

# COIL Institute for Globally Networked Learning in the Humanities Course Development and Implementation Case Study

## 17. Netherlands - USA: Intercultural Studies

### Abstract

The Global Village is an experiential, globally networked, honours course co-taught by Loes Damhof, Intercultural Communication at Hanze University in the Netherlands and Janine DeWitt, Sociology, Marymount University USA. Twenty-three students joined us for this pilot course, offered in Fall 2012. Developing and delivering this course was an interesting and demanding journey for both faculty and students. Relationship-building and face-to-face interactions were two critical factors that enabled us to collaborate and bridge differences during course development phase of the project. The course was offered in a blended format with 50% of the class sessions conducted in a face-to-face setting on each campus, 25% of the class sessions conducted together online and 25% of the class sessions planned for exploring the local community. Our students collaborated for 17 weeks.

Students from both universities completed three course modules, applying insights from sociology & intercultural communication and working collaboratively. These modules included opportunities to engage with one another and the communities in which they live. In the first module, the class members examined how their daily lives are affected by globalization using photography. In the second module students focused their study on how globalization affects the movement of people across national borders and their resulting citizenship rights. In the final module, students worked in intercultural teams to formulate their answer to “What does it mean to be a member of the global community?”

Part of our challenge when teaching the course came from the need for students to learn from intercultural experiences. Students needed an appreciation of the importance of developing a shared “value” system that comes from the experiencing the implications of different ways of understanding. We found that the university educational systems in the United States and The Netherlands are similar and yet different with regard to time management, meaning of deadlines & grades, and course load. As instructors, we experienced the impact of these same differences when working together developing the course.

Facilitating learning in a way that is culturally sensitive became critical in our global classroom, particularly when we asked students to negotiate complexity in terms of the subject matter (globalization) as well as to develop their intercultural communication skills. The role of instructor “guidance” in a global classroom seemed to differ from that in a traditional classroom. Technology enabled the project but also presented barriers in terms of access in a way that created a common ground in the blended classroom.

The team members from this project have requested their entire Case Study not be reproduced here. You may contact COIL ([coilinfo@suny.edu](mailto:coilinfo@suny.edu)) if you would like to contact any team members directly to find out more about the project.

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