

## INS 251: Study Abroad Practicum: Journaling for Credit

**Course description:** This course provides an opportunity to earn academic credit for journaling while on study abroad. Students will demonstrate increased awareness of the nature and complexities of intercultural communication by applying various theories to their lived experiences in their host country, and in doing so deepen their culture-specific knowledge of the host country. Progression towards these goals will be demonstrated through a series of guided writing assignments to be completed during their study abroad. Students must complete this course during their semester or academic year abroad.

**N.B.:** Upon return from study abroad, you will also have the opportunity to enroll in INS 252 (Cross-cultural Re-entry from Study Abroad) to complete a total of three credits in International Studies. INS 250, INS 251 and INS 252 comprise a three-credit series in International Studies that will fulfill the requirements for the General Education International Category.

**Course requirements:** You will complete the assigned readings. During your study-abroad experience, you will submit twelve written assignments (500-750 words each) from a list of proposed topics and will submit them electronically according to the specified deadlines. There will be a drop box in D2L for your assignments.

You should communicate your interest in INS251 to the instructor prior to departure (and usually upon completion of INS 250 at the end of the previous academic semester). You can enroll for INS 251 (Sec 001) during the regular enrollment period in the semester prior to going on study abroad.

**N.B.:** This course is only available to UWL students. Non-UWL students who are participating in UWL-affiliated study-abroad programs are ineligible to enroll in this course.

### Required materials:

Linda A. Chisholm, *Charting a Hero's Journey* (New York: The International Partnership for Service-Learning, 2000).

(Approx. \$23.00; available in the UWL bookstore or at <http://ipsl.org/organization/charting.html>)

R. Michael Paige et al. *Maximizing Study Abroad* (Minneapolis: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, 2002). Excerpts to be used: "Part V: Strategies for Keeping a Journal," pp. 115-20.

**You should purchase your copy of the Chisholm book AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Make sure you have the books in hand before you leave on study abroad and do NOT forget to pack them.**

## SYLLABUS

This course is designed for students who participate in both one- and two-semester study abroad programs and the due dates for written assignments vary according to the length of the study-abroad program.

### Prior to study abroad, students will read:

-R. Paige, "Strategies for Keeping a Journal" (pp. 115-120)

-L. Chisholm, "Introduction for Students" (1-3) and "Journals and Journal Writing" (pp. 11-22).

During study abroad, student will read the following chapters and complete the related writing assignments. Please note that most writing assignments are adapted from Chisholm's *Charting a Hero's Journey*.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Although the syllabus appears long, you are required to **answer only one set of questions** for each writing assignment. The guiding questions are meant as a tool to help you organize your thoughts. You may, of course, consider all questions and combine responses into **ONE** answer.

**WHEN YOU SEND YOUR WRITTEN RESPONSE, PLEASE LABEL YOUR FILES WITH YOUR LAST NAME AND ASSIGNMENT NUMBER. EXAMPLE: SMITH1.DOC. WHERE THERE IS A CHOICE, INDICATE THE NUMBER OF THE QUESTION CHOSEN (A, B, C, etc.) IN THE DOCUMENT ITSELF,**

**ASSIGNMENT ONE:**

One-semester deadline: Prior to departure or Week 1-2 of Study Abroad

Two-semester deadline: Prior to departure or Week 1-2 of Study Abroad

**REMEMBER TO LABEL YOUR FILES WITH YOUR LAST NAME AND ASSIGNMENT NUMBER.**

*Read, Chisholm, "Stage I: Hearing the Call?" (pp. 23-44)  
Select and respond to **one** of the following sets of questions:*

- A. Why did you choose to leave the relative comfort of your home country to face new challenges? How do you feel about leaving UW-L and the US? What are you glad to be leaving behind? What do you think you will miss? And, most importantly, what **cultural values and perspectives are you taking with you and bringing into your new experience?**
- B. Was the desire to get away part of your reason to study abroad? If so, from what or from whom? Do you friends and family understand your desire to go or do they assume their world is the center of the universe, from which no sane person would depart? How do they view the place you are going? Are they happy for you? What did you experience upon departure? Excitement? Pleasure? Anxiety? Who along the way created, intensified or modified your feelings?
- C. To what were you drawn in your host country? What ideals have been part of your desire to study abroad? What do you expect to find on study abroad? Are you embarking on the journey with no known friends? Are you glad to be striking out on your own? Is there anxiety for you in being alone or are you confident of making new friends? How will you go about this?
- D. How do you expect to be perceived by the people among whom you will be living? What is the basis of your perceptions?

**ASSIGNMENT TWO:**

One-semester deadline: Prior to departure or Week 1-2 of Study Abroad

Two-semester deadline: Prior to departure or Week 1-2 of Study Abroad

*Read Chisholm's "Stage II: Preparing for the Journey" (45-60)  
Select and respond to **ONE** of the following sets of questions:*

- A. What travel have you done before study abroad? How did it prepare you for your current journey? What points of view are being represented about your chosen destination from friends, family, teachers, media, etc.? Record these points of view and in a few months reassess them in light of your experience and study.
- B. What did you select to bring with you and what did you leave behind? Are there things you now realize that you did not need or things you wish you had brought? What do the things you chose to bring with you say about your expectations and your needs? What assumptions did you make that caused you to pack the unnecessary? Were you and your luggage friends or have you wrestled all the way? Did any of your possessions cause you embarrassment in your new culture? How and why?

**ASSIGNMENT THREE:**

One-semester deadline: Week 2-3 of Study Abroad

Two-semester deadline: Week 2-3 of Study Abroad

*Read Chisholm, "Stage III: Departing and Separating" (61-78)*

*Select and respond to **one** of the following sets of questions:*

- A. How do you feel about starting alone? Excited, eager, anxious, sad, fearful? Was there a moment when you knew you had crossed the "Rubicon" as expressed in Chisholm's book? What were you thinking and feeling? Imagine a fictional or real hero whose story you know, and compare your reaction to the one you believe he or she may have had at the moment of departing?
- B. What books did you bring with you? What do these books represent in your hopes for the adventures ahead? Are you thinking differently of yourself now that you have embarked? What has the separation from friends, family, school, and a familiar way of life revealed to you about yourself?
- C. What have you done with the culture of home? Have you thought about it often, been homesick, stayed in close touch through the telephone or email? Or, have you let it go for the time being, focusing on the new situation and its challenges? Describe how you went about it.

**ASSIGNMENT FOUR:**

One-semester deadline: Week 3-4 of Study Abroad

Two-semester deadline: Week 3-4 of Study Abroad

*Read, Chisholm, "Stage IV: Crossing the First Threshold" (79-100)*

**FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT EVERYONE IS REQUIRED TO RESPOND TO THE FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS.** The indented guiding questions are meant to help you think more deeply about and formulate your answer.

**Question:** How is Chisholm's chapter IV and our discussion in INS 250 (Orientation to Study Abroad) of R. Kohl's and R. Paige's comments about Stage I of Study Abroad (The Initial Euphoria) related to your present experience? What examples of this have you experienced during your study abroad?

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Describe the scene that greeted you upon your arrival at the airport and recount the behavior you observed. What bewildered, delighted, interested, amused or frightened you? As you learn more about the country and the people to which you have come, return to this description and use it to illustrate the history and culture about which you are learning.

What fascinated you most in your first days? What was a brand-new sight, sound, taste, or smell for you? What did you see, hear, taste, feel, and smell that began to introduce you to the host culture? What did you relish and what did you find distasteful? Make a list of every adjective that may be applied to your first observations and then write an accurate, specific, and lively description of your first impressions.

In your first few days, has anyone misunderstood you and your purpose for being in the country? What did you ask for in the first few days that perplexed, amused, or annoyed your hosts? How did you initially react to this experience and what have you learned about it as time went on?

Who welcomed you in the first couple of weeks and in what ways? How have you responded? Have you trusted the sincerity of motives or has the welcome made you somehow uneasy? What reasons have the local people given, or have you deduced, for the hospitality you have encountered? How does the hospitality you received compare to that given to strangers in your home culture?

Compare what you expected to find in your new surrounding with what in fact you found? What was the source of your expectations? By now you may begin to see your new land and geography differently from your first impressions. What preconceptions have you had to-- or begun to-- shed?

### **ASSIGNMENT FIVE:**

One-semester deadline: Week 5

Two-semester deadline: Middle to End of Month 2

Read, Chisholm, "Stage V: Taking up the Challenges" (101-132)  
Select and respond to **one** of the following sets of questions:

A. How is geography an important determinant of culture? How have the people who inhabit your host country been challenged by the land and climate? What various, and possibly, contradictory, human qualities have the land and the climate shaped? How have you been challenged by the geography of your host country? How have you had to "wrestle" with your new location? What has it taught you?

B. Have you visited places which are special to the local inhabitants? How has such a visit helped you to understand the values and beliefs of the people?

D. What place does education hold in the values of your host country? Is there a difference between the rhetoric and the reality? Do your host country and university speak of "diversity" in the same way that many US-based institutions do? How do you relate the form and quality of education to national achievement? Compare it with your home country: what are the underlying assumptions of the system and form of education in both countries? [e.g. What is the role of the student and the teacher? By what measures are you judging the practices of the teachers in your host institution?]

E. Recount a telling incident when various cultural differences (related to gender, class, race, sexual orientation) between your worldview and that of the host culture have become evident to you? In your host culture, is there a rhetoric about these issues that is commonly voiced? How have you come to understand these differences?

### **ASSIGNMENT SIX:**

One-semester deadline: Week 6

Two-semester deadline: End of Month 3

Read, Chisholm, "Stage VI: Battling the Beasts" (133-156)

**IN THIS ASSIGNMENT, EVERYONE IS REQUIRED TO RESPOND TO THE FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS.** The indented guiding questions are meant to help you think more deeply about and formulate your answer.

**Question:** How are the contents of Chapters 5 and 6 in Chisholm's book and our discussion in INS 250 about R. Paige's comments about Stage II of Study Abroad (Irritability and Hostility) related to your current experience? What examples of this have you experienced during your study abroad?

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

Have you battled loneliness, confusion, exhaustion? Have they influenced your view of yourself and the world? Have your struggles helped in the clarification of your values?

Have you battled the beast of insecurity only to find that the cause of your failure lay elsewhere? How long did it take you to discover the real truth and how did your understanding come about? Have you any examples to cite in which you struggled to assign responsibility to the correct source? Do you see the faults of others without recognizing your own?

Have you observed the behavior of tourists or other new students, such as talking too loudly, showing excessive courtesy, acting inappropriately familiar, swaggering, or bragging about their home culture, that you suspect covers fears of not belonging? How do you react to and handle these feelings in yourself? What do you see in your study abroad companions that may help or hinder their process of learning? Will you lead or be lead by them? Have you felt any need to stand apart from the group? Why?

What conflict of values and beliefs do you see between your own culture and your host culture? How do you understand the conflict of values and beliefs? Is one right and the other wrong?

How have you interpreted your own culture to you hosts? Is the mythology you have shared with them an accurate reading of your own culture? What have you withheld and why? What delusions do you recognize in yourself, your host culture, and your home culture that need to be dispelled?

What habits do you seize as weapons when you confront loneliness, anxiety, or other challenges you meet along the way? Have any of these habits alarmed, amused or angered your hosts? Have you had times of feeling sorry for yourself? Can you identify why? Was it in part the result of disappointed expectations? What or who helped you to overcome such feelings?

When are you most likely to write in your journal? In times of exhilaration, quiet reflection, or discouragement?

What has troubled, confused, frightened, angered, or amused you about the relations between men and women? Is your host culture changing its sexual mores? Have your attitudes changed in any way?

Have you seen examples of religious or political zealotry in your host country? In your home country? What might be its cause in each place? Are you of the same religion as most people in your host country or a different one? How do people view you as a result of your religion? How do you view them?

### **ASSIGNMENT SEVEN:**

One-semester deadline: Week 7-8

Two-semester deadline: End of Month 4

*Read, Chisholm, "Stage VII: Passing through the Gates" (157-180)*

*Select and respond to one set of the following questions:*

**IN THIS ASSIGNMENT, EVERYONE IS REQUIRED TO RESPOND TO THE FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS.** The indented guiding questions are meant to help you think more deeply about and formulate your answer.

### **QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU FORMULATE YOUR ANSWER.**

How is Chisholm's "Passing through the Gates" and our discussion in INS 250 about R. Paige's comments about Stage III of Study Abroad (Gradual Adjustment) related to your experience? What examples of this have you experienced during your study abroad?

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Are you able to identify any milestones in your passage that mark a breakthrough in your ability to communicate and relate on a new and deeper level with those whose circumstances are different from yours?

What experiences have you had that have made you appreciate the variety within your host culture? How might you help, when you return home, to correct misperceptions of your fellow citizens or your government about your host country?

What beliefs about you have been expressed by those in your host country? Are there distortions of your true identity? What have you said or done to try to correct the image? Have you been successful?

Is there congruence between the reputation you have among family, friends, and professors at home and the reputation you are developing in your host community? Are you in any way redefining yourself?

**ASSIGNMENT EIGHT:**

One-semester deadline: Week 8-9

Two-semester deadline: End of Month 5

*Read, Chisholm, "Stage VIII: Recognizing Guides and Guardian Spirits" (181-202)  
Select and respond to one set of the following questions.*

**IN THIS ASSIGNMENT, EVERYONE IS REQUIRED TO RESPOND TO THE FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS.** The indented guiding questions are meant to help you think more deeply about and formulate your answer.

**How is Chisholm's "Recognizing Guides and Guardian Spirits," "Celebrating the Victories" and the chapters that follow similar to our discussion in INS 250 related to R. Paige's comments about Stage IV of Study Abroad (Adaptation and Biculturalism)? What examples of this have you experienced during your study abroad?**

**GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

Who instilled in you by word or example the values and qualities that now guide you during study abroad? Where did you expect to find mentors and teachers along the way during your study abroad process? Where in fact have you found them? Describe one source of unexpected help and support you have experienced.

**ASSIGNMENT NINE:**

One-semester deadline: Week 9-10

Two-semester deadline: End of Month 6

*Read, Chisholm, "Stage IX: Celebrating the Victories" (203-224)  
Select and respond to **one** of the following sets of questions:*

A. Have you reached the stage, if only briefly, where your host culture felt as similar and as easily traversed as "shops in your own street at home"? Describe an incident in which you realized that, at last, you understood your host culture and that they understood you.

B. About what complex issue facing the host culture have you gained deeper understanding? What factors

brought about your change in perception? When did you have to suspend judgment about the host culture and suspend beliefs about your own?

C. Have you made friends in your new community or among your fellow students or someone with whom you are able to disagree on many important issues? Has this been a victory for you? For him/her? Give an example of such disagreement.

### **ASSIGNMENT TEN:**

One-semester deadline: Week 10-11

Two-semester deadline: End of Month 7

*Read, Chisholm, "Stage X: Discovering the Boon" (225-252)*

*Respond to the following set of questions:*

**Cultural Comparison:** Have you seen anything which your own traditions and that of your host culture hold in common? What do people hope for or value in your host country? Cite examples from the literature, religion, or history of your host country or your own experiences to illustrate the hopes and values of the culture. Have you been able to appreciate, at least in part, the traditions and beliefs of your hosts? Give an example.

### **ASSIGNMENT ELEVEN:**

One-semester deadline: Week 11-12

Two-semester deadline: End of Month 8

*Read, Chisholm, "Stage XI: Charting the Course" (253-270)*

*Select and respond to **one** of the following sets of questions:*

A. Over the weeks and months, you have undoubtedly made connections and at least the beginnings of friendships. How are outsiders viewed and treated in your host community? Are they welcomed, ignored, treated with tolerant amusement, suspicion, or curiosity? How long does it take to become at one with the host culture? What historical and cultural conditions explain how strangers are treated?

B. Personal growth and change: Has your host country given you new or changed values? Have you been freed in any way to think or do something that has previously eluded you? To what do you attribute these changes?

Have you had to struggle in any way between new and old loyalties or belief systems? Have you, in any way, come to a fork in the road? Which new direction will you take?

C. Are there dimensions to your host community that you have not yet explored or fully understood? How long do you believe you would need to remain in your host community in order to learn these things? What undergraduate research project could help you to further explore these areas of interest?

### **ASSIGNMENT TWELVE:**

One-semester deadline: Week 13-14

Two-semester deadline: End of Month 9

*Read, Chisholm, "Stage XII: Returning Home" (271-288)*

*Select and respond to one set of the following questions:*

**N.B.: If you are still in your host culture, respond to A. If you are back already, respond to B.**

**A.** Since time will fly from now on, use this late assignment to prepare yourself for returning home. Briefly reflect upon and record your answers to the following questions:

1. In what ways have I changed?
2. In what ways might my friends and family have changed?
3. How would I like my family and friends to treat me when I return home?
4. What am I looking forward the most? The least?
5. What lessons have I learned that I never want to forget? What are some skills I have learned?
6. What resolutions have I made for my life as a result of what I have seen, learned, and reflected upon while on study abroad? [And what obstacles do you expect to face at home which will make it difficult to keep your resolve?]
7. What have been the important things about this SA experience that I want to share with family and friends?
8. Since many say that re-entry shock is often more challenging than initial culture shock, what are some things I might do to make the transition easier? [NB: this may be the time to reread the chapter in *Maximizing study abroad*]

**And for the late starters on the final assignment** (i.e. those of you who are already back in the country ☺)

**B.** Has anyone failed to recognize you upon your return, or commented on your change in appearance or behavior?

In what ways do places and things now mean something different to you than they did in the past?