

INS 250: ORIENTATION TO STUDY ABROAD

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Office Hours (Fall 2009): Tu/Th 11:00 -11:50 and by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is required for all students accepted into a study abroad program offered under the auspices of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. It is designed to provide an introduction to the various challenges related to resident study and research in a foreign country. Students will learn about cultural theories, stumbling blocks of intercultural communication, and strategies for repairing communication break-downs and acquiring new knowledge and attitudes. Students will engage in activities geared towards increasing their cultural awareness, cross-cultural sensitivity, and adaptability to a new culture. Specific objectives include: (1) developing awareness of own culture; (2) learning about the host country; (3) becoming familiar with important international issues facing the U.S. and the host country; and (4) acquiring skills necessary for living, travel and study in a foreign culture.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

Material will be presented in a variety of formats: readings, lectures, discussions, group activities, guest speakers, videos. Students' learning experiences include research, presentations, cultural simulations, various written exercises.

COURSE MATERIALS

R. Michael Paige et al. *Maximizing Study Abroad*. Minneapolis: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, 2002. [Provided through the Office of International Education (OIE) and distributed during first class session].

Class policies and caveats:

Take attendance, quizzes and the travel portfolio seriously and invest thought, time and energy into the class and its activities. This course and its activities directly apply to your life and educational goals.

**Attendance is mandatory.** Each attendance earns you 5 points up to a total of 35 points (20 pts for section 3 students). Please keep in mind that you need to earn a grade of BC or higher to participate in study abroad.

**Remember: Study abroad is a privilege and not a right. The Office of International Education can cancel your application if you do not fulfill your obligations by preparing yourself properly through this course.**

Email etiquette: As a good preparation for your study abroad, please practice basic rules of communication etiquette. In particular, you should include a proper address (i.e. Dear Dr. or Professor ), and not start your email message with something like: "Hey...I missed class today...can you tell me if I missed anything important?" Remember that in most cultures communication is more formal than in the US.

Furthermore, given the great number of students enrolled in these classes, please only ask questions that your classmates cannot answer for you. **It is YOUR responsibility to get the notes and assignments from one of your peers.**

GRADING SYSTEM: The final grade is determined as follows:

		Final grades will be assigned according to this system:	
Quiz	25 points	A = > 93%	AB = 88-92%
Travel Portfolio	80 points	B = 82-87 %	BC = 78-81%
Attendance	35 points / 20	C = 70-77%	
Total	140 points / 125	D = 60-69%	F = < 60%

## SYLLABUS

**Please note that ALL students must attend the SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION  
NOVEMBER 7-8  
339 CARTWRIGHT CENTER FROM 1-5 PM.**

### **Sections 1 (Tuesday) and & 2 (Wednesday) meetings)**

**Week 1: Introduction to culture** (Paige, pp. 1-43)

- Introductions
- Welcome to Study Abroad (Paige, pp.1-3)
- General Departure Tips (pp. 4-7)
- You as a culturally diverse person (p. 43)

ASSIGNMENT for week 2:

1. Surveys: "Discovering Your Styles: Strategies to Language and culture Learning," (Paige, 9-35)
2. **TRAVEL PORTFOLIO, sections 1,2 & 3**

**Week 2: The concept of culture**

**DUE today:** Portfolio, Section 1-3

- Cultural simulation
- Defining culture: The "Iceberg Analogy", (Paige pp. 46-51)

ASSIGNMENT for week 3

**TRAVEL PORTFOLIO, Section 4** (International controversial topics facing the US)

**Week 3: Values and beliefs**

**DUE today:** Portfolio, Section 4

- Exploring culture and cultural values
  - Contrasting values (Paige, pp. 63-75)
  - Stereotypes and Generalizations: (Paige, pp. 54-61)
- Video clip: Italy / The

ASSIGNMENT for week 4

- **TRAVEL PORTFOLIO, section 5** (Controversial topics facing your host country)
- Find and bring to class 5-6 "new" proverbs from your host country
- **START VIEWING FILM: *L'Auberge espagnole***

**Week 4: In-Country Culture Strategies, Part I**

**DUE today:** Portfolio, Section 5

- Culture shock and Cross-cultural adjustment (Paige, pp. 91-111)
- Language and Communication; Activity: proverbs
- Nonverbal Communication (Paige, pp. 125-142)
- Video clip: The anti-Americans

**Guest speakers: Study-Abroad Alumni Speak about Their Culture Shock**

ASSIGNMENT for week 5

- **TRAVEL PORTFOLIO, Section 6** (Planned Trips)
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**Week 5: Strategies for Developing Intercultural Competence**

**DUE today:** Portfolio, Section 6

- Developing Intercultural Sensitivity: the Bennett model
- Hypothesis-testing, the D.I.E. model of cultural analysis (Paige, pp. 107-117)
- Culture learning activity: Becoming ethnographers
- Time permitting, finish watching *L'Auberge espagnole*

ASSIGNMENT for week 6

- **TRAVEL PORTFOLIO, Section 7** (Culture immersion experience)

**Week 6: Reverse Culture Shock**

**DUE today:** Portfolio, Section 7

- Debriefing of Cultural immersion experience
- In-Country Culture Strategies: Preparing to Return Home (Paige, pp. 143-146)
- Discussion of film as it relates to culture shock and reentry shock
- Wrap-up / Synthesis

**QUIZ**

**+ Guest speakers: Study-Abroad Alumni Speak about Their Culture Shock**

**Saturday, April 4: Mandatory presence,**

The practical side of studying Abroad, Cartwright 339

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**SYLLABUS SECTION 3 (WEEKEND SECTION, Sat-Sun, Nov 7-8)**

Saturday 9am -5pm (339 Cartwright Center)

- 9:00-11:45 Overview of Orientation Packet
  - “Welcome to Study Abroad” (Paige, pp.1-4)
  - “General Departure Tips” (pp. 4-7)
  - “Introduction: Culture-Learning Strategies” (pp. 39-42)
- Culture Strategies Part I:
  - You as a Culturally Diverse Person” (pp. 39-41)
  - The concept of Culture: The Iceberg Analogy (pp. 46-51)

- “Understanding the Ways Cultures Can Differ in Value,” and Understanding yourself as a Member of a Culture or Cultures” (pp.63-75)

**Video clip: The anti-Americans**

**12:00-1:00 Lunch**

1:00-3:00 Joint Meeting of Sections 1, 2, and 3  
Presentation: Sandy Sieber and other guest speakers

3:00-5:00 Small Group Meetings with students who have participated in past programs.  
Question and Answer Period

**Sunday 9-5pm (339 Cartwright Center)**

9:00-12:15 In-Country Culture Learning Strategies:  
Language and Communication; Nonverbal Communication” (pp. 125-142)

ACTIVITY: Becoming Anthropologists

Culture Shock and intercultural Adjustment (pp. 93-106)

Developing Intercultural Competence (pp. 107-117)

**FILM: *L’Auberge espagnole*** by Cédric Klapisch

12:30-1:30 Lunch (View film during lunch)

1:30-3:00 Discussion of the movie as it relates to various stages of culture shock and reverse culture shock

3:00-5:00 Reverse Culture Shock  
Paige, “In-Country Culture Strategies: Preparing to Return Home” (pp. 143-146)  
Summary and Conclusion: Travel Portfolio review / last minute questions.

**QUIZ**

Summary and Conclusion: Travel Portfolio review / last minute questions.

**STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE WEEKEND SECTION OF INS 250, PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR FINAL PORTFOLIO IS DUE ON WEDNESDAY, December 10, 2009.**

<p><b>PLEASE SEND YOUR PORTFOLIO TO:</b></p>	<p><b>Dr. Francine Klein</b> <b>Dept. of Modern Languages</b> <b>345 Graff Main Hall</b> <b>UW-La Crosse</b> <b>1725 State Street</b> <b>La Crosse, WI 54601</b></p>
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**Travel Portfolio**

General comments

1. This series of assignments requires you to compile a Travel Portfolio containing information relevant to your individual study abroad program. It will help in your preparation and can serve as a journal for recording your observations and experiences. **Each assignment must be typed and stapled (i.e. no paper clips or folded corners). Please print the word count at the bottom of each section, EXCLUDING titles, headings and bibliography.** Please hand it in as you enter class.

2. Make sure that your Travel Portfolio reflects independent research and thought. Always **put ideas into your own words** and **never cut and paste from a website**. Summarize information collected to show an understanding of facts (i.e. present them in narrative/paragraph form). It is usually quite obvious when the style of writing changes from your [the student's] voice to someone else's. If you need to, review the policy on academic honesty published in the UWL Undergraduate Catalog 2007-09.

**3. DO NOT INCLUDE QUOTES, CITATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES IN THE BODY OF YOUR WRITING. Include full bibliographic references [at least 3 independent sources] at the end of assignment section 3 (for sections 2 and 3), section 4, and section 5. No bibliography is required for sections 6 and 7.** You may use either APA or MLA format. If you use websites, please learn how to properly cite these materials. For example:

“US reassures China on investment.” BBC News. 18 March 2009 (date you accessed the site) <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7942924.stm>>

**4. PLEASE NOTE:**

- A. Remember to **proofread** your work. [As you well know, spell checkers do neither catch homonyms nor missing words]; students who do not proofread their work should not expect to receive full credit.
- B. Pay close attention to the specifications above. Students who turn in assignments which do not meet specifications (e.g. are too short or do not include adequate bibliography) will be asked to redo the assignment; for work that has to be regraded, you should **not** expect to receive full credit

**5. ALL ASSIGNMENTS must be turned in as indicated. If any assignments are missing at the end of the semester (December 10), no more than a grade of BC can be earned in the course. No extensions can be granted for travel portfolios.**

**Explanation of the assignments**

**Section 1: Statement of your goals and objectives** (5 pts)

Write a comprehensive goal statement indicating your **reasons** for studying abroad, your **goals**, during your time abroad, and **specific strategies** for achieving your objectives (i.e. how you will actually achieve your goals. Be specific). You may base this section on the statement you included in your application for study abroad to the Office of International education [“base” does not mean simply recopy] Be sure to tailor this assignment closely to the goals of this course and your own personal and academic goals. (**Minimum length**: 350 words)

**Section 2: Non educational facts about your host country** (10 points)

This section will give you the opportunity to get to know your **host country and city** by **gathering information** about it. Indicate whatever information you consider to be essential knowledge for a long-term visitor to the country and the particular city. Address at least 5 different areas (see. Paige, p 56). Summarize information collected to show an understanding of facts, i.e. present it in narrative paragraph form and use **paragraph headings**. (700-1000 words)

***Reminder: Do not cut and paste from the Internet.*** See *General Comments* above.

**Section 3: The Educational System in Your Host Country/City** (10 points)

This section asks you to gather information to help you relate to the local university students in your host country. Provide information on

- (1) **how higher education is structured**, types of degrees, entrance requirements, **grading system**
- (2) **student population** at your institution (make-up, diversity, etc)

(4) Expected differences from the US system.

Advice: Visit the website of the host university if possible. Find out about campus life and student activities before you leave. (650-700 words)

**All references for sections 2-3 should be listed after section 3.**

#### **Section 4: International Controversies Facing the US** (15 points)

Discuss and analyze **three** controversial topics facing the US that have importance and **relevance outside the US**. Think of topics where you may be asked to explain the US position while abroad. **Use paragraph headings** and number your topics. (1,000-1,500 words)

**What is a controversial topic?** It is a topic which is controversial within a society, that is, people strongly disagree on what to say about it or how to solve the problem. For each such controversial topic, be sure to explain what the major conflicting views are that set up the controversy. *For instance, hosting the Olympics, illegal immigration, global warming, or winning the world cup, by themselves are not controversial topics. BUT: Raising taxes to pay for the Olympics, what to do about illegal immigration or global warming, or establishing racial quotas on national teams, would count as controversial topics.* Other topics might include the war in Iraq, US response to global concerns, various trade issues, or foreign aid. On the other hand, the US debate around national healthcare, gay marriage or abortion, however controversial they are, they are NOT INTERNATIONAL controversies. Your analysis of each issue should contain **3 very short** paragraphs:

- (a) a clear statement of what the controversy is about **and how it affects the rest of the world**
- (b) Explicit identification and explanation of the TWO --or more -- opposing viewpoints on the topic. Use a structure such as "some think/believe that..... Others think/ believe / recommend that .....
- b) **Your** thoughts or position on this issue

A good place to start is the Brookings Institute: [www.brookings.edu](http://www.brookings.edu), the New York Times at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), or BBC news: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/> Do not rely solely on news articles from yahoo.com or google.com

#### **Section 5: Controversial topics Facing Your Host Country and/or City** (15 points)

Discuss and analyze five significant controversial topics (see definition above) facing your host country. Explain why they are controversial topics and provide enough detail to indicate your understanding of the issue (see comments above). **Avoid the internationalization of US issues, current events and popular culture in overseas contexts.** For example, just because MAoff appears in the Australian news, does not make him a vital news issue for Australia. (1,000-1,500 words) **Add references.**

#### **Section 6: Proposed Trips** (10 points)

This is the one section of the travel portfolio that you must do **in bulleted format.**

You are to design in detail **TWO** trips you might want to take while abroad: (1) a three-day weekend; and (2) a nine-day excursion either within your host country or outside of it. Think carefully and be reasonable. **Include a TOTAL estimate of the costs as well as an ITEMIZED budget**, places to travel, modes of travel, places to stay, etc. Vary your modes of transportation (i.e. take trains and/or other less expensive modes of transportation and include a timetable). Make sure to include a youth hostel along the way. Don't forget to consult your Orientation Manual for other helpful hints. (3-4 pages)

#### **Section 7: Culture Shock** (20 points)

Attend one community event or function **that you otherwise would not attend.** The goal is for you to expose yourself to **something completely outside your "comfort zone."** Past choices by students have included volunteering at Chileda or assisting nurses in a mental hospital; participating in an unfamiliar religious service; going to a gay bar or visiting another gay gathering place (if you are heterosexual); participating at a Hmong celebration, spending an evening with an unfamiliar ethnic group,

or working with the homeless or in a soup kitchen. Students enrolled in Sections 1 and 2 of the course should be prepared to present their findings to the rest of the class during Week 5 or 6. (1,000-1,500 words).

Criteria for the experience:

1. You should stay for at least one-two hours (travel time NOT included ☺ ☺)
2. You should be able to be a participant-observer within the location you chose. DO NOT arrange a “guided tour”, observing “from the outside”. Attempt to involve yourself directly in the *activities* of your chosen milieu.
3. If you have any doubts whether your planned experience satisfies the criteria, talk to me FIRST

Write-up:

Once at your destination, play the role of a field anthropologist. In **your two-part paper**, (1) briefly explain the event you attended AND your reasons for attending and (2) describe your impressions of the overall experience as **they relate specifically to the various stages of culture shock** (See Paige in *Maximizing Study Abroad*).

In order to help you with the analysis part of your simulated culture shock experience, here are a few suggestions from a professional interculturalist.

→ As you consider possible location and begin to plan, write down your immediate feelings about doing the exercise *ND* about the setting you have chosen. Watch for reactions such as

- I wouldn't go *there*
- What a stupid exercise!
- What would I *do* there?

Such reactions count as feelings – feelings of dislike and irritation – and can tell you a lot about how you respond to unfamiliar environments.

→ Make the visit

→ Even as you do it, observe yourself as you go. Makes notes on your internal experience, on what you think and feel as well as what you do.

**For example:**

If there is a part of you that feels frightened, but another part that say: “How stupid to be frightened of such and such, it is only x miles from home” [or “These people aren't all that different from me”], then write down: “denied I was frightened.”

This act of denial tells you a lot about your reactions to unfamiliar environments

→ When you interrupt or end the experiment, recall when exactly you did so, what the cues for ending it were, what your feelings at the time were and afterward

**For example:**

“Just sat there and waited out my allotted time” could be an important indication of how you respond in such situation, as could “Intensive experience; glad it's over; sad too.”

→ Consider comparing your experience - and your notes – with a fellow student. The learning will be deepened and intensified.

And as you participate in this exercise you may deny that anything happened at all, and simply be relieved that you have stopped wasting time and can now get back to normal. But isn't that in itself a significant piece of information on how you cope with unfamiliar environments? It is not uncommon to find a person in the throes of culture chock vociferously denying the obvious.

The intent of this exercise is to provide you with a small dose of “culture shock”. It will not inoculate you against the experience when you go abroad but it should reduce the surprises. The next step is to develop coping mechanisms geared to your particular mindset and personal needs.

[excerpted from *Gochenour, Education for the intercultural experience*]