



Source: CENTER FOR TEACHING+LEARNING, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



Get to Know Finland (1 cr.) H01

Teacher: Aija Elg aija.elg@aalto.fi

Time: Tuesdays 14:15-15:45

Place: Otaniemi, the Main Building, room Y405

Course description

Get to Know Finland course will present to you key aspects of Finnish culture and history. Together, we will study some of the main historical events that have shaped Finnish culture over the last two centuries. We will study the culture of Finland, and the dynamics of its formation, through observing aspects of Finnish history, society, architecture, paintings, music, films and popular culture. We will place the material in social context and discuss it in an analytic manner. Both discussions and group work is used for learning.

Course program

1. Tue 16.9. Introduction / Finnish language
2. Tue 23.9. Communication and Habits
3. Tue 30.9. Finnish Society

4. Tue 7.10. History and Politics

5. Tue 14.10. Finnish Art

6. Tue 21.10. Film

Fri 24.10. Cross-Cultural journals are due

Course evaluation passed / not passed

Homework includes reading and preparing topics, making observations and writing a cross-cultural journal. In order to pass the course you have to submit your cross-cultural journal on time. Max one absence is allowed.

Tasks

You have three kinds of tasks; **reading, homework** and **pre-tasks**. Reading and homework are important for your orientation to the next lesson and for the pre-tasks. Pre-tasks are essential part of the next lesson since the lesson can totally be based on the results of your pre-task.

READING / HOMEWORK

PRE-TASKS

Reading for the lesson 2: **due 23.9.**

- What are you doing here?
- Finnish silence can be golden.
- Finland has a shyness problem.

Reading for the lesson 3: **due 30.9.**

- The best countries in the world
- Why cold depressive countries end up being the best?
- The happiest countries in the world

Reading for the lesson 4: **due 7.10.**

- Prepare for the group work by reading the *Outline of Finnish history*, watching the Power Point presentations.

Homework for the lesson 5: **due 14.10.**

- The Ateneum Audio Collection task

Reading for the Kalevala task:

- The songs behind the Kalevala,
- The Kalevala in many forms
- European Tales: Kalevala

1. For the lesson 1: **due 16.9**

Watch the *Credible* video and send a mail to Aija.

2. For the lesson 2: **due 23.9.** a pair work: Cultural dimensions by country.

3. For the lesson 2: **due 23.9.** Interview a Finn/Finns.

4. For the lesson 3: **due 30.9.**

Participate in the Forum discussion.

5. For the lesson 4: **due 7.10.**

Fill in the blank chart before coming to the class. (Note, if you don't do this it is in vain to come to the class.)

Homework for the lesson 6: **due 21.10.**

- The Monomyth task

Final task: Cross-Cultural Journal: **due 28.10.**

PRE-TASK 1 for the lesson one Introduction

Four videos show off Europe's best-kept secret: Finland. Each lasts about five minutes. Your task is to watch the *Credible* video and send me an email where you introduce yourself and tell, which 3 facts you found the most surprising, fascinating, interesting etc. in the video and why. We will discuss these facts in the first lesson, so please be prepared.

Here is the link:

<http://finland.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=178504>

PRE-TASK 2 for the lesson two Finnish Communication: Cultural Dimension test on line

1. Choose a pair that is different nationality than you (the more distant the better).
2. Make together *The Cultural Dimension* test with your own culture's info and compare your cultures with each other - how similar or different are your cultures?
3. Compare your cultures with Finnish one and try to figure out what dimensions might cause problems in Finland.
4. Send a brief summary about your discussions here.
5. Be prepared to discuss your findings in groups in class.

PRE-TASK 3 for the lesson two Finnish communication: An interview

Interview a Finn (or Finns) and ask what a typical Finn would do in the following situations (12 questions). Sometimes more than one option may be ok. Try to figure out why they behave like that.

1. Finnish passengers get on a bus. Where do they like to sit?

- a. A window seat
- b. Next to someone
- c. Any available seat

2. In a Finnish city a foreign tourist is standing in a street corner with a map looking like he is lost. What happens?

- a. Passers-by look away and try to ignore him.
- b. Passers-by come to ask in English if he needs help.
- c. If a foreigner himself stops someone, he will get help.

PRE-TASK 4 for the lesson three Finnish Society: Forum discussion - My country

- Write about your country: what in general **is working and what could be done better**.
- You can write about the social security system, tax structure, education, equality between sexes, public transportation, communication, trust etc. about anything that you find important to mention.
- You can also compare some aspects in Finland to your own country.
- Read the articles in this section (The best countries in the world, Why cold depressive countries... and The happiest countries) and you will get some ideas what to write.
- Then **read at least one** somebody else's Forum submission and **comment** on that. Feel free to comment as many discussion openings as you want.
- Next lesson will be based on these discussion openings and comments.

PRE-TASK 5 for the lesson four History (Group 1 materials)

□ Read the materials, print the blank form, fill out your part and bring it to the next lesson. You are familiarizing for the time periods **prehistoric and Finland as part of the Swedish realm**. Notice that the other two members of your group are not familiar with these periods and you are responsible to explain them the historical events. Please, be well prepared and if you don't do this pre-task, don't participate the group work.

PRE-TASK 6 for the lesson five Art and the Kalevala

1. Do the readings (3 texts) and answer to the questions (Homework: The Kalevala)
2. Voting: Kalevala and Finnish folk music have inspired many artists in Finland. Listen to the music on the videos and vote which type of music you prefer (see links down). We will listen more the winner music in class!!!!
3. Selected works of art from the Ateneum Art collections can be toured with an audio guide. Click below to listen to the presentation or save the file to your computer. You can also download the audio guide to your own mp3 player.

Open the Ateneum Audio link down. Choose one painting from

1. Akseli Gallen-Kallela
2. Albert Edelfelt
3. Helene Schjerfbeck
4. and one choice of your own

Listen to the audio and send me a brief description of the works and tell me more about the 4th painting. Why did you picked that one?