolution
Preparation (Stereotyping v. Awareness)
Cross-cultural Exercise
AFTERNOON SESSION:
Cross-cultural Mediation
International Negotiations (inter-Government)
Communication Techniques
Acquiring Skills and Training
Cultural Goal/outcome of a dispute and Role Play

GRADING:

Your grade will be based on the quality of the final paper described below. While class participation will not be specifically graded, I reserve the right to adjust your final grade up to ½ letter grade higher if your classroom participation (including class discussion, role plays and exercises) is consistently outstanding.

The final paper should be 8-10 typewritten (12-point), double-spaced pages. You may choose to write on either of the following topics:

**Topic One -- Choose a cross-cultural interaction/negotiation that you were involved in:**

1) Identify at least three cultural differences present in the interaction/negotiation. Be specific. Use concrete examples.

2) Analyze the identified differences (apply lessons learned from course readings, classroom interactions, and the model for cross-cultural understanding presented).

3) Discuss what you would do differently in the interaction/negotiation having now completed this course. Be specific. Apply the principles learned to the specific factual setting you describe.

**Or**

**Topic Two -- Choose a specific cross-cultural interaction/negotiation (domestic or international) that you were NOT involved in:**

1) Identify at least three cultural differences present in the interaction/negotiation. Be specific. Use concrete examples.

2) Analyze the identified differences (apply lessons learned from course readings, classroom interactions, and the model for cross-cultural understanding presented).
3) Discuss what the parties should do differently in the interaction/negotiation (based on what you have learned in this course). Be specific. Apply the principles learned to the specific factual setting you describe.

Your final paper is due in the Law School Registrar’s office by 4:30 pm, on Monday, January 28, 2008. Please keep a copy of your paper and obtain a time-stamped receipt. Students not residing in the Twin Cities may mail their paper to Debra Berghoff, Dispute Resolution Institute, 1536 Hewitt Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104. Submissions must be sent via two-day mail and postmarked no later than Monday, January 28, 2008. I suggest you obtain a receipt from the post office in case you need to verify that the paper was mailed on time. Only degree-seeking students must complete the written assignment. Such students should submit their paper anonymously, using their exam number. Non-degree seeking students have the option to submit for comments and feedback.