



Kris Acheson, PhD

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Languages: English (native language), Spanish (fluent), Korean (intermediate), German (reading proficiency)

Kris is a Lecturer in Intercultural Communication and the Director of the Undergraduate Program in the Department of Applied Linguistics at Georgia State University.

www.interculturalcompetency.com

Kris Acheson, PhD teaches intercultural communication at the university level. She uses her academic expertise and life experience to teach cultural discovery skills and prepare students for cultural adaptation. Kris is adept at guiding students in their development of positive attitudes towards cultural differences and fomenting intercultural competence. Her publications focus on cross-cultural differences in the uses and meanings of silence, as well as the effects on intercultural interactions of cultural identifications such as race/ethnicity, gender, and class.

Sample of Kris's Recent Experience:

- Awarded a *University Teaching Fellowship* from GSU's Center of Instructional Effectiveness for 2015-2016
- Served as one of two *US Fulbright Scholars* to Honduras for eight months in 2015
- Recognized as Georgia State University's *Study Abroad Director of the Year* for 2013
- Implemented three new study abroad programs and three new student exchange programs at GSU, to Switzerland, Thailand, China, and South Korea
- Received GSU's *Instructor Effectiveness Award* for exceptional teaching in 2012
- Led the training and assessment of GSU faculty who internationalized their courses as part of a university-wide Global Education Initiative
- Developed a senior "capstone" course for Applied Linguistics students at Georgia State University, teaching cultural discovery skills and encouraging critical thinking through writing

Examples of Courses Developed:

- Intercultural Communication
- Language, Culture, & Communication
- Intercultural Ethnography
- Communication across Cultures
- Language in Society
- Nonverbal Communication
- Gender & Communication
- Race & Communication

Teaching Experience:

Kris currently teaches intercultural communication, cultural adjustment, and language teaching methods in the Department of Applied Linguistics at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Her students typically include future language teachers – those who will live and teach abroad, those who will teach English locally to immigrants, and those who will teach foreign languages to US Americans. In addition, she also teaches many international students studying English, as well as other students studying programs related to language and culture (e.g., Middle East Studies and Anthropology).

Intercultural competency is vital for all these students, as their work inherently involves intercultural interactions on a daily basis. Kris's courses provide her students not only with a theoretical background in intercultural communication, but also with practical skills for preparing for and working through the cultural adaptation that their future careers will demand.

Prior to her current role at Georgia State University, Kris taught Intercultural Communication courses at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. Previously, she taught ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) courses at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia and Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. Kris has also taught Spanish in public secondary schools and ESOL in public primary schools. She maintains current teaching certificates in Spanish and ESOL in Georgia. All told, Kris has over 16 years of classroom experience teaching in intercultural settings.

Teaching Philosophy:

Kris believes in the importance of context in intercultural competence. Her experience has taught her that there are no simple formulae, easy Do & Don't lists, or hard and fast rules for successful intercultural interactions. Instead, she attempts to offer her students a tool kit of knowledge and skills that will help them understand and negotiate the particular contexts in which they may find themselves. These tools include: 1) self- and other-awareness; 2) positive attitudes towards cultural differences; 3) critical thinking habits; and 4) cultural discovery skills. Kris believes that, with regard to intercultural communication, providing opportunities for self-guided learning encourages students to become life-long learners of language and culture.

Education:

Kris holds an Interdisciplinary PhD in Communication (2008), with a specialization in intercultural communication, from the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication at Arizona State University. At the time of her residency there, the Hugh Downs School was ranked first in the US amongst intercultural communication doctoral programs. She has also earned an MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL (2004) from Georgia State University, and a BA in Spanish and Art from Berry College. As an undergraduate, she completed a study abroad program on a full academic scholarship with the Center for Cross-Cultural Study in Sevilla, Spain. Her interest in language and culture were developed early in her life as a Third Culture Kid and child of a military family.

Selected Publications:

- Acheson, K., Nelson, M., & Luna, K. (2015). Measuring the impact of instruction in intercultural communication on secondary Spanish learners' attitudes and motivation. *Foreign Language Annals*, 48(2), 203-217.
- Wandschneider, E., Pysarchik, D. T., Sternberger, L. G., Ma, W., Acheson, K., et al. (2015). The Forum BEVI project: Applications and implications for international, multicultural, and transformative learning. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 25, 150-228.
- Nelson, G. L., & Acheson, K. (2015). Intercultural competence and Applied Linguistics. In J. Bennett (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Acheson, K. (2010). Navigating silences in international business contexts. In M. B. Hinner (Ed.), *Forum for General and Intercultural Business Communication, Volume 6*, (pp. 187-220). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Acheson, K. (2008). Silence as gesture: Rethinking the nature of communicative silences. *Communication Theory*, 18, 535-555.
- Acheson, K. (2007). Silence in dispute. In C. S. Beck (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 31* (pp. 1-58). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.