

**5 examples of Cultural  
and Intercultural  
modes of  
communication**

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B. S. CRIMINOLOGY (BLOCK A)

# Cultural Communication

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- Cultural communication requires some fleshing out—and in particular, the tension between the individual and the communal that exists within the concept of cultural communication needs attention.
- Cultural communication thus refers to the communication between people who have differences in any one of the following: styles of working, age, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

# Philippines Culture

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- In Filipino culture, the use of body language and hand gestures are very common in daily communication. If you're an expat living in the Philippines, you would want to familiarize yourself with these common gestures to avoid any misunderstanding. Here are a few common forms of non-verbal communication and what they mean in the Philippines.

## 1. Mano or Pagmamano

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- “Mano” is the Spanish word for “hand,” while “po” is a Filipino term used as a sign of respect. It is done by taking the hand of the elder and gently tapping it to one’s forehead while saying “mano po.” This is usually done by someone younger to show respect to the elders and as a way of accepting a blessing from them. *Mano* is also unofficially called “bless” by some Filipinos.

## 2. Lip Pointing

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- Instead of lifting a hand or finger or arm, which uses unnecessary energy, Filipinos sometimes use their pouting lips to point at a certain object or direction instead. Many foreigners find this funny and confusing, but this gesture is very common and unique to Filipinos. When you see a Filipino do this, don't confuse it with an invite for a kiss!

### **3. Nodding and raising eyebrows with a smile**

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- This is one way of how Filipinos greet each other in a casual and quick way, acknowledging that you saw that person. This gesture is sometimes followed with a friendly tap in the shoulder if they are within reach.

## **4. Arms extended while lowering the head**

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- These gestures are commonly done when passing in front of two people talking to each other or crossing a room when someone's watching a TV. Followed by an "excuse me," this gesture is seen as a sign of courtesy and respect.

## 5. Silent looks

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- Usually, when Filipino parents give this fiery-eyes-silent-look to their child, it automatically means that the child should stop whatever he/she is doing. This is one way of Filipino parents to warn or control their children in public without negatively catching many people's attention.

# Intercultural communication

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- is the verbal and nonverbal interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds.
- Communication Between Cultures.
- Used to describe a single person trying to interact in a foreign environment but more often, it is a two-way street, where people from both cultures are trying to improve their communication.

# 1. Eye contact

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- Whether or not eye contact is made, who makes it and how long it lasts vary tremendously in meaning. In many Asian cultures, avoiding eye contact is seen as a sign of respect. However, those in Latin and North America consider eye contact important for conveying equality among individuals. In Ghana, if a young child looks an adult in the eye, it is considered an act of defiance.

## 2. Gestures

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- Gestures can convey wildly different meanings. Individuals in the United States use the “OK” sign to convey that something is acceptable. In Japan, the same hand symbol means “money.” Argentinians, Belgians, the French and the Portuguese all use the symbol to mean “zero” or “nothing.” Still other countries in eastern Europe consider that same sign an offensive swear.

# 3. Physical Space

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- Countries that are densely populated generally have much less need for personal space than those that are not. The Japanese, for example, are less likely to react strongly to an accidental touch by a stranger than Americans. Less personal space is also needed in areas such as Latin America, and, in the context of one-on-one conversations, the Middle East.

## 4. Facial Expressions

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- Winking is a facial expression particularly varied in meaning. In Latin America, for example, the gesture is often considered a romantic or sexual invitation. The Yoruba people in Nigeria wink at their children if they want them to leave the room. And the Chinese consider the gesture rude.

# 5. Touch

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- A great number of cultural expressions are achieved through touch. In America, for example, using a firm handshake is considered appropriate to greet a stranger or another business professional. In France, however, it is common to kiss someone you greet on both cheeks. Touching children on the head is fine in North America. Yet in Asia, this is considered highly inappropriate, as the head is considered a sacred part of the body. In the Middle East, the left hand is customarily used to handle bodily hygiene.