INS 151 Section A, “Cross-Cultural Engagement While Abroad” (1 credit hour)  
Wake Forest University, Fall Semester 2012

Location: Via email and Sakai  
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INS 151 is the second course in the Cross-Cultural Engagement course series. The course 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.

For each module there are assignments involving introspection and integration exercises. There are choices for most of the assignments. Please read the instructions carefully. Some modules have two assignments. Try to pay attention to the due dates, although I know that Internet access can be limited. Enjoy these assignments. They have been designed to facilitate your full appreciation and experience of your host country and its culture.

Next to each module, you will see the date it is due. Be sure to upload the assignments into Sakai no later than the date listed and save a copy of the assignment, at least until I have confirmed with you that I have received your 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.

Have fun with these assignments. Make the most of your experience!

Module 1: Adjusting to a New Culture, Beginning to make Observations and Analyzing Feelings, due two weeks into program

Reading:  
“Strategies for Social Relations,” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 77-89. If you don’t have the book, access the pages in Sakai.

Assignment #1: Letter Home  
Write a letter to someone in the U.S. and describe your initial response to your new environment. Upload a copy of the letter in Sakai. You will need to be very descriptive and precise with your language in order to help the individual understand what you are experiencing. Be sure to include some of the following topics:

- 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 your goals for your study abroad experience?
- What is exciting?
- What is baffling?
- Has anything intimidated you? If so, what?
- Is there anything that you just don’t understand?

Be sure to keep a copy of this letter, as you will use it for a later assignment!!
Assignment #2: How people communicate. Complete either A or B.
A. Find an ad/flyer posting board at the local University. You are most likely to find this in a common area. Read, or attempt to read the signs.
   a. What is being advertised? How? Are there activities listed which interest you?
   b. What conclusions about student life and culture can you infer from the posters and flyers? What inferences can you draw from the culture based on this?
   c. Find what appears to be a high traffic area at the University. Jot down your observations about the people you see. How do they greet one another? What do you observe about their pace? Are they rushed, relaxed, intense? Describe your sensory impressions.
   d. If you feel brave, initiate a conversation or greet someone there. Describe how that feels and if you experienced any successes or any cultural misunderstandings.

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

B. If there is no University or place for students to hang up signs, find a local shopping market or area where many people come to meet or purchase food and/or household items.
   a. What is being sold? How and by whom?
   b. Are there items or activities in the shopping area which interest you?
   c. 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?
   d. Find what appears to be a high traffic area in your host city. Jot down your observations. Describe the people you see. How do they greet one another? What do you observe about their pace? Are they rushed, relaxed, intense? Describe your sensory impressions.
   e. If you feel brave, initiate a conversation or greet someone there. Describe how that feels 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: Exploring the Host Culture and Values. Due four weeks into program

Reading: “Language Learning Styles and Strategies: Speaking to Communicate” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 203-224. If you don’t have the book, access the pages in Sakai.

Assignment #3: Communication in the Host Culture. Complete either A or B, then write a 2-3 page paper/journal. Upload your paper or journal in Sakai.

Activity A: Ask other students or people in your host country what they think about the US. Your questions can progress from the general to the specific (include a mix of both), such as What do you think about the US? What is your opinion of Obama? If you think of a stereotype of an American, what comes to mind? What do you think are the best aspects about the US? The worst? etc . . .

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?
Activity B: This activity has two aspects. First, read and complete the charts on pages 219-221 in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition. You will need to ask a person from the host culture to help you with this. Second, observe and describe the relationship between professors and students at your host institution. How is the professor addressed? How accessible is he/she? What is the classroom environment like? Formal? Informal? Describe in detail, and compare it to your experience at Wake Forest.

Module 3: Cultural Integration, due seven weeks into program

Reading: “Strategies for Intercultural Communication” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 125-142. If you don’t have the book, access the pages in Sakai.

Assignment #4: Integration. Write a 2-3 page paper or submit a photo journal.
How are you adjusting to your new environment? What, if anything, do you miss from the USA? How do you feel? Why do you feel this way? Describe some encounters you have had so far. Do you think you have experienced culture shock? Why or why not? If yes, what strategies have you taken to overcome it? Write a 2-3 page reflective journal, report, poem, etc. 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.)

Module 4: Cultural Analysis due 10 weeks into program

Reading: “Strategies for Making Cultural Inferences to Enhance Your Culture Learning” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 113-117. If you don’t have the book, access the pages in Sakai.

Assignment #5: Cultural Analysis: Complete A or B and then submit 2-3 page paper in Sakai

A: Join other students 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? If there are aspects about your interaction/time spent with students from the host culture that you sensed or noticed were different from your normal expectations, describe these, and also feel free to discuss these differences with other students.

B: Write a 2-3 page paper analyzing an event or incident you have experienced so far that caused a shift in your understanding of the host culture or that challenged your understanding of the culture. Use the “Cultural Analysis Paper” instructions available in Sakai. Upload your paper in Sakai.

Module 5: Preparing for Re-Entry due one week before end of your program

Reading: “Strategies for Intercultural Communication” in Maximizing Study Abroad, 2nd edition, pp. 143-162. If you don’t have the book, access the pages in Sakai. If you have time, answer the questions on pages 145-146.

Assignment #6: Read the letter you wrote to yourself the first few days after you arrived in your host country. What do you feel when reading this letter? Now, having been through several weeks of your experience, is there anything you would tell yourself then? Do you have a better understanding of things now, that you did not understand then? What are they? Did you meet
your goals? Were your expectations realistic? Write a letter to your then-self, explaining what you now know and what you think your then-self should know, understand, and be aware of. Upload your letter in Sakai.

Assignment #7: 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 U.S.? How do you feel about returning? Why? Write a 2-3 page reflection paper, then upload it in Sakai.