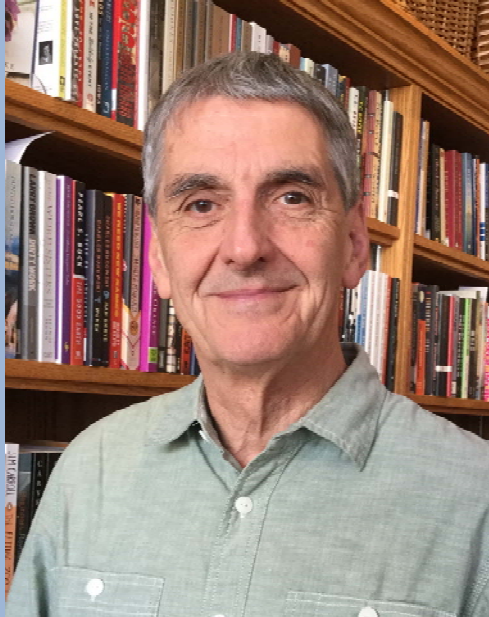


# The Prime Directive in Our Times: Challenges to Understanding a Multicultural World



Professor Richard Harris was born in London, U.K., and since 1980 has lived in Japan, apart from a two-year sojourn in New Mexico, U.S.A. He has an undergraduate degree in English Literature, a Master's in Humanities, and a Doctorate in Intercultural Communication. He is currently Professor of Intercultural Management at Chukyo University, Japan where he has worked for 26 years.

Loving travel from an early age, Richard has always been particularly fascinated by the differences in how societies and the physical environments they inhabit influence each other in subtle yet significant ways. His most recent publication is a study of how misunderstandings arise from people from different backgrounds physically perceiving the same space yet forming culturally specific meanings. Richard has also published and presented on the representation of cultures in museums, and on differing cultural conceptions of the ideal.

**Date:** Monday, November 14, 2016  
**Time:** 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM

*Location: Williams Family Room, Davis Center*

**How can we retain the principle of respect for other cultures and yet be true to our own moral certainties?**

Fifty years ago the first Star Trek episode was broadcast. This broadly optimistic view of the future of humanity featured the advantages of a multiethnic, yet integrated crew whose only intercultural difficulties were with inhabitants of 'strange new worlds', encounters with whom were guided by the Prime Directive, a strict prohibition against interfering with the natural cultural development of the society in question.

The reluctance to judge or intervene in the behaviors and beliefs of cultures other than our own has been the cornerstone of the multicultural conversation in our own times, but this cultural relativism is coming under increasing strain as people struggle to respond appropriately to such seemingly objectionable practices as child marriage, female circumcision, caste discrimination, and all forms of perceived social injustice.

## *Presentation Open to the Community*

*For UVM faculty, staff, students and community.*

*If you have any questions, contact The UVM Center for Cultural Pluralism at 656-8833 or email [ccpuvm@uvm.edu](mailto:ccpuvm@uvm.edu)*

Sponsored by the University of Vermont's Center for Cultural Pluralism  
Co-sponsored by Office of the Vice President for Human Resources, Diversity & Multicultural Affairs and Diversity, Engagement & Professional Development Unit