INS 151 “Cross-Cultural Engagement While Abroad” (1 credit hour, Pass/Fail)

Wake Forest University, Spring Semester 2015

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INS 151 is intended to help you to engage with the host culture while you are abroad; in so doing, you will hopefully learn more about yourself as well.

Because this course is online, there is a lot of text on the syllabus, and please read the instructions carefully. Enjoy these assignments. They have been designed to facilitate your appreciation and experience of your host country and its culture.

**NOTE: For assignments that involve observation of the environment, the more detail you put into your observations, the more you can potentially learn from them.**

The course is divided into “Modules”, each of which contains assignments. Next to each module, you will see the time frame in which it is due. Be sure to upload the assignments into Sakai no later than the time frame listed and save a copy of the assignment. If you are having trouble with the Internet, try to get word to me so I’ll know that. If you are unable to upload using Sakai, just email the assignment to me.

**On-line Forum Posting requirement:** This course also includes an online Forum, in Sakai, where you will submit selected assignments and also be able to view the submissions of other Wake Forest students from different study abroad programs. For these selected assignments, you will **post your assignment as well as read the submission of another student and then write a half-page (or longer) response to it. Your response may include points of comparison with your own study abroad experience, thoughtful advice (not on the writing skill but rather on the experience), and questions or thoughts the writing raises for you.** This is designed to give you an opportunity to see how your experience compares with others and expand the perspective you have. **Forum posting requirements are for assignments 1,3, 4, and 7.**

Make the most of your experience!

**See list of additional suggested activities attached to the end of this syllabus!**

**Module 1: Adjusting to a New Culture, Beginning to make Observations and Analyzing Feelings**

**Assignments #1 and #2, due two weeks into program**

**Reading:**

“Strategies for Social Relations,” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 77-89. Access the pages in Sakai.

**Assignment #1: Eyes Wide Open**

Describe your initial response to your new environment. You will need to be very descriptive and precise with your language in order to help the reader understand what you are experiencing. Put the reader in your shoes. Elements in **bold** are required, and address several of the following:

* What initially struck you most about your new environment?
* Describe an interaction you have had with a host country national and how the experience was for you and how it made you feel.
* How does it feel to hear a new language or new dialect of English being spoken around you all of the time?
* Have you experienced a language mixup?
* **What are you curious about and what will you do to do to learn more about it?**
* **What are your goals for your study abroad experience?**
* What is exciting?
* What has been the biggest adjustment so far?
* Has anything made you uncomfortable or intimidated you? If so, what?
* Is there anything that you just don’t understand?
* What, if anything, has been a challenge or difficult?

**Write about 2 pages, upload in Sakai, and also upload this into your Forum section in Sakai and post your half-page response to another student paper in the Forum.**

***Be sure to keep a copy of your write-up, as you will use it for a later assignment!!***

**Assignment #2: Observing Public Spaces. Complete either A or B.**

**READ:** “Consumer Reports” in *Yin Yang, American Perspectives on Living in China,* Renouf and Ryan-Maher, eds., pp. 105-108 in Sakai

There are many new variables in your new environment, so careful observation can both help you make sense of it and also stimulate your curiosity to learn more. And remember that in observing, your first aim is to give an objective description; your evaluation of an environment (for example, “*The market was totally chaotic”*) is something you can add, but be sure to distinguish your objective description from your evaluation (note that the evaluation is interesting because it can reveal assumptions you hold). [Also note that by doing this assignment, you are creating a detailed record of your experience, which will provide you a great resource for remembering your experience years later]

**Option A:** Choose one of the following three locations, and bring a small notebook for notes:

**\*** local restaurant/café/bar in a **non-tourist** area

\*Host home/apt – detailed description

\*Grocery store

For whichever location you choose, write a detailed description about it and the people in it.

How did being in this setting make you feel?

In what ways does it differ from similar locations in your home country? Focus in on details both large and small. Also jot down your observations about the people you see. How do they greet one another? What do observe about their pace? Are they rushed, relaxed, intense? What is the talking/communication like? Describe in specific detail your sensory impressions; note also how it compares to life in the US. Remember, first give the objective description, and then add your subjective reactions to the location.

**Write 2-3 pages about what you observed and upload it in Sakai.**

**Option B.** Find 1) a local shopping center, market or area where many people come to meet and/or shop, and 2) a public space like a central square.

1. What is being sold?
2. Describe the set-up of the area, and nature of the shopping (is there bargaining or haggling? Do people talk to strangers? Is it fast-paced, relaxed, or other? How is it organized?) Are there activities in the shopping area which interest you?
3. How did being in this environment make you feel? Why?
4. What conclusions about daily life can you infer from the environment? What inferences can you draw from the culture based on what you have seen?
5. Next, find what appears to be a high traffic public space area in your host city. Jot down your observations. Describe the people you see. How do they greet one another? What do observe about their pace? Are they rushed, relaxed, intense? Describe in specific detail your sensory impressions.
6. If you feel brave, initiate a conversation or greet someone there. Describe it and how it felt and if you experienced any successes or any cultural misunderstandings.

**Write 2-3 pages about what you observed and upload it in Sakai.**

**Module 2: Interviews and Observations. Due four weeks into program (assignments 3 and 4)**

**Reading:** “Language Learning Styles and Strategies: Speaking to Communicate” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 203-224. Access the pages in Sakai.

**Document:** “Interview questions while abroad” in Sakai

**Assignment #3: Interviewing a host national. First, access the interview questions guide sheet in Sakai. Follow directions below, and write a 2-page paper and upload in Sakai.**

**Also upload this into the Forum section of Sakai, and post your half-page response to another student’s paper in the Forum as well.**

**Interview a local.** Note: the list of interview questions helps ensure that you get a significant amount of content from your interviewee. While you are free to ask some questions not included on the guide, the most interesting student reports of interviews have come from those who asked many of the questions on the guide.

*Using the list of interview questions 1-10 as a* *guide*, ask people in your host country what they think about themselves and about Americans/the USA. Your questions can progress from the general to the specific (include a mix of both). Next, continue with the interview, asking as many questions as possible from questions 11-30 on the guide sheet.

Describe your interview. Note your own internal reactions to the opinions/discussion you hear. How did you feel during the discussion? Also pay special attention to the *manner* in which opinions are expressed –what did you notice about the rhetorical style of the discussion? Were they very direct in expressing their opinions or more indirect? Did they make an outward effort to take into consideration the fact that you are there as an American student abroad?

**Assignment #4: Complete A or B**

**A: Observing the student/teacher relationship and classes.**

Observe and describe the relationship between professors and students at your host institution. How do you feel in this environment? How is the professor addressed? How accessible is he/she? What is the classroom environment like? Formal? Informal? Has anything surprised you or bothered you? Do students challenge or question the ideas of the professor? Describe in detail, and compare it to your experience at Wake Forest.

**B**: **Internship Description**

Observe and describe your internship experience, addressing the following:

* In what ways has it matched and not matched your expectations?
* How do you feel in the work environment, and why?
* Describe any cultural differences you have noticed, and what effects they may have
* Describe the relationship between supervisors and employees, and among employees of similar status (including interns)

**Write 1-2 pages and upload in Sakai. Also upload this into the Forum section of Sakai, and post your half-page response to another student’s paper in the Forum as well.**

**Module 3: Interaction and Cultural Integration, due seven weeks into program (assignments 5 and 6)**

**Reading:** “Strategies for Intercultural Communication” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 125-142. Access the pages in Sakai.

**Assignment #5: Choose A, B, or C and write one page about either activity; submit in Sakai.**

**A:** In Sakai, access the Pdf “Circle of Relations, Culture Matters” – you complete the circle of culture for yourself and then ask as a host national to complete it (directions are on the Pdf)**.**

**B:** Watch TV with a local and ask them to explain some of the culture and language to you. Don’t flip through multiple channels –stick to one or two programs and examine them. Take notes while you do this; try to observe carefully and make note of details and of what your host tells you. For example, how do TV ads differ in your host country compared to home? How does the news or other programming differ? In your write-up, describe your viewing experience and anything you learned from it.

**C:** Visit a well-known local landmark. First, write down what the landmark means to you and what you know about it. Next, find one or more locals and ask them what it means to them. How does your understanding/interpretation of the landmark compare with the locals’? What new things about the landmark and the local culture did you learn from this?

**Assignment #6: Integration. Write a 2-page paper or submit a photo journal.**

**Note: photo journals must also have accompanying text/captions to help address the questions below.**

How are you adjusting to your new environment? How do you feel? Why do you feel this way? Describe some encounters with locals you have had so far. What have been the most interesting topics of discussion you’ve had regarding being abroad, either with locals or with fellow study abroad students? What do you enjoy most about being abroad?

Do you think you have experienced culture shock? Why or why not? If yes, what strategies have you taken to overcome it? Write a 2-page reflective journal, or do a photo project (Word document with photos and captions) to express your transition to this point. (Be sure to ask permission before you take photos of strangers unless you are unnoticeable/at a distance.)

**Module 4: Interaction and Cultural Analysis, due 10 weeks into program (assignments 7 and 8)**

**Reading:** “Strategies for Making Cultural Inferences to Enhance Your Culture Learning” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 113-117 Access the pages in Sakai.

**Assignment #7: Social Activity –write 1-2 pages and submit in Sakai. Also upload this into the Forum section of Sakai, and post your half-page response to another student’s paper in the Forum as well.**

**NOTE: You may in addition attach one or more photos from your social activity.**

Join other students from your host culture for a social activity. Note what kinds of topics the group talks about. Are there cultural references (jokes/pop culture/traditions) which make you feel like an outsider? Note how the group budgets its time –do you detect any difference between your host culture and how a group of students in the US might use their time? Do you feel impatient, rushed, or neither? With communication, do people interrupt/jump in or do they usually wait for the speaker to finish? Were any efforts made to bridge your culture and theirs? If there are other aspects about your interaction with students from the host culture that you noticed were different from your normal expectations, describe these, and also feel free to discuss these differences with other students in the Forum section.

**Assignment #8: Cultural Analysis, 2 pages**

**First, READ**: Peterson, *Cultural Intelligence* pages 19-22 in Sakai (Pdf)

**NOTE: If you did not take INS 150, be sure to do the reading!**

**Next:**

**To do this assignment well, be sure to use the “Cultural Analysis Paper” instructions in Sakai**. Write a 2-page paper analyzing an event or incident you have experienced so far that caused a clarification or shift in your understanding of culture (your own and/or the host culture) or that challenged your understanding. Upload your paper in Sakai.

**Module 5: More Interaction with Locals –Due 12 weeks into program**

**Assignment #9: Choose either A or B:**

**A. Go over a newspaper with a local.** Get a newspaper from your host country, preferably one that contains local, national, and international news. Meet with a local and ask them to explain any aspects you would like to understand better, and ask them their opinion about certain stories/topics as well. Also ask them to explain where the newspaper falls along the political spectrum (conservative, moderate, liberal). Note the name and date of the paper and write 1-2 pages describing your experience and what you learned.

**B. Conduct a second interview, but this time try to interview a person from a different demographic/background** (so for example, if you interviewed a young person, now interview an old person; rich/poor, man/woman, student/teacher, etc)Follow the same procedure as Assignment # 3. How do the answers compare, and how was your experience different? Write a 2-page report of your interview.

**Module 6: Final Reflection and Preparing for Re-Entry, due one week before the end of your program**

**Assignment #10: Then and Now:** Go back and read the first assignment you wrote the first few days after you arrived in your host country. What do you feel when reading this? Now, having been through several weeks of your experience, is there anything you would tell yourself then? *Write a letter to your then-self, explaining what you know now and what you think your then-self should know, understand, and be aware of.* ***Address each of the following:***

* Do you have a better understanding of your host culture now? *Summarize the most important things you have learned, and would like to understand better, about your host culture. Be specific, especially regarding behavioral norms such as communication style differences, relationship differences, etc.*
* Did you meet your goals? Were your expectations realistic?
* Include any advice about attitudes or behaviors that would be helpful for your then-self.

(In other words, your letter basically consists of two main elements –reflections upon your personal attitudes, emotions, coping strategies, or inner changes, (i.e., reflections about yourself) and reflections about your understanding/objective knowledge of the host culture.

**Upload** **your letter in Sakai.**

**Assignment #11**: **Preparing for Reentry to the US**

**Reading:** “Strategies for Intercultural Communication” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 143-162. Access the pages in Sakai. If you have time, answer the questions on pages 145-146.

Think about how you have changed, then write a list of ways you have changed in your worldview, behavior, feelings, etc. Looking over the list, how do you think this might affect you upon re-entry? How will family and friends respond to these changes? What might be challenging upon re-entry? What will you need to get used to when you are back in the US? How do you feel about returning? Why? Write a 1-2 page reflection paper, then upload it in Sakai.

**Assignment #12: Course Evaluation**

After you have completed assignment #11, you will receive an email with a link to an online course evaluation. Your responses will be anonymous. Please be open and accurate in your statements, as evaluation helps contribute to improving course design for future study abroad students.

**Use this list below for additional ways to experience the culture of your host country**

**(list continues on next page)**

**Interactive Activities While Abroad**

1. Volunteer with children at an after-school daycare or study program.
2. Join a sports club or group that meets regularly; play pick-up games
3. Watch TV with a local and ask them to explain some aspects.
4. Get a map of the host country and/or city, take it out and ask a local to tell you about some of their favorite places and places they would like to visit. Large paper maps are better than phone apps. You might get lots of good travel tips from doing this!
5. Learn a fairy tale or nursery rhyme from a child.
6. Teach a local an American pop song or folk song
7. With a local, compare some US currency (paper and coin) with the local currency –what images are on the currency, and what is their cultural relevance?
8. Interview people of different ages and backgrounds (see interview questions posted on Sakai)
9. Find volunteer projects in the city or countryside, such as environmental clean-ups, soup kitchens, tutoring/literacy programs, etc.
10. Find local musicians to play with
11. Attend a local church service and inquire about other activities the church is involved in
12. Find a language partner and set up a language exchange
13. Help your host family with a house or apartment project
14. Frequent a neighborhood bar or restaurant and get to know the workers and owner
15. Get a newspaper and go over it with a local.
16. Have a local teach you the national anthem (music and lyrics)
17. Ask the baker/butcher/shopkeepers to explain more about the products they are selling
18. Go to a local barber shop/beauty salon.
19. Go on a weekend outing with students from your host country.
20. Watch a sporting event with students from your host country.
21. Prepare a meal for your host family and/or friends.
22. Ask for directions even if you don’t need them –see if perhaps some other conversation results.
23. Go attend a political debate or town/city meeting of some sort.
24. Visit a farm or winery
25. Visit a local elementary/middle/ high school and arrange to do a presentation in their English class
26. Find a place or center where elderly people congregate and see if you can talk with them.
27. Go sing Karaoke with fellow students
28. Rent a bike, take the bike on the bus or train to a lesser-known small town, bike around the town and stop in a bar or restaurant or shop and talk to locals about their town.
29. Find an animal shelter and see if you can volunteer
30. Talk to the concierge or security or maintenance workers in the building you live in, or at the university.
31. Take the same bus route for several days, and if there is usually the same driver, eventually introduce yourself and ask if one day you can interview him or her at the end of the driving shift.
32. Go to a museum and sign up for a guided tour.
33. Form a study group with students from your host country
34. Host an American Movie Night where you give a presentation about how the film relates to US culture/history
35. Find an immigrant or immigrant family and ask about their life in their new country
36. Locate an expatriate American living in your host country and ask about their experience of the culture and if they can introduce you to activities with locals.
37. Go to a bike shop or a car dealership and compare prices with the US (talk to the dealers and tell them you are doing some research –that way you get to interact with somebody)
38. Sign up for lessons for some hobby or activity you enjoy, such as dance, tennis, photography, etc.