

# Sample Cultural Competence Assignments

College of the Canyons Curriculum Committee – Spring 2025

## Overview:

- By Fall 2024, the content within a given COR (Course Outline of Record) will be reviewed according to the [Curriculum Committee’s Cultural Competence Checklist](#). That said, including a sample assignment or sample discussion board prompt which demonstrates Cultural Competence may be one of the simplest ways to begin such a journey, especially as no faculty teaching the course is required to utilize any of the sample assignments or discussion board prompts listed in a COR.
- Below are examples of how a Cultural Competence framework could be infused into a given sample assignment or discussion board which can then be listed in a COR, including some examples of relatively simple changes, some examples of assignments already including such elements, and examples of perhaps improving such work.
- Our overall goal here is to model how Cultural Competence can be included in CORs – especially where it may not seem obvious how to do so – while also respecting the academic freedom of our fellow faculty.

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## Section I: “Before and After” Suggestions for including a Cultural Competence framework

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### 1. ID 102: Applied Color for Designers

#### Original Sample Assignment:

Marketing report team collaboration and cooperation (performance based for real-world experience):

1. Write a report on a piece of art from the Norton Simon Museum and describe the artist’s approach to color, color harmonies, and choices of color as they relate to the emotional aspect of the art piece.
2. Document the psychological impact colors have on a fine food restaurant, fast food restaurant, place of worship, and a library. Explain, in writing, how the colors impact the customers.

#### Suggestions to incorporate Cultural Competence:

Marketing report team collaboration and cooperation (performance based for real-world experience):

1. Write a report on a piece of art from the Norton Simon Museum and describe the artist’s approach to color, color harmonies, and choices of color as they relate to the emotional aspect of the art piece.
2. Document the psychological impact colors have on a fine food restaurant, fast food restaurant, place of worship, and a library. Explain, in writing, how the colors impact the customers.
3. Select one of the organizations from #2 and explore whether the psychological impact of the colors you wrote about is different in another culture/society of your choice.

#### Alternative approach incorporating Cultural Competence: Create a New Assignment

Prepare a slideshow comparing and contrasting the impact of colors across two (or more) different cultures. Projects explored must include minimum (2) residential projects and (2) commercial projects.

### 2. NC WELD.002: Welding Lab

#### Original Sample Assignment:

Skills Demonstration: Weld various joints in the flat, horizontal, vertical, and overhead positions.

#### Suggestions to incorporate Cultural Competence:

Skills Demonstration: For this project, students will need to weld various joints in the flat, horizontal, vertical and overhead positions to create a Classic Pull Lift, a device that enables people to access a pool (those in a wheelchair or require assistance getting into a pool).

### **3. FIRE TECH 103: Fire Protection Systems**

#### **Original Sample Assignment:**

Conduct research, and write a minimum 4-page report analyzing the design, installation, and effectiveness of various "fire protection systems" installed in a local business.

#### **Suggestions to incorporate Cultural Competence:**

Conduct research, and write a minimum 4-page report analyzing the design, installation, and effectiveness of various "fire protection systems" which you think should be installed in Kisho, a local Teppanyaki restaurant located in a Valencia shopping center next to a gas station.

### **4. NC ESL 20: Intermediate Conversational Skills for Everyday Needs**

#### **Original Sample Assignment:**

You want to look your best for your best friend's wedding. Ask the receptionist at the hair salon for his or her recommendations. Include questions and answers about prices, services, and preferences from both the client and receptionist. Before ending the phone call, confirm that the information has been accurately conveyed and understood.

#### **Suggestions to incorporate Cultural Competence:**

You want to take your best friend out to dinner to acknowledge their job promotion. With another student role playing as the receptionist of the restaurant, explain the reason for the reservation, ask for food recommendations and prices, and be sure to identify any food allergies or accommodations you or your guest may need. Before ending the phone call, confirm that the reservation and accommodations have been accurately conveyed and understood.

### **5. NURSING 050: Nurse Assistant Training**

#### **Sample Assignment:**

Your patient, Catherine, has very low-level needs when she is not confused. At these times, the one thing she really needs help with is arthritis. However, when she is confused, she forgets when to eat and sometimes forgets that she has eaten so she will need monitoring when eating rather than assistance. Knowing Catherine's level of need, develop a week's plan of care for your patient, and identify what services your patient will need – physically and socially.

#### **Suggestions to incorporate Cultural Competence:**

Your patient, Metzli, has very low-level needs when she is not confused. She needs help sitting up in the bed and cannot use the remote control as her fingers are very badly damaged from arthritis, and as such will need assistance getting out of bed. She cannot manage small buttons when dressing and most days she just wears t-shirts, but on Sundays she wishes to wear a blouse going to mass and will need assistance with that. Metzli does not wear dentures and is on a chopped diet for now; she can manage to use cutlery but prefers to use a spoon. When she is confused, she forgets when to eat and sometimes forgets that she has eaten so she will need monitoring when eating rather than assistance. Knowing Metzli's level of need, develop a week's plan of care for your patient, and identify what services your patient will need – physically, socially, culturally, and spiritually.

### **1. ID 207: Residential Design**

#### **Signature Assignment:**

Student groups will design a remodel for a single-family residence that will be home to a deaf family. Students will research and analyze the DeafSpace principles as developed by architect Hansel Bauman and incorporate them into a residential project. The student's design synthesis will center around the Deaf experience, and will explore space & proximity, sensory reach, mobility & proximity, light & color, and acoustics. Final presentation will be an oral presentation/portfolio that will include the student's proposed design, including their design process.

### **2. ID 114: Architecture and Interiors History: Antiquity – Classical Revival**

#### **Other Assignment:**

Choose three indigenous buildings in at least three different regions that are expressions of status. Prepare a slide presentation that explains what status the buildings represent, and how this connects into the culture of each society. Also compare & contrast the design elements of the buildings, do each handle that expression similarly or differently? You may include pictures for illustrative purposes. Be sure to cite your sources.

### **3. ID 115: Architecture and Interiors History: Classical Revival – Post Modern**

#### **Other Assignment:**

Choose two architects or designers from two different non-western regions. Prepare a slide presentation that explains how they might use the vernacular of their region in their represented work. Compare & contrast the design elements between the projects, also discuss if their designs are expressions of post-colonialism or do they embrace that past? You should include pictures for illustrative purposes, and must cite your sources.

### **4. BUSINESS 126: Managing Diversity in the Workplace**

#### **Sample Case Study:**

Instructions: The following is a business case scenario with multiple issues. Read the case and respond by discussing all major business diversity issues and propose business strategies (case solutions) based

on those issues. Elaborate in your response as it will require more than stating the issues and definitions. It will require your proposed solution.

Case: Myron Murphy runs Murphy's Groceries and Drugs (Murphy's). Murphy's is a fairly large grocery/drug store and employs about 50 people (full and part-time combined). Most employees live within five miles of the store in a very diverse area of the city. Recently, employees were very divided on discussions about the law which made same-sex marriages legal in the state. Discussions have become even more heated since passage of the law. Arguments between the sides for and against have teetered on the brink of violence in the employee break room. Vicious messages have been left by both sides in lockers belonging to employees on the other side. Myron's position is that the politics and personal opinions of his employees is none of his business. He's never hosted diversity training claiming that all people need to remember is to treat everybody the same. His reaction in each case of employee disruption brought to his attention has been "Settle it amongst yourselves. If you don't—you're outta here!" Previous issues regarding scheduling and religious holidays, immigration, and affirmative action have also arisen and were handled in a similar manner. Employee morale is very low. Angry and frustrated cashiers are snapping at customers, clerks can't wait until it's time to go home, and even managers have begun looking for employment opportunities elsewhere.

Myron noticed a slight dip in his sales and immediately put together a customer survey. The results were not what he wanted to hear. Most of his customers rate the staff as unhelpful and much less courteous than six months prior. When asked whether they would shop at another store if it opened up within the same proximity to their home almost a third of the customers said yes singling out customer service as the issue.

Myron has come to you for assistance. As his favorite cousin who doesn't benefit financially from his business at all, please make very frank recommendations regarding what he should do to resolve the above. Be specific in your recommendations. Also, explain to him what could happen if he does not follow your recommendations.

## **5. CLS 202: Clinical Hematology, Hemostasis, and Body Fluids**

### **Sample Case Study:**

John is a 4-year-old boy who frequently complains of weakness, fatigue and dyspnea. The family moved to the United States from Greece before the child's birth. Both parents experienced fatigue from time to time but never consulted a physician. Consider the types of anemia most often found at this age and laboratory tests that could help establish a diagnosis. What is the significance, if any, of knowing the parent's background and medical history?

Below are the CBC and differential results for John:

CBC		Differential	
WBC:	11.4x 10 <sup>9</sup> /L	Segmented neutrophils:	55%
RBC:	1.7x10 <sup>12</sup> /L	Bands:	1%
Hemoglobin:	8.3 g/dL	Lymphocytes:	36%
Hct:	0.24 L/L	Monocytes:	7%
MCVC:	69 fL	Eosinophils:	1%
MCH:	21 pg	Moderate poikilocytosis, polychromasia, and target cells; few teardrop cells	
MCHC:	29.2 g/dL		
Platelets:	172x10 <sup>9</sup> /L		

Based on the indices, classify the anemia morphologically.

Name the dominant poikilocyte observed in this peripheral blood smear.

Name three disorders that frequently present with the same poikilocyte that dominates this peripheral smear.

List two additional lab tests that would help to confirm the diagnosis and predict the results of each.

## 6. ENGLISH 251: British Literature II

### Sample Discussion Board prompt:

In Charlotte Brontë's Victorian novel *Jane Eyre*, Rochester's wife, Bertha, directs her violence only at men, specifically Rochester and her brother. While Bertha was for many years considered "the madwoman in the attic," her character is often currently considered more sympathetically. Now that you know Bertha's story, do you believe her violence against men is justified? Does it seem like an attempt to protect herself from those she perceives as perpetrators? Does she seem to be revolting against patriarchal and/or colonizing violence? Or is she only adding more violence and turmoil to a problematic situation? Once you have posted your analysis, post two responses to your peers within 48 hours.

## 7. THEATRE 220: Theatre History I

### Sample Discussion Board prompt:

#### Introduction

For most of this semester, we have looked at male playwrights who were well connected to the powerful in society. Western plays historically were sponsored by wealthy men, the government, or the church. There were strict rules about who was allowed to put on a play, who was allowed to be in it, and/or what it was allowed to be about. During the English Restoration in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century, this starts to change. Plays in this period are being written by and for more diverse

audiences. Women are allowed to openly be playwrights and performers throughout the Western world. Many of the new genres feature characters that are members of the growing middle class. Theatre is considering the tastes, values and desired stories of more of society.

### **Initial Prompt**

As we compare traditional theater to popular entertainment today, we likewise often do not have an equal representation of groups creating the content. For example in 2021, only 21.8% of top grossing films had female directors, and only 30.2% were directors of color. Of those same films, only 33% had female writers and 32% had writers of color (statistics from this article from [Deadline](#).)

How would a shift in who is creating the stories and who the stories are created for change the story? As you consider this question in relation to movies now and plays during the Restoration, for your initial post please write 4-6 college level sentences that answer some of these questions about Restoration Theater:

- Does the shift in who is creating theatre and who the plays are created for change the plays? How?
- If you were an audience member of the period, what would you think of the change & why? (It may help to define how you think you would be perceived in this era.)
- If you were a member of the royalty, or wealthy elite, how do you think you would react to the changes in the plays? Why?

### **Response Prompt**

After reading your classmate's responses, please select at least two to respond to. (One may be a response to someone who responded to you.) Write 4-6 college level sentences that respond these points:

- Are there other ways these new voices are changing the stories?
- Would all members of an identified groups have the same opinion about the changes? What other opinions might exist? Why?
- Do the lowest of classes see themselves in the plays and on the stages?

*NOTE: You must post your response before you can see anyone else's response.*

- **Initial post: Sunday at 11:59 PM**
- **Response Post due: Wednesday at 8:00 AM**

## **8. GEOLOGY 100: Introduction to Physical Geology**

**Sample Discussion Board prompt:**

**For This Discussion, You Will:**

1. Select a notable woman or person of color in the field of geology and conduct in-depth research on their contributions. Discuss the challenges they faced, the significance of their

work, and how their contributions have shaped the field of geology. This should be at least two college level paragraphs (250 words in length).

2. Lastly, you will read through the classes posts and pick your favorite two posts, and reply to their posts why you picked theirs. Your responses should be at least one paragraph each in length. When you reference the rubric, note that you can earn extra credit on discussion boards in this class.

Need some suggestions? Here is a short list of scientists that you may choose from, or to inspire you to dig a little deeper to find someone that we can add to the list!

- Marie Tharp-Geologist and Cartographer
- Marie Curie -Geochronology
- Alice B. Gould- Paleontologist
- David Suzuki- Environmentalist

### **Rubric | Submission, Feedback, and Grading**

Discussions are an important tool for the interaction and development of a learning community. Your timely participation is essential. Please plan to submit your initial reply by Friday, and reply to at least two of your peers by Sunday. Any discussion marked late by Canvas is subject to a point reduction. Once the discussion is locked, no late work will be accepted.

The responses you will write for your peer's posts are what make this a discussion, so in your responses, you might:

- Agree or disagree with their comment and explain why. (Your why is the important part.)  
NOTE: It's OK to disagree with someone; just be sure to acknowledge your disagreement in a mature and respectful way.
- Offer a gentle suggestion or ask a clarifying question about their response.
- Point out how their response is connected to something in the learning material.
- Make a new, related comment that expands on their response.
- Try to answer their questions! Bring in external links and ideas to the conversation.



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### Section III. Sample Assignments: Can We Do Better?

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Sometimes it can be as helpful to have an example as to how we can improve on what we are currently doing when we try to incorporate a Cultural Competence framework into our assignments:

- A. The following is an exaggerated example of an incomplete way to include Cultural Competence into an assignment. (To be clear, this is *not* based on anything we have read from any department at CoC. It is completely fictional but hopefully will be useful):

*Maria threw a tortilla from a 30 foot building on the Day of the Dead. Calculate how long it would take for the tortilla to hit the ground.*

**Unpacking this example:** While it is great to consider how we may study and include elements from other cultures into our assignments, the overall effect of adding “Maria,” “tortilla,” and “Day of the Dead” to the sample problem here does not appear to offer an authentic understanding of another culture. Rather, in this example, it seems like simplistic stereotypes of Hispanic culture have been combined in a manner which seems non-sensical and thus do not allow students a way to feel seen via this example nor to learn about another culture.

- B. John Thomason's June 2022 Grist article "[Olúfemi O. Táíwò's theory of everything: One of America's most prominent philosophers argues that climate change calls us to rethink world history](#)" includes the following textbook example about a man from Bangladesh:

*The textbook offered as an example a man in Bangladesh who worked as a taxi driver, tailor, and an array of other odd jobs.*

*“The book was like: Why is this person poor?” Táíwò said to me. “I expected an answer that would have to do with anything about Bangladesh. And the answer was like: ‘This guy doesn’t understand the principles of specialization and trade.’”*

*“Their assumptions seemed to background stuff that I thought should be foregrounded,” he [remembered](#) of those courses. “I just figured philosophy was the place you went to think about background assumptions.”*

**Unpacking this example:** If we take a standard problem for a given academic discipline (here, Economics), and then we just place that problem in another culture without taking the time to understand the complex layers of socio-political history and/or values and principles of that culture, we can end up erasing – albeit often unintentionally – many other important factors which are likely present and critical when such a problem is considered within that new cultural context. In other words, stating that a Bangladeshi man is simply poor because he has multiple jobs and so “doesn’t understand the principles of specialization and trade” means that this textbook applied a Western framework of Economics to a man whose very existence – due to forces like Colonialism but perhaps

also factors like regional politics and religious tensions – is likely multi-faceted in ways that this Western Economics framework doesn't know how to consider.

- C. A math problem involving boats and, eventually, trains can be helpful in demonstrating how bringing diverse examples to life and involving expertise from various disciplines can help us continually improve our Cultural Competence.

**Original Math Problem:**

Two boats leave the same port at noon. One is headed at a bearing of N 32E, traveling at 8 mph. The other is traveling at 10 mph at a bearing of S 43E. How far apart are they at 3PM?

**Suggestions to incorporate Cultural Competence?**

Two sampan fishing boats leave the same port of Hue, Vietnam at noon. One is heading at a bearing of N32E towards Hong Kong, China at 8 kph, and the other is heading at a bearing of S45E towards Manila, Philippines at 10 kph. How far apart are they at 3 PM?

**Further Suggestions to incorporate Cultural Competence?**

Two trains, A and B, leave the Casa Del Desierto Amtrak station in Barstow California. They depart at the same time, traveling north and east. Train A travels at 60 miles per hour, and Train B travels at 80 miles per hour. What is the distance between the two trains after 3.5 hours?

**Unpacking this example:** The original math problem was very interesting in that it offers students bearings and speeds and asks students to calculate distances after 3 hours of travel. When a Geography professor looked up the bearings and tried to locate this in our physical world, they landed on the port of Hue, Vietnam as an enticing possibility, which then led to other destinations those boats could be heading towards. Those details allowed additional aspects of the math problem to come to life, such as perhaps what kind of boat could be used and whether mph (miles per hour) or kph (kilometers per hour) would be most appropriate.

However, when additional professors looked at the second version of the math problem, additional “real life” considerations were raised, such as the potentially fraught politics of the waterways in that region as well as the fact that the Earth isn't a perfect spherical shape, and so it would be very difficult to calculate distance unless the boats traveled just North and South away from each other. This led to a suggestion to switch the boat problem to a train problem which could be set almost anywhere in the world, such as Barstow, CA.

Perhaps much can be taken from these three examples in this final section, but hopefully - as we embark on our Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Cultural Competence journeys - one of those lessons can be that there is much for all of us to learn, and that that is natural. There is a Maya Angelou quote often referenced in this work: “I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better,” and we hope this insight helps to inform your journey. In other words, there is often no reason to feel ashamed for what we have done in the past. But, as we continue to grow in sensitivity to and awareness of others, we can continually improve the ways we can include things such as Cultural Competence in our classes.