

## UNIT OUTLINE

### **OLBUS854 Managing cultural diversity in business**

#### **Session 1 2006**

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#### **Description**

Welcome to BUS854 online! Together with on-campus students of this unit, you will be studying cultural differences between individuals, groups and organizations; and the opportunities they offer for more effective management, particularly in international settings.

The central argument of this unit is that the more managers learn about differences in human behaviour (including their own) the more effective they will become in coordinating individual and company goals.

An essential characteristic of leadership is the ability to communicate a vision of the future. For cross cultural and international leaders, the vision must be of multiple perspectives that all can share, no matter what their background.

US854 is designed to be highly interactive so you will have plenty of opportunity for case studies, discussion and application of your own experience to the topics under review.

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#### **Assessment (see guidelines below)**

- 1: Answer five questions on any two of ten case studies throughout Weeks 1 through 12 (10%).
- 2: Participate in online discussions via the discussion board (10%)
- 3: Participate in a group research project (20%)
- 4: Complete a 2-hour written examination on the content of the unit (60%)

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#### **Objectives**

After completing this unit you should be able to do the following:

- Define 'globalisation' for the purpose of the unit; and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation, including questions of social responsibility and ethics for multi national enterprises (Topics 1 and 2);
- Define "cross cultural" for the purposes of the unit; and identify major cultural differences and the communication problems they may cause within and between regions, nations, communities, groups and individuals. Cross-cultural differences are assumed to include those of age and gender, political and religious affiliation; class, status, income, nationality and race (Topics 3 and 4).
- Identify culture-based differences in the behaviour by which people negotiate with each other, and discuss how these differences affect the strategies of corporate leaders for international expansion (Topics 5 and 6)

- Summarize and discuss significant and major differences in structures and controls for international management; and the management of workforce diversity (Topics 7 and 8)
- Describe what leadership approaches, strategies and management training might be appropriate in international contexts of workforce diversity; and how to adapt western models of motivation to non-western contexts (Topics 9 and 10).
- Enhance your generic skills (critical thinking, independent work, teamwork, writing skills and problem solving) developed from previous studies.

#### Topics and timetable

Ten major topics will be covered over 12 weeks in this unit, as follows. A written examination is held in Week 13.

- **Week 1:** Going global (corresponds with Chapter 1 of set text)
- **Week 2:** Social responsibility and ethics (corresponds with Chapter 2 of set text)
- **Week 3:** The role of culture (Chapter 3)
- **Week 4:** Communication (Chapter 4)
- **Week 5:** Negotiations and decisions (Chapter 5)
- **Week 6:** International strategies (Chapter 6)
- **Week 7:** Global alliances (Chapter 7)
- **Weeks 8 and 9:** Structures, controls and workforce diversity (Chapters 8, 9 and 10)
- **Week 10:** Motivation & leadership (Ch 11)
- **Weeks 11 and 12:** Group reports and discussion
- **Week 13:** Examination (2 hours plus 10 minutes' reading time)

You will be expected to prepare for and participate in

- Online discussions,
- Other forms of group work; and
- Experiential exercises that you can carry out in your work and domestic environments.

I hope you will find these activities not only promote learning but are also stimulating and entertaining.

Do not hesitate to contact me for help with any material you do not understand or in regard to any academic-related problem you feel unable to solve.

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## Assessment guidelines

In order to pass this course you will need to do the following:

- Item 1: Answer the five questions on any two of the ten case studies that accompany each topic of the unit (10%). Each case response is worth up to 5 marks (one mark for each acceptable answer to each of the five questions); and any two cases may be selected by you for assessment during Weeks 1 - 12. The answer to each question should be in about 100 words (5 – 6 lines), i.e. you will write about 1,000 words in all for this assessment item.
- Item 2: Participate in online discussions via the discussion board. You should expect to write a total of about 1,000 words over the semester; and your contributions will be worth up to 10% of your total assessment.
- Item 3: Participate in a group research project. This will be an exciting challenge because it will involve working in virtual teams via the internet - as happens so often in real life business enterprises. Each team will write a report of the project (approximately 2,000 words, value 20%) and post it during Weeks 11 and 12 on the Discussion Board for feedback by me and the other students
- Item 4: Complete a 2-hour written examination on the content of the unit (60%)

Note: to pass the unit overall you will need to gain at least 20/40 marks available for the three coursework assessment items and achieve at least 30/60 in the final exam.

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## Conduct of the Unit

I am almost constantly online during the semester! In fact I spend more time 'with' my online students than those I teach face to face - and feel I get to know them as well or even better! On my part, I will do my very best to create for you a virtual learning environment to support and encourage you. For your part, you will find that distance learning requires a great deal of self-discipline and personal responsibility - but it has the enormous advantage that you are not tied to set lecture periods, you can work at your own time and pace. We will cover the ten basic topics of the unit over 12 weeks; and please try to read as much and as widely as you can. A large list of recommended texts is included with this 'package', and I hope you will be intellectually stimulated to range even more far and wide in your search for related knowledge. I wish you every success with your studies, and a lot of fun!

## Online Discussions

These will give you the opportunity to do two things:

- 1: To analyse case studies:

Each topic is illustrated by at least one exemplary case study. Several questions are asked after each case. 10% of your total assessment for this unit will be based on the answers you post on the Discussion Board to at least two case studies out of the ten.

- 2: To engage in discussion with other students and with me:

I will visit the Discussion Board daily and join in your discussions with my own two cents' worth of comments and suggestions. Also you are free at any time to send me personal emails on matters relevant to your studies. 10% of your assessment is based on your overall contributions to the discussion board.

### Self-assessment questions

You can use self-assessment questions to assess the progress of your own learning. These questions are supplied by the publishers of the textbook and are available at:

<http://www.prenhall.com/deresky/>

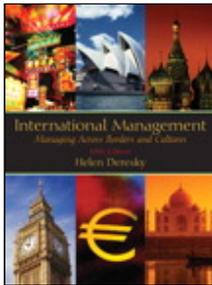
Your answers will not be graded - they are for your eyes only- because they are to help you monitor your learning and prepare for the written exam.

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### Readings

The set text is:

International Management: Managing Across Borders and Cultures, 5/E



**Helen Deresky**, *State University of New York, Plattsburgh*

ISBN: 0-13-109597-8

Publisher: Prentice Hall

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There is a Deresky companion Web site at <http://prenhall.com/Deresky> for internet resources for each chapter of the text.

For a comprehensive list of recommended reading for the Unit, see **Readings** on the Home page.

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**About me:**

I am an Honorary Associate of the Graduate Accounting and Commerce Centre, and an Adjunct Professor of the Department of Business - both within the Division of Economic and Financial Studies, Macquarie University.

I am both an academic and a practising consultant for the design of international management and leadership training programs. After many years in business in the private sector, I returned to a university environment and taught at the University of New South Wales from 1979-1983. I was awarded a PhD from the former School of Organisational Behaviour (now the Australian Graduate School of Management). Throughout the 1980s and '90s I spent time as a visiting professor at various universities in the US; and wrote and taught undergraduate and graduate management study programs for Charles Sturt University (CSU) in Bathurst, Australia. I continue to supervise doctoral students enrolled with CSU, as well as my teaching commitments with Macquarie University.

As a private consultant I have designed and run management development programs in America, Britain, India, Japan and PNG. Occasionally I still lecture and direct workshops overseas, and present papers at international conferences. I have published quite widely in my field, and am a reviewer for a couple of international journals.

BUS854 is presented by the Graduate Accounting and Commerce Centre (GACC) at Macquarie University. For general information about GACC and its functions, visit its web site at <http://www.gacc.efs.mq.edu.au>

For general information about BUS854, visit the web site [www.gacc.efs.mq.edu.au/units/bus854](http://www.gacc.efs.mq.edu.au/units/bus854)

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