

What makes a course internationalized?

Hilary E. Kahn (hkahn@indiana.edu)
IU Center for the Study of Global Change

Course internationalization is a process where international/global/intercultural components are integrated into course content, teaching methods, resources, assignments, and measures of assessment. There are a variety of approaches to how to internationalize a course, from the addition of a module or assignment that is international in scope to a complete course re-design where the entire course is structured around the learning and assessing of global/international/intercultural student learning goals. This guideline aims for the middle ground in these approaches, where instructors can fairly easily internationalize their teaching, content, and assessment while simultaneously teaching toward global learning outcomes.

Learning Objectives: An international course, at a bare minimum, must be structured such that it achieves and assesses at least one global/international/intercultural learning objective. Ideally, however, it should be aligned such that it achieves and assesses more than one global learning objective such that the course is oriented to global/international/intercultural learning outcomes that cross student knowledge, development, attitudes, skills, and actions.

Selected examples: students will be able to...

- Explain cultural/national differences and interpret the contexts that shape and give meaning to them
- Effectively interact and communicate interculturally
- Analyze and evaluate the forces shaping international events, both in the past and present
- Understand the global context of his/her chosen profession
- Retain deep and contextualized knowledge about at least one culture and/or nation beyond the US
- Demonstrate willingness to act upon knowledge and attitudes, both at local and global levels
- Recognize oneself and one's culture through the perception of others

Teaching Methods and Resources: An internationalized course should not only be international in content but should utilize instructional methods and means of assessment that introduce a variety of perspectives, provide alternate paradigms of learning, allow for student reflection, encourage dialogue and discussion, and create an environment that inspires advocacy, engagement, and curiosity.

Content: An international course should ideally have a minimum of 25% International/Global/Intercultural content. International content can be provided through case studies, resources, readings, assignments, papers, presentations, films, lectures, explanation of various concepts, examples of skills in practice, discussions, dialogue with international colleagues and students, various forms of experiential learning both abroad and with international communities in the U.S., etc.

Assessment: Ideally, multiple forms of student learning evidence, whether written assignments, oral presentations, papers, classroom assessment techniques, portfolios, group work, reflection, or classroom debates and discussions, will be specifically designed to evaluate whether students are achieving the stated global/international/intercultural learning objectives.

Transparency: Students should be informed, in the syllabi and/or on the first day of class, of the global/international/intercultural learning objectives respective for the specific course. The clear articulation of these outcomes will not create a normative experience but will rather create environments that reveal the international and global perspectives embedded in their various fields of professional and academic study and where learning expectations are clearly stated.