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Designing Pre-Departure Orientation as a For-Credit Academic Seminar: Curriculum and Content

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**DESIGNING PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION AS A FOR-CREDIT
ACADEMIC SEMINAR: CURRICULUM AND CONTENT**

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PIM 72

**A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters of
International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.**

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ABSTRACT

International educators widely agree that overseas experiences provide tremendous opportunities for student growth and learning. However, institutions and international education professionals are increasingly recognizing that pre-departure preparation is essential to maximize student learning during overseas programs. Most institutions offer a pre-departure orientation program of some form, such as a weekend workshop, a series of presentations, or weekly sessions prior to departure. These meetings are often mandatory and provide essential “nuts and bolts” information about the international programs and usually some type of cross-cultural training and instruction.

A mandatory for-credit pre-departure seminar, called Global Awareness and Competence, was developed to provide prospective study abroad participants at Freed-Hardeman University (FHU) with the tools and knowledge necessary for successful completion of FHU’s semester-long program in Belgium. The seminar replaces the previous pre-departure orientation program and enhances it with experiential learning activities, a self-reflection component, and additional lectures and discussions on culture and cross-cultural exchanges. This paper describes the theoretical foundations, institutional context, goals and objectives, content and curriculum, and other details about the orientation seminar.

INTRODUCTION

As interest in study abroad programs has increased during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, research in the field of international education has frequently focused on the effects and benefits of studying abroad (Gillespie & Slawson, 2003; GLOSSARI, 2010; Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic, & Jon, 2009; Redden, 2010). At the same time, a diverse range of stakeholders—students, parents, teachers, educational administrators, employers, politicians, and others—often ask the question: Why study abroad? Students want to know what international travel will teach them. Perhaps the best answer is two words: not much. That is, the benefits of studying abroad are not guaranteed. As with any course of study, students will benefit from an international experience only to the extent that they invest themselves in the experience. For self-centered or closed-minded students who are unwilling to allow their experiences and observations to challenge and transform them, studying abroad can be little different from a vacation or an educational experience at home. As Grove explains in the *Orientation Handbook for Youth Exchange Programs*, “Merely sending young people to live abroad for a while does not guarantee that they will learn a great deal more than if they remained at home” (1989, p. xi).

Furthermore, the skills necessary to learn and thrive in an intercultural setting do not come naturally for a student who has had little to no international or cross-cultural exposure, even if that student is motivated to learn. As L. Robert Kohls emphasizes in *The Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, travelers are not likely to have positive international experiences if they are ill-prepared: “The success rate of overseas adjustment among Americans is not nearly so high as it might be. If left to luck, your chances of having a really satisfying experience living abroad

would be about one in seven” (Kohls, 2001, p. 1). Pre-departure orientation is therefore used to help students prepare for their overseas experiences by creating realistic goals and expectations and reducing the unpredictability involved with studying abroad.

Preparing students for their international and intercultural experiences is essential if they are to get the most out of their travels. Consequently, pre-departure orientation is now a common element of study abroad programs in some form or another. However, the emphasis of orientation is often on administrative matters (e.g. paperwork, program cost, academic credits), basic “how to” skills and preparations for international travel, and occasionally a brief cultural-historical introduction to the host country (Homann, 1999). All of these topics should be covered in orientation, but other vital areas that are often left out include preparing students for active participation and reflection on their experiences, developing cross-cultural awareness and intercultural communication skills, and establishing goals and objectives for the experience.

This paper will outline a design for a pre-departure orientation experience that is intended to thoroughly prepare students to take advantage of studying abroad. Specifically, the pre-departure orientation will be designed as a one-credit-hour academic seminar for a study abroad program at Freed-Hardeman University (FHU), the researcher’s own workplace. In order for the research to be relevant for other institutions and international education professionals, the researcher’s conclusions will be generalized so that the principles and practices of pre-departure orientation described in this paper can be replicated in other contexts.

Program Context

FHU is a private faith-based liberal arts university located in Henderson, Tennessee. The enrollment of roughly 2,000 students consists primarily of undergraduates from the West Tennessee area from a Christian evangelical background, although other regions and religious

traditions are represented among the student body. While FHU's international services are far from extensive, the study abroad office—called FHU Abroad—does offer a handful of short-term programs and one semester-long faculty-led program in both the fall and spring semesters. The semester-long program is based in Verviers, Belgium, in Wallonia, the French-speaking region of the country. FHU has been sending students to Verviers for nearly 30 years, with approximately 50 students participating in the program annually. Using FHU Abroad records from the last five years, the researcher calculated that most of the students who participate in the study abroad program have very limited international experience; fewer than 20% report having traveled internationally before, and only about 3% report having traveled overseas for a period longer than two weeks at a time.

FHU Abroad requires study abroad participants to attend pre-departure orientation sessions the semester before they go abroad in order to prepare them for their international travels. The current design of the program includes about ten half-hour to one-hour sessions, primarily in the form of lectures and presentations, although other activities, such as icebreakers and group discussions, are also included in the orientation content. Material covered during pre-departure orientation includes basic introductory information (cost and financial aid, paperwork, academic courses, and the overseas program's itinerary), travel "survival" skills (accessing money overseas, using cell phones internationally, and packing), and some historical information about Belgium and Europe. Although the pre-departure orientation program affords a great deal of face-time with the students, no time is set aside for cross-cultural training or discussions on topics like cultural awareness and intercultural communication skills, nor does the orientation involve discussions about experiential education, personal reflection, or goals and objectives. The current orientation program does not have official goals or student learning objectives.

Program Rationale

Reorganizing the pre-departure orientation for FHU's semester-long study abroad program in Belgium as a for-credit course will help improve the academic quality of the study abroad program and maximize student learning outcomes. Like the rest of the field of international education, FHU Abroad is realizing, as La Brack notes, "just how much more effective and relevant the overseas experience can be made by providing participants a well-designed orientation prior to immersion" (Hoff & Kapplar 2005, p. 195). By expanding and supplanting the curriculum of the current pre-departure orientation at FHU with an academic seminar, time will allow for a much broader and more thorough approach toward orientation, including topics such as cultural learning, experiential education, and reflective learning. As *NAFSA's Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators* explains, "Conducting an academic course on pre-departure is ideal in many ways, as courses can cover every pre-departure topic in an in-depth manner" (Thebodo & Marx, 2005, p. 298). Cross-cultural topics can be thoroughly reviewed, and course activities can be used to introduce students to the experiential learning theory in anticipation of their own international experiences. Reflective learning can also be built into the program as a course requirement, and additional assignments and activities can be used to increase student involvement in orientation.

Literature Review

Pre-departure orientation has become commonplace in study abroad programs and is included as one of the Forum on Education Abroad's *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (2011). Chapters in both *NAFSA's Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators* and *The Guide to Short-Term Programs Abroad* are dedicated to the design and practice of pre-departure orientation and describe several formats and approaches for orientation

(Thebodo & Marx, 2005; Kinsella, Smith-Simonet, & Tuma, 2007). Much is written in these resources and elsewhere about what content should be covered in orientation, particularly the “nuts and bolts” details—practical and logistical concerns related to the particular program.

Numerous studies have been conducted that suggest study abroad programs have diverse impacts on student development; researchers indicate that studying abroad contributes to the development of students’ cross-cultural skills, enhances students’ worldviews and global perspectives, promotes multicultural and international understanding, encourages reflective thought, and increases self-reliance and self-confidence (Carsello & Creaser, 1976; Carlson & Widman, 1988; Kitsantas, 2004; Kitsantas & Meyers, 2002; Kuh & Kaufman, 1984; McCabe, 1994). Maximizing study abroad outcomes depends on a number of variables, as Hoff and Kapplar explain, “one of which is the preparation and training of students” (2005, p. 194). Kitsantas suggests that pre-departure preparation, particularly in the area of goal setting, is essential for student success (2004). Shaheen also asserts that “cross-cultural issues are an important part of pre-departure orientation sessions” and should be included in orientation curriculum in order to maximize cultural learning (2004, p. 40). However, there appears to be very little actual research about the effectiveness of particular components of orientation in enhancing study abroad outcomes. Thebodo and Marx note in *NAFSA’s Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators* that while there are excellent resources available for intercultural training, “Empirical evidence evaluating the usefulness of intercultural training programs is rare” (2005, p. 213). Nevertheless, a few components are often put forward as essential for student preparation and orientation, in addition to logistical and practical concerns: cultural training, instruction on experiential learning, personal reflection, and goal setting (Homann, 1999; Kitsantas, 2004; Post, 2011; Wood, 2006).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Pre-departure preparation is critical to students' success, and Rhodes and Hong assert that the best way to prepare students is through a pre-departure course, which can cover cross-cultural learning in-depth:

It is critical that students with a limited background in the languages and cultures of the world, as well as a limited understanding of the United States' role in the world, receive additional academic learning in order to take full advantage of their foreign experience.

In addition to emphasizing academic study, it is critical to preparing students to live in another country and culture. (2005, p. 39)

Cultural training and instruction is a necessary component of this pre-departure academic learning. Cultural orientation should begin by clarifying the nature of culture and explaining why it is important for an international traveler to be prepared for cross-cultural interactions. The iceberg analogy (Weaver, 1986), combined with one or two frameworks of cultural variation, would be an effective way to introduce the concept of culture. The features of culture described by Edward T. Hall in his 1976 book *Beyond Culture* include variations in the concept of time (monochronic versus polychronic) and styles of communication (high context versus low context). Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory focuses on variation in cultural values between nations in areas such as individualism versus collectivism and power distance (G. Hofstede, G. J. Hofstede, & M. Minkov, 2010).

Repeated unanticipated collisions with the iceberg of culture can lead to cultural dissonance or culture shock, a term coined by Kalervo Olberg to describe the emotional reactions

experienced by travelers upon encountering a new culture (1960). Louise Stewart and Peter A. Leggat built on Olberg's work to describe the medical symptoms of culture shock and the factors that influence the severity of culture shock (1998). As Grove explains, "Culture shock is a stress-related medical condition with potentially serious consequences for the physical and mental health of the sojourner" (1989, p. 5). Preventing culture shock, therefore, should be a priority of pre-departure orientation. This can be done, Grove suggests, by reducing the "degree of unpredictability" that students will face overseas (1989, p. 9). By increasing students' country-specific and general cultural awareness and familiarizing them with examples of cultural variation using the values frameworks, they will be more likely to recognize their frustrations as being rooted in cultural differences, thus reducing the unpredictability and, ideally, their anxiety.

An important component of cultural awareness is "a recognition of the pervasiveness of ethnocentrism" (Homann, 1999, p. 10). Milton Bennett describes ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism as two ends of a continuum representing the ways people react to cultural differences (1993). This continuum or scale, called the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), is useful not just to measure the intercultural development of learners, but also to teach learners how to assess themselves as they reflect on their own intercultural development. Once learners become more self-aware and understand how their own culture creates their perception of the host culture, they will be more prepared to respond to the host culture with understanding.

Cross-cultural training emphasizes experiential techniques so that students can learn to recognize their emotions and reactions as culture-based, having already experienced similar emotions during their training. Experiential learning methods involve a different approach to teaching and learning than traditional classroom methods, as summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1: EXPERIENTIAL AND TRADITIONAL EDUCATION APPROACHES

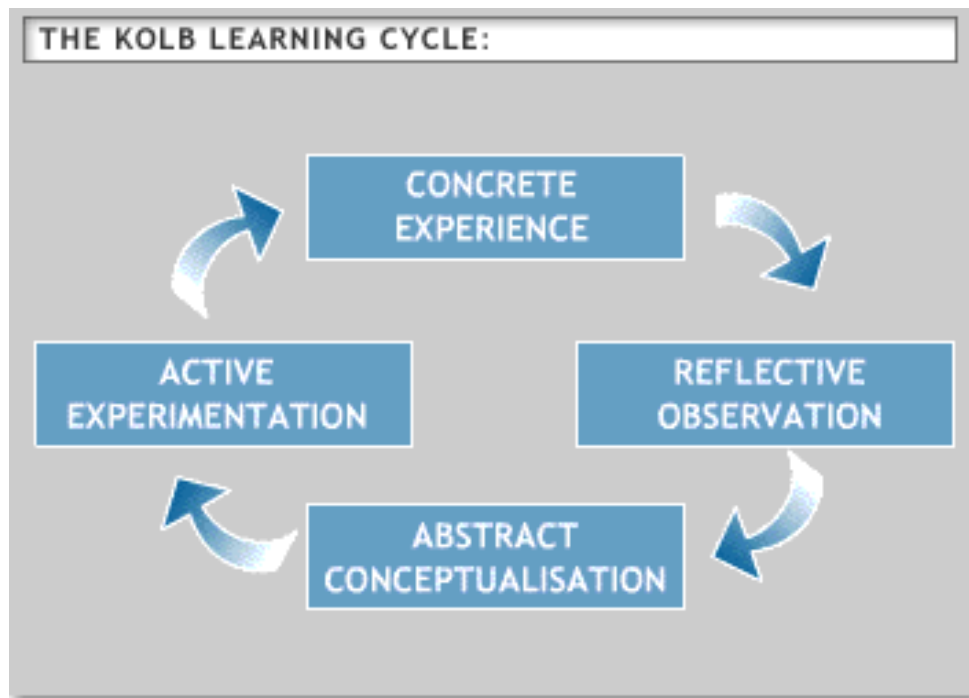
EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION STRESSES:	TRADITIONAL EDUCATION STRESSES:
getting involved and doing	watching and listening
learning from classmates and on your own	expecting teacher to have all the answers
learner and teacher sharing responsibility for learning	teacher being responsible for the learning
sharing the decision making	decision making by teacher only
learning <u>how</u> to learn	learning facts or skills
identifying problems and solutions	memorizing and acquiring information
recognizing importance of learners' experience and knowledge	minimizing learners' experience and knowledge
guiding and assisting in learning on one's own	telling, prescribing and ordering
understanding learners' motivation for what needs to be learned	reinforcing <u>others'</u> ideas of what needs to be learned
applying practical, immediate approaches	building repertoires of information for future reference

Note. From Fantini, 1984, p. 76.

Experiential education provides opportunities for the learner to engage in structured activities and participate in the four phases of the experiential learning cycle (Figure 1). The cycle's four stages will be described in more detail in the curriculum section of this paper, along with examples of activities that will be used to facilitate students' progress through the cycle. It should also be pointed out that the entire study abroad experience is an experiential learning activity that will likely not be structured or facilitated to the same degree as a pre-departure orientation experiential learning activity. The goal of organizing activities and introducing students to the experiential learning cycle during pre-departure orientation is for them later to

apply what they know about experiential learning to their study abroad experiences and facilitate their own progress through the cycle, so that they can independently process and apply what they learn while abroad through self-guided reflection.

FIGURE 1: THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE



Note. From Mobbs, n.d.

Various cultural learning theories and experiential learning theories thus form the primary theoretical groundwork for this orientation program. Other theoretical foundations influencing the design and curriculum of the orientation program include Kitsantas's research on the importance of goal setting in maximizing study abroad outcomes (2004), as well as Mezirow's transformative learning theory as summarized by Kitchenham (2006), which is itself rooted in Freire's educational theory of conscientization described in his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). The primary element of transformative learning is critical reflection on assumptions and perspectives in light of new knowledge, and is thus linked to the experiential learning cycle.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The pre-departure orientation seminar designed in this paper is a course called Global Awareness and Competence that will be mandatory for any student who intends to participate in FHU Abroad’s semester-long study abroad program in Belgium. The course will meet once weekly throughout the semester prior to when the students will study abroad (e.g. during the fall for students who will study abroad the following spring). Class meetings will be facilitated by FHU Abroad staff and will involve instruction and activities intended to introduce the students to the diverse opportunities and challenges inherent in participating in a study abroad program. Table 2 compares standard orientation content at FHU with the content to be covered in Global Awareness and Competence.

TABLE 2: STANDARD ORIENTATION VS. PRE-DEPARTURE SEMINAR

STANDARD ORIENTATION	PRE-DEPARTURE SEMINAR
Review “nuts and bolts” details (passports, logistics, etc.)	Discuss the concept of culture and cross-cultural principles throughout the course
Review academic information (courses, transfer of credits, etc.)	Experiential learning activities and personal reflection exercises
Review excursions/travel opportunities	Readings and assignments about course material
Review health and safety information	Conduct individual goal-setting and review the program’s student learning outcomes
Little opportunity for group interactions	Group team-building activities
10 orientation sessions	14 class sessions

Global Awareness and Competence is meant to expand, rather than supplant, the current pre-departure orientation content, and the material currently covered in the standard orientation will still be included in the curriculum for the seminar. Many of the topics dealt with in the course will still be practical in nature, but theoretical and abstract issues will also be explored. The primary changes to the content are the inclusion of material related to cultural training and the used of experiential, as opposed to exclusively didactic, learning methods. Table 3 outlines the schedule for the pre-departure seminar. Experiential learning activities and each session's content will be described more thoroughly when the seminar's curriculum is described below.

TABLE 3: ORIENTATION SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Session 1	Introduction I: review syllabus; introduce experiential learning cycle
Session 2	Introduction II: passports; paperwork; cost/payments/financial aid
Session 3	Cultural Learning I: discuss concept of culture (iceberg analogy, frameworks)
Session 4	Academic courses; goals and objectives; transformative learning
Session 5	History and Cultures I: Europe
Session 6	History and Cultures II: Belgium
Session 7	Health and Safety in International Travel
Session 8	Cultural Learning II: culture shock; ethnocentrism; intercultural communication
Session 9	Miscellaneous Logistics: using cell phones and accessing money
Session 10	Packing I: packing list and luggage restrictions
Session 11	Packing II: student panel
Session 12	Planning Independent Travel I
Session 13	Planning Independent Travel II: experiential activity
Session 14	Wrap-up: Q&A, evaluation

Goals and Objectives

Pre-departure orientation represents the beginning of the study abroad experience, a process that involves “three major sequential phases: (1) pre-departure, (2) during-the-sojourn, and (3) post-return” (Grove, 1989, p. 12). Global Awareness and Competence is thus the first component of a three-piece study abroad program that also includes on-site experiences and a re-entry process. The ultimate goal of pre-departure orientation is to improve students’ international learning experiences by creating appropriate expectations and introducing them to important concepts for understanding their experiences. Within this broad goal, the following objectives can be identified.

The course objectives are:

- To describe the study abroad program in Belgium by giving essential practical and logistical information about the program;
- To provide relevant travel health and safety information in the interest of student well-being;
- To prepare students to effectively engage in an international or intercultural setting with awareness and sensitivity;
- To introduce the process of experiential learning and reflection; and
- To assist students in developing personal objectives that fit into their own long-term goals.

By the end of the program, students should be able to:

- Adequately prepare for and conduct international travel;
- Apply basic intercultural principles and skills;
- Use strategies to cope with culture shock;
- Describe the experiential learning cycle and use it to process their own international experiences;
- Think critically and reflectively about global issues and their roles as global citizens; and
- Identify personal learning objectives for their participation in the study abroad program.

Various evaluation methods will be used to identify whether or not the course objectives are being attained, as described in the evaluation section of this paper.

Needs Assessment

FHU Abroad recognizes the importance of pre-departure preparation, and the current pre-departure orientation program already affords a great deal of face-time with participants. The rationale for transforming the existing orientation program into an academic course was established through discussions and interviews conducted with the Director of FHU Abroad, Dr. Jennifer Johnson. The purpose of the discussions was to explore how FHU Abroad can prepare students to make the most out of their international experiences and to gather Dr. Johnson's perspective of students' needs as well as a better understanding of the course proposal process. Dr. Johnson felt there were several advantages to a pre-departure seminar over a standard orientation program with weekly meetings.

First, students may be more likely to take the orientation sessions seriously as an academic course than as non-academic "meetings," knowing that their attendance and participation will affect whether they pass the class, and therefore whether they are allowed to participate in the study abroad program. An academic course would also make various classroom tools available to the instructor. As Dr. Johnson explains, "It may sound juvenile, but while an assigned seating arrangement would seem out of place for meetings, you could take advantage of the classroom setting to create a seating chart if there are groups of students that are disruptive and inattentive" (J. Johnson, personal communication, June 5, 2014). The seminar format, then, would ideally increase student attendance, attention, and participation in the orientation.

Second, an academic course provides a better environment and sufficient time to focus on more in-depth learning outcomes involving more than general "nuts and bolts" information about the study abroad program. Dr. Johnson emphasizes the importance of including historical and cultural information during pre-departure orientation—something done inadequately in the

current orientation program—in order to provide students with a cultural-historical framework for understanding their experiences abroad. “A pre-departure course can include cultural and historical learning, which students probably would not pay as much attention to in pre-departure meetings. A classroom setting can create an environment that makes it possible to talk about things like history and culture while retaining the attention of students who might otherwise zone out because of disinterest” (J. Johnson, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

Third, a pre-departure seminar format is advantageous in that readings, homework, and other activities can be assigned and enforced. These assignments can be designed so that the students will have to begin to think critically and reflect on their global learning. Thebodo and Marx highlight one advantage of pre-departure academic courses: “Pre-departure courses can train students to write analytically about their cross-cultural experiences, which can aid them in analyzing cultural interactions and critical incidents and can prepare them for journal writing” (2005, p. 298). The self-reflective component of the course, as described in the Curriculum section of this paper below, will familiarize the students with reflective writing and journaling. Other assignments and readings can focus the students’ attention on content that cannot be covered in the amount of time allowed in a one-credit-hour seminar.

Curriculum

While research and empirical evidence evaluating the usefulness of pre-departure orientation content is lacking in the field of international education, several elements are often suggested as essential for student preparation, as has already been explained: logistical and practical concerns, cultural training, instruction on experiential learning, personal reflection, and goal setting. Thebodo and Marx advocate in *NAFSA’s Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators*, “New developments in the curriculum design of programs abroad can help

advisers, in their role as educators, manage the education abroad experience as a continuum” (2005, p. 312). The curriculum for the Global Awareness and Competence seminar represents an attempt to design a pre-departure program that enhances the study abroad experience and learning outcomes through effective preparation and training.

Course content will include didactic teaching methods such as lectures, quizzes, and assigned readings and response prompts, as well as experiential learning activities and self-guided reflection. The curriculum can be divided into at least two broad categories: schema-building and practical concerns. The schema-building content focuses on building the background knowledge necessary for participants to effectively frame their experiences (in a cultural and historical context, for example). The practical concerns address information that students should be aware of in order to prepare for their travels, take advantage of their study abroad opportunities, and know how to analyze and interpret their experiences. The seminar may also examine issues related to topics such as globalization and internationalization, sustainability, and current events—content that may fit into the schema-building category depending on the manner in which the issues are approached. For example, the students may be asked to read and discuss recent news articles about the Romani population in Europe and consider issues such as stereotyping, discrimination, and inequality, providing a case study through which the students will be encouraged to think critically about cross-cultural concerns.

Classes 1 & 2: Introduction

The first two class sessions of the seminar will serve as an introduction to the study abroad program and the pre-departure orientation course. In the first session, the instructor will review the syllabus (Appendix A), including the course schedule, course goals and objectives, and assignments and expectations. After reviewing the syllabus, the rest of the session will be

spent introducing the class to the concept of experiential learning and Kolb's four-phase experiential learning cycle, including its goals and methods. The cycle involves (1) having a concrete experience, followed by (2) reflective observation of that experience, which leads to (3) forming abstract concepts through analysis and making useful generalizations by drawing conclusions, which are then (4) applied in future situations or "experiments," resulting in new experiences to be observed, analyzed, and applied. The four stages will be explained and simplified using the following version of the cycle from Andrea Corney (2007):

1. **Do it.** Have the experience!
2. **What?** What happened? What were the results?
3. **So what?** What do these results imply? How did I influence the outcome?
4. **Now what?** What will I do differently next time?

The discussion of the cycle will start with the Concrete Experience ("do it") stage, but students will be assured that learners can enter the cycle beginning at any of the four stages. They will then apply the experiential learning cycle by participating in a brief in-class activity and working through the cycle together. The class will watch the HSBC "Eels" advertisement, which portrays a cross-cultural encounter between an English businessperson and his Chinese partners (Drummond, 2007). The students will be asked to imagine themselves in the place of the English businessperson and feel what they imagine he is feeling, in place of a concrete experience. The group will then be asked to make reflective observations about the interaction, and then analyze the encounter and attempt to draw meaningful conclusions, before brainstorming how their abstract concepts can be applied in future experiences.

The group will also briefly be introduced to Kolb's four learning styles—diverging, assimilating, converging, and accommodating—and shown where each learning style fits into the

experiential learning cycle (Table 4). The students will be asked to reflect later on their own preferred learning styles through reflective journaling. Observation and reflection are an important part of the experiential learning cycle, and reflective journaling is an excellent way to participate in the experiential learning opportunities involved in studying abroad. International experiences have tremendous power to provoke critical introspection:

While learning about others during an intercultural experience, one tends to learn even more about oneself. While experiencing other cultural contexts provides opportunities to learn about the host language and culture, it also provokes reflection and introspection about aspects of one’s own culture that are usually taken for granted. (Fantini, 2005)

The students will thus be introduced to the importance of reflection and encouraged to do reflective journaling throughout the orientation program and during their overseas experience. To familiarize them with reflective journaling, the class will be required to write a few reflections throughout the pre-departure orientation program, beginning with a journal entry responding to a prompt about Kolb’s learning styles. The students will receive a handout describing each learning style and, as homework, they will identify which style they prefer and why. The journal responses will be submitted to the instructor throughout the semester. (See Appendix B for examples of journal prompts.)

TABLE 4: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MATRIX

	Active Experimentation <i>doing</i>	Reflective Observation <i>watching</i>
Concrete Experience <i>feeling</i>	Accommodating (feel and do)	Diverging (feel and watch)
Abstract Conceptualization <i>thinking</i>	Converging (think and do)	Assimilating (think and watch)

The first orientation session will conclude with a brief icebreaker activity called “Go to the Corner” so that the students can meet each other. The students will respond to multiple-choice questions about their tastes and preferences by going to the designated corner of the room best corresponding to their choice. Once they have gone to their corner, they will exchange names with the rest of the students who chose the same corner and give more details about their preference. For example, the students might be asked to choose their ideal travel setting: the city, the countryside, the mountains, or the beach. After going to their corner and sharing their name, they will then give an example of a destination in Europe that represents their preferred setting and that they would like to visit. Another brief icebreaker activity will take place at the beginning of the second orientation meeting to further familiarize the students with each other.

The second class session will also cover basic “nuts and bolts” information about the program, including passport application instructions and the passport priority deadline, paperwork, and information about the cost of the program, financial aid, and payment deadlines. The forms necessary for participation in the study abroad program (Appendix C) will be distributed and explained. The instructor will also explain what costs are and are not included in the program charge and advise the students regarding how much additional money they should budget for personal expenses. The students will also be encouraged to visit with the Office of Financial Aid, share the deposit deadlines with their parents, and review the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship application if they are eligible for the award.

Classes 3 & 8: Cultural Learning

Cross-cultural development is a primary objective of participation in a study abroad program and is one of the student learning outcomes of FHU’s study abroad program in Belgium. It is important to lay a foundation for cross-cultural learning before students depart for

their education abroad experience. As Brewer and Solberg note, “A variety of both credit-bearing and noncredit orientation courses, taught both on campus and virtually, have been introduced. Virtually all include an emphasis on cross-cultural or intercultural concepts” (2009, p. 42). One of Grove’s principles of youth exchange orientation highlights the importance of cultural learning in pre-departure orientation: “The fundamental objectives of orientation [. . .] are (1) to promote intercultural learning and (2) to prevent culture shock” (1989, p. 5). It is important to note that these objectives are not accomplished automatically while studying abroad. As Lundy Dobbert notes, not all students have a natural propensity to adjust to another culture, so the university must “prepare students and faculty prior to their [international experiences]” to respond appropriately to cultural differences and take advantage of opportunities for cultural learning (Hoff & Kapplar, 2005, p. 195).

La Brock asserts, “Properly designed and conducted orientation programs do assist participants to achieve positive intercultural adjustments” (Hoff & Kapplar, 2005, p. 194). The Global Awareness and Competence seminar will therefore focus two separate class sessions on culture-general principles and instruction in cross-cultural training. In class session three, the instructor will engage the students in a discussion about the complexity of the concept of culture using the iceberg analogy. The instructor will ask the class to give examples of culture and will then use those examples to fill in the iceberg model, explaining the difference between surface culture and deep culture (Weaver, 1986). The concept of culture will also be explained using various cultural values frameworks, such as Hofstede and Hall’s difference paradigms for organizing and identifying culture. Five dimensions in particular will be emphasized:

- High/Low Context: the degree to which people rely on factors other than explicit speech to convey their messages (Hall, 1976);

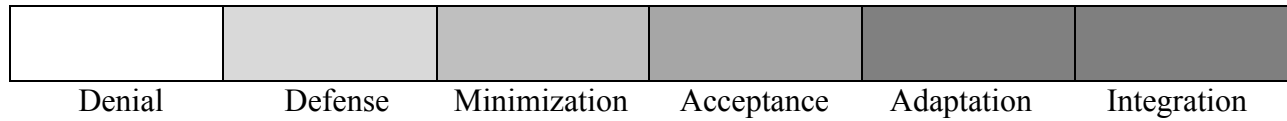
- Power-Distance: the extent to which people accept unequal power distribution in society and institutions (Hofstede, 2001);
- Collectivism/Individualism: the degree to which people are integrated into a cohesive group and seek the group's best interests (Hofstede, 2001);
- Femininity/Masculinity: the extent to which a society exhibits traditionally masculine or feminine values (Hofstede, 2001); and
- Uncertainty Avoidance: the extent to which people are willing to tolerate the unknown or ambiguous (Hofstede, 2001).

While discussing the various dimensions of the cultural values frameworks, the instructor will provide specific and tangible examples of cultural variation using the students' culture, the host culture, and other cultures, so that the students may perceive the cultural-general information as practical to their future experiences. The class will also complete an activity in which they will be given examples of American and European cultural values and behaviors and must guess which culture the value or behavior (generally) describes. Some of the examples will apply to both cultures, while other examples will generally better represent one culture or the other.

The purpose of the discussion and activity about cultural variation is for students to begin to recognize cultural differences and understand their own cultural baggage that they will carry with them when they travel abroad. The discussion will be continued in lesson eight, in which the students will learn to think critically about culture and intercultural interactions. The students will be asked to share and discuss intercultural experiences that they have had and reflect on their own cultural values. Using Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), the instructor will present the ethnocentrism/ethnorelativism continuum (Bennett, 1993). The

continuum, shown in Figure 2, includes several stages from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Participants will be taught how to assess themselves and reflect on their progress along the scale.

FIGURE 2: DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY



Note. Adapted from Bennett, 1993.

The students will also be warned that repeated collisions with the iceberg of culture can lead to cultural dissonance or culture shock, with “reactions ranging from mild discomfort to deep disturbance” (Thebodo & Marx, 2005, p. 302). The instructor will explain the many possible effects of culture shock and share strategies for coping with culture shock. The class will be also shown various models of the cultural adjustment curve, with the goal of reducing anxiety and unpredictability as the students begin to better understand the cultural adaptation process and the emotions and reactions frequently expressed in cross-cultural experiences.

The instructor will also provide pointers for effective intercultural communication, including recognizing and addressing cross-cultural communication barriers and understanding non-verbal communication styles and norms. To continue the development of their intercultural communication skills, participants will also be encouraged to enroll in COM 236, the Intercultural Communication class at FHU, after reentry. This three-hour semester-long course goes into much more detail about culture-general information and intercultural communication skills than time allows for in the Global Awareness and Competence seminar.

Class 4: Your Time in Europe

The fourth class session covers material intended to answer questions students may have about how their time overseas will be structured, as well as to help each student review how the

overseas experience fits into his/her academic and personal goals. First, the instructor will describe to the class the course options for their semester abroad, including courses that will be taught by the participating FHU faculty and opportunities for individualized instruction and independent studies. The instructor will also provide an overview of the program calendar, including departure and return dates, class days, group trips, and opportunities for independent travel. After answering any questions from the students about the courses and the program calendar, the instructor will lead a class discussion about goals and learning objectives. One of the course objectives for Global Awareness and Competence is to assist students in developing personal objectives that fit into their own long-term goals. Therefore, in addition to discussing the program's goals and learning objectives as established by the FHU Abroad Office, the students will be encouraged to develop their own goals for their overseas experience. They will be required to submit a journal response reflecting on their personal goals for their study abroad, including at least three goals with learning methods for each goal.

The class will also discuss the importance of self-directed learning in the context of personal goal setting. The students will be introduced to Mezirow's transformative learning theory and Freire's theory of conscientization, which influenced Mezirow. As Mezirow explains, "Learning to think for oneself involves becoming critically reflective of assumptions and participating in discourse to validate beliefs, intentions, values and feelings" (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 118). The instructor will therefore stress the importance of critical reflection (e.g. through reflective journaling or conversation) in order to take full advantage of the learning and growth opportunities involved in an overseas study program. This method of learning through critical awareness will be contrasted with the traditional education method, which Freire describes as the "banking" method, in which the teacher "deposits" knowledge to the students, and the students

become dependent on the teacher for knowledge and do not learn to think for themselves (Kirchenham, 2008).

Classes 5 & 6: History and Cultures

While classes three and eight take a culture-general approach in order to provide a framework for cultural analysis and comparison, classes five and six are culture-specific and focus on European and Belgian history and culture. The discussion of European history and culture during the fifth class session will consider the ways in which Europe has impacted the modern world, effectively serving as an introduction to the course Western Heritage, which is offered every semester as part of the study abroad program. The session will begin with a brief discussion of classical antiquity and Medieval Europe, but the lesson will focus primarily on modern Europe, from the Renaissance to contemporary Europe, including European integration efforts, current events, and linguistic and cultural diversity. Integration efforts that are relevant to the students will be emphasized, such as the adoption of the euro, the Schengen Agreement, and higher education exchange programs and policies such as the Erasmus Programme and the Bologna Process. Finally, places of interest will be discussed that are relevant to European history and culture and near the location where the students will be residing, such as the Aachen Cathedral, which dates back to the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne; Maastricht, where the Maastricht Treaty was signed formalizing the creation of the European Union and the common European currency, the euro; and Brussels, the location of the European Parliament and European Commission and the de facto capital of Europe.

The students will later reflect on a journal prompt regarding the controversy surrounding European integration, including euroskepticism and the Eurozone crisis and sovereign debt, using Spain and Greece as case studies. Before the class session, the students will also be

required to read short articles about a current event in Europe, such as the marginalization and scapegoating of the Roma population. The current event chosen will in some way relate to linguistic or cultural diversity and intercultural interaction, so that it can be reflected on later after class eight's discussion about ethnocentrism and cross-cultural barriers.

The sixth class session will focus more specifically on the history and culture of Belgium, Wallonia, and Verviers, where the FHU facility in Belgium is located. Before the class session, students will be required to read short articles related to the decentralization and linguistic tensions within Belgium, particularly between the Dutch-speakers in Flanders and the French-speakers in Wallonia. For example, the students might be sent an article about the political feud over two pandas that Belgium received from China, which the French-speaking Belgian prime minister gave to a zoo in Wallonia rather than the arguably more deserving Antwerp Zoo in Flanders. Other aspects of Belgian culture will also be explored, such as the country's long tradition in comics (including *The Adventures of Tintin* and *The Smurfs*). The students will be offered samples of Speculoos spread and cookies, which are immensely popular in Belgium and rebranded in the United States as Biscoff.

The discussion of Belgian culture will also consider the country's sizeable immigrant population. Belgium's demographics are becoming very diverse, with high rates of immigration from within and outside the European Union. Immigrants in Belgium often face the same nativist reactions that can be found in other countries. In fact, one organization in Belgium has identified Verviers, the location of FHU's campus in Belgium, as the most Islamophobic city in Wallonia, hinting at the tensions between nativists and Middle Eastern immigrants in the country ("Verviers serait la ville," 2014). The students will be asked to reflect later in their journals about their own perceptions of both immigrants and Muslims.

In addition to the discussion of Belgian history and culture, the class will participate in an experiential learning activity to familiarize themselves with the city of Verviers. The students will be divided into groups to complete a virtual scavenger hunt (Appendix D) using Google Maps. They will receive a link to a Google Map with several locations in Verviers placemarked and the walking route from the city's central train station to the FHU facility highlighted. Each group will use Google Maps and Google Street View to take screenshots of locations throughout Verviers, including the train station, the FHU facility, restaurants, hospitals, plazas, and other landmarks. Each group will email the screenshots to the instructor once they have completed the exercise, and once the activity is over, the instructor will reconvene the class and show photographs of various locations throughout Verviers and the inside of the FHU facility.

Class 7: Health and Safety

In the seventh class session, the students will be presented with several health and safety scenarios, ranging from minor to severe situations. The instructor will explain both how to respond to each health and safety scenario and how to prevent such situations from occurring in the first place.

The scenarios will include situations like severe jet lag, an illness or injury, a lost or stolen passport, and a regional or national crisis. The instructor will provide instructions about the best practices for responding to each situation: find an English-speaking doctor through IAMAT; visit the nearest U.S. embassy; cancel your lost credit card; watch for updates from the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, etc. The instructor will also provide suggestions on ways to avoid each scenario: begin adjusting your circadian rhythm before departure to reduce the effects of jet lag; check with your doctor about any necessary immunizations; keep your money and travel documents in a money pouch; avoid public

demonstrations and locations with a potential for unrest, etc. The students will also be debriefed on their student travel insurance coverage and how to take advantage of it if they experience a covered loss.

Class 9: Miscellaneous Logistics

Logistical concerns related to using cell phones internationally and accessing money while traveling overseas will be discussed in the ninth class session. For regular communication with friends and family back home, the instructor will recommend alternatives to cell phones, such as various programs and services available over the Internet. The instructor will also explain how to determine whether a cell phone will work in Europe (i.e. whether it is GSM-compatible and can operate on the frequency bands used in Europe). The students will also be provided with information about how to obtain the local currency while traveling abroad and the various fees that they may be charged for using an ATM card to make international transactions.

Classes 10 & 11: Packing

Class 10 will focus on how to pack for the study abroad program, including the importance of packing light, information about luggage restrictions and prohibited items, and an overview of suggested items to pack for the semester-long program. The instructor will show examples of items such as electrical adapter and converter sets, travel backpacks, and TSA-approved luggage locks. Veteran study abroad participants will be invited to the eleventh class session to sit on a panel and answer questions from the class about packing or other things related to a semester abroad. The panel members will be encouraged to prepare advice in advance and bring examples of items they intend to reference.

Classes 12 & 13: Planning Independent Travel

During the semester abroad, there are two extended periods of time set aside for students to form their own groups and conduct independent travel. Extensive preparation and thorough research are necessary in order for students to prepare for their independent travel opportunities, so two class sessions of the pre-departure seminar are set aside to teach students how to plan international travel. The first session is primarily lecture-based, as the instructor walks the class through the five stages of planning independent travel:

1. Picking destinations
2. Planning transportation
3. Finding and reserving accommodations
4. Planning time
5. Writing an itinerary

As the first stage—picking destinations—is being discussed, a map of Europe will be projected onto a screen in the classroom, and the instructor will highlight several popular travel destinations, showing pictures and explaining each location's significance. The instructor will then provide information about how to research and plan transportation during independent travel, introducing students to resources such as online rail planners, budget airlines, and travel search engines. The instructor will show the students how to use these resources to research and plan transportation from one destination to another. The class will also be introduced to train travel using videos and a brief role-play activity. The instructor will play a video of a flap display departure board in a European train station and explain how to read a departure board to find the appropriate platform. The role-play activity will involve student participants choosing the correct “train car,” represented by chairs or desks marked with pieces of paper that refer to each car's

numbers, destinations, and whether they are first or second class. The instructor will also show the class how to use online hostel search engines and explain what hostels are, and introduce the students to online travel guides like Wikitravel and Lonely Planet. Finally, the instructor will demonstrate to the class how to write up their travel plans in the form of an itinerary, which must be submitted to the study abroad program director any time the students go on independent travel.

The next class session will be used as an experiential activity to teach students how to plan independent travel. The class will break up into smaller groups, and the students will put into practice what they learned previously about how to plan travel. Each group will be led by a mentor—a student who has previously participated in the study abroad program. The mentors will walk their groups through the five stages of planning free travel, guiding them along as necessary as they complete the exercise. (See Appendix E for the directions that will be distributed to the class explaining the exercise.)

Class 14: Wrap-Up

The final class session will be used as a wrap-up to answer any remaining questions from the students and to evaluate the orientation program. A more detailed description of the evaluation is provided in the Evaluation Plan section below. The evaluation segment of the wrap-up session will take the form of a group discussion in the style of a helping-hindering exercise. The students will be asked to identify elements of pre-departure orientation that helped them prepare for their semester abroad and to offer constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement. Class time will be split evenly between the final Q&A and the evaluation discussion.

Bell Ringers

Several class sessions will involve “bell ringer” assignments and activities that the students will complete at the beginning of class. (See Appendix F for examples of several bell ringer activities.) The first bell ringer will be an information sheet that the students will receive when they enter the classroom on the first day of the seminar. The information sheet asks for basic information about the student’s classification, field of study, international travel experience, and goals for his/her study abroad.

At the beginning of session three, the students will spend five minutes individually listing as many characteristics or expressions of their own culture as they can. This bell ringer exercise will get the class to start thinking critically about culture and possible cultural differences. The exercise will be followed by a class discussion about the concept of culture using the iceberg analogy, during which the class will identify as many expressions of culture as they can think of, and the instructor will place those characteristics on the iceberg, explaining why it is an example of either surface culture or deep culture.

A bell ringer at the beginning of session five will survey the group’s knowledge of basic European geography. The students will be given a quiz in which they will be asked to identify ten particular European countries and seven major European capitals and match six European cities with the rivers that flow through them. The quiz will be scored and the results recorded; upon reentry after completing the semester abroad, the students will take the quiz a second time to measure the extent to which their knowledge of European geography improved.

To gauge the students’ critical-thinking skills in emergency situations, they will complete another bell ringer assignment at the beginning of session seven in which they will be presented with three scenarios that involve emergency (or perceived emergency) situations. The students

must describe the steps that would take in response to each situation. As part of their reentry program, the participants will again respond to similar scenarios, and their pre-departure and re-entry responses will be compared in order to gauge improvements in critical thinking and their ability to respond appropriately to emergency situations.

The students, many of whom have no experience using a metro network, will not be expected to know how to navigate a public transportation system prior to their participation in the study abroad program. They will complete a bell ringer at the beginning of session 12 that will require them to fill in information about how to get from one point to another on a metro map; it is expected that not all of the students will be able to complete the exercise accurately. The students will complete a similar exercise after re-entry, and the results of both exercises will be compared to measure improvements in their ability to use public transit.

Handbook

Participants will receive a PDF copy of FHU Abroad's pre-departure orientation handbook at the beginning of the semester. The handbook will supplement the orientation program and the Global Awareness and Competence seminar and provide additional information to help prepare the students for their study abroad. Much of the information covered during the seminar will also be included in the handbook so that students can reference it later. Most sections of the handbook will be assigned as required reading throughout the semester. (See the course syllabus in Appendix A for the assigned reading schedule.)

Staffing Plan

Pre-departure orientation for all FHU study abroad programs is conducted by FHU Abroad staff, specifically the FHU Abroad Coordinator, as detailed in the duties and responsibilities outlined in the FHU Abroad Coordinator's official job description. The FHU

Abroad Coordinator will continue to be responsible for teaching the pre-departure seminar. In addition to the competencies detailed in the position's job description, therefore, the FHU Abroad Coordinator should have or strive to develop the skills and knowledge areas of an effective intercultural trainer, since intercultural training will be incorporated into the curriculum of the pre-departure orientation seminar.

Michael Paige outlines several ideal characteristics of effective intercultural trainers in his article "Trainer Competencies: The Missing Conceptual Link in Orientation" (1986). While Paige's work in this area is worth referencing in the context of pre-departure orientation—as he does a very good job of thoroughly listing the many competencies that are important for intercultural trainers—study abroad advisors should understand that one does not need to be an expert intercultural trainer to provide a quality orientation experience (Homann, 1999). Nevertheless, those who facilitate orientation programs have formidable responsibilities in their role as trainers:

Not only does the trainer impart the "who, what, when and where" of survival abroad, the competencies in "how" to be effective and the "whys" of the cultural environment, but must also attempt to establish in the participants the confidence to take risks, the motivation to develop as a person, the curiosity to dig deeper, and the tolerance of ambiguity to stay sane. (Bennett, 1986, p. 120)

In order to teach and train students effectively as they prepare to study abroad, it is important for the instructor to have overseas experience, preferably in a study abroad program, as well as academic qualifications in a related discipline. Study abroad participants are often faced with experiences and new knowledge that challenge their personal beliefs and cultural identity. The FHU Abroad Coordinator is responsible for preparing the participants through pre-departure

orientation to process these experiences and function effectively in situations that require accommodating a different cultural frame of reference. This task will be easier if the FHU Abroad Coordinator has previously experienced and processed discomfort similar to what the students will likely experience.

Evaluation Plan

Evaluation is important for maintaining high-quality, effective programs, especially educational programs. Effective evaluation of any program takes time, and pre-departure orientation programs often do not have a great amount of time available for evaluation. However, evaluation should be treated as an essential activity of the orientation program and built into the course schedule rather than trying to “squeeze it in,” which might suggest that the evaluation is not important or will not be taken seriously (Homann, 1999). The pre-departure seminar will utilize two periods of time for evaluation: part of the final regular class session of the semester, and the time set aside for final examination at the end of the semester.

FHU Abroad policy prescribes a triangulated, multi-method evaluation plan that utilizes group discussion, online surveys, and individual feedback to assess student satisfaction and evaluate whether a study abroad program is successfully meeting its objectives. The same evaluation plan will be employed to evaluate Global Awareness and Competence. Half of the final class of the semester will be set aside for a group discussion in the style of a helping-hindering exercise. Grove notes that “any evaluation effort can address either or both of two fundamental concerns: merit and/or worth” (1999, p. 24). During the helping-hindering exercise, therefore, students will be asked to reflect on the merit of the orientation seminar (i.e., “Are we doing things right?”) and the worth of the curriculum (i.e., “Are we doing the right things?”). In other words, feedback will be solicited on course activities and instruction methods, as well as

course content and curriculum. In addition to the group discussion during the final class session, students will complete a brief online survey during the time allocated for final examination. The survey will include various queries involving a Likert rating scale and fields for open-ended comments. The survey results will be used to measure self-reported participant satisfaction and learning during pre-departure orientation. Further assessment will be conducted through individual feedback received from students throughout the orientation program. This feedback will be gathered from reflective journal responses assigned at various points throughout the semester. (See Appendix B for examples of journal prompts.)

The FHU Abroad office will analyze the quantitative and qualitative information gathered from these evaluation methods. If the information is determined to be sufficiently representative of the entire group, then descriptive and statistical analyses can be applied as appropriate, with assistance from the Director of Institutional Research as needed. The evaluation findings, along with the standard FHU course evaluation responses, will then be used to assess student satisfaction with the orientation program and determine whether or not the seminar was effective at meeting its goals and objectives. If it is found that students are unsatisfied with some aspect of the seminar, or that the learning objectives were not met, then the course's design and/or curriculum will be reviewed and adjusted with the aim of improving student learning and service. The assessment and evaluation process is continuous and premised on improvement, with constant adjustments being made to the program in order to ensure quality and provide opportunities for learning and transformation. Periodic assessment and evaluation is integral to the program's success.

Budget Impact

The faculty of record for Global Awareness and Competence will be the Director of FHU Abroad, who is currently a full-time faculty member at FHU. As such, there will be no budget impact involved with creating the for-credit academic seminar, since the course will be included in the Director's current teaching workload. Should the FHU Abroad Coordinator take a faculty (rather than staff) position at the university, the workload will be transferred from the Director to the Coordinator.

CONCLUSION

International educators agree, based on both research and anecdotal evidence in the field, that studying abroad has the potential to enhance a student's global perspective, and in most cases the experience's impact on the student's intellectual and personal development is very positive. International experiences can increase a student's intercultural skills, critical-thinking skills, global awareness, and self-reliance. For international programs to accomplish these outcomes, careful consideration must be done when planning the program's design. Moreover, students must be prepared to reflect on their experiences and assimilate their new knowledge to their worldviews. In order for all of this to be successful, extensive preparation is necessary to eliminate students' anxiety and unpredictability and introduce them to concepts and practices that will help them take full advantage of their opportunities for learning. Pre-departure orientation and training is one large piece in the larger endeavor of maximizing student-learning outcomes during study abroad.

The Global Awareness and Competence course at FHU is intended to thoroughly prepare the students who participate in FHU Abroad's study abroad program in Belgium for their overseas experiences. While this research has not aimed to change the design of the on-site experience of the program—something worthy of consideration—the principles and findings still have the potential to significantly enhance student learning through presentations, discussions, experiential activities, readings, and critical self-reflection. The seminar aims to produce learning that has as its goal the increased cultural and global awareness of the student participants so that they can effectively navigate and interact with other cultures and peoples.

APPENDIX A: SYLLABUS



UNDERGRADUATE COURSE SYLLABUS

HUM 299X Global Awareness and Competence

Fall 2013 1 credit hour

Instructor: Josh Barber
Office Location: Joy Simon McDaniel House, Room 5
Phone: 731-989-6174
Email: jbarber@fhu.edu
Office Hours: M-F 8:00 – 5:00; call or email for appointment

COURSE CONTENT

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: A seminar designed to prepare students to live and study in a country and culture other than their own by providing the theoretical and practical knowledge that is necessary for a successful overseas experience. It is required for students who intend participate in FHU's semester-long study abroad program in Belgium.

PREREQUISITES: None

REQUIRED MATERIALS: FHU Abroad Study Abroad Handbook – Belgium (PDF)

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The course is designed to adequately prepare students for international travel by describing the study abroad program in Belgium and providing essential practical and logistical information, providing relevant travel health and safety information, and preparing students to effectively engage in an international or intercultural setting with awareness and sensitivity.

At the end of the seminar, students should be able to apply basic intercultural principles and skills, use strategies to cope with culture shock, describe the experiential learning cycle and use it to process their own international experiences, think reflectively and critically about global issues and their role as global citizens and identify personal learning objectives for their participation in the study abroad program.

METHODOLOGY: This course will employ classroom lectures, group discussions and activities, readings, and reflective writing.

COURSE OUTLINE

The material covered in this course should help you develop and refine skills that will serve you well during your semester abroad and during every international trip you take afterwards.

- Session 1 Introduction I**
Introduction to the course (syllabus), the experiential learning cycle, and each other
 In class: “Eels” advertisement; “Go to the Corner” icebreaker activity
 Reading due: Handbook pp. i, 1-3
- Session 2 Introduction II**
Review information about passports, paperwork, and cost/payments/financial aid
(Pay attention! You need to know this stuff!)
 In class: Icebreaker activity
 Reading due: Handbook pp. 4-7, 9-11
 Reflection due: Learning style preference
 Apply for a passport! Visit with the Office of Financial Aid!
- Session 3 Cultural Learning I**
The concept of culture, cultural values frameworks
 In class: Iceberg model of culture
 Paperwork due
- Session 4 Your Time in Europe**
Academic courses, program calendar, goals and objectives, and transformative learning
 Reading due: Handbook p. 8
- Session 5 History and Cultures I**
Europe
 Reading due: Handbook pp. 12-15; articles about Roma, European integration
 Reflection due: Personal goals for study abroad
- Session 6 History and Cultures II**
Belgium
 In class: Virtual scavenger hunt in Verviers
 Reading due: Handbook pp. 16-23; articles about linguistic tensions in Belgium
 Reflection due: European integration and euroskepticism
- Session 7 Health and Safety in International Travel**
Health and safety scenarios and resources
 Reading due: Handbook pp. 43-51
 Reflection due: Immigration
- Session 8 Cultural Learning II**
Culture shock; ethnocentrism; intercultural communication
- Session 9 Miscellaneous Logistics**
Using cellphones and accessing money
 Reading due: Handbook pp. 27-29, 31-40
 Reflection due: Romani marginalization

- Session 10 Packing I**
Packing list and luggage restrictions
Reading due: Handbook pp. 24-26, 30
- Session 11 Packing II**
Student panel
Reflection due: Helping and Hindering
- Session 12 Planning Independent Travel I**
The 5 Stages of Planning Travel
In class: Train role-play exercise
Reading due: Handbook pp. 41-42, 52-73
- Session 13 Planning Independent Travel II**
Practice planning travel
- Session 14 Wrap-up**
Final Q&A, evaluation

GRADING POLICY

GRADING SCHEME: Successful completion of this course is required in order to participate in FHU Abroad's semester-long study abroad program in Belgium. In order to pass the class, students must attend all sessions of the seminar and complete all assignments.

GRADING SCALE

P = Completion of all assignments and attendance at all class sessions.

I = Students with incomplete work at the end of the semester will receive a grade of "I." If all requirements for the course are not completed by *one month* before the date of departure for the study abroad program, the student will be dropped from the program and charged the withdrawal penalty, and the "I" will be changed to an "F."

F = Incomplete or substandard work or failure to attend class sessions.

APPENDIX B: REFLECTIVE JOURNAL PROMPTS

Entry 1

Read the following descriptions of David Kolb's four learning styles from psychology.about.com. Reflect on your own learning style preferences, and identify which style you relate to, explaining why you prefer it. If you aren't sure which style you prefer, try taking the Learning Style Survey at www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/styles/learn_style_survey.html

Diverger (feeling and watching)

Divergers' dominant abilities lie in the areas of Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation, essentially the opposite strengths of the Converger. People with this learning style are good at looking at the "big picture" and organizing smaller bits of information into a meaningful whole. Divergers tend to be emotional and creative and enjoy brainstorming to come up with new ideas. Artists, musicians, counselors, and people with a strong interest in the fine arts, humanities, and liberal arts tend to have this learning style.

Assimilator (watching and thinking)

Assimilators are skilled in the areas of Abstract Conceptualization and Reflective Observation. Understanding and creating theoretical models is one of their greatest strengths. They tend to be more interested in abstract ideas rather than in people, but they are not greatly concerned with the practical applications of theories. Individuals who work in math and the basic sciences tend to have this type of learning style. Assimilators also enjoy work that involves planning and research.

Converger (doing and thinking)

People with this learning style have dominant abilities in the areas of Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation. They are highly skilled in the practical application of ideas. They tend to do best in situations where there is a single best solution or answer to a problem. People with a converging learning style are more attracted to technical tasks and problems than social or interpersonal issues.

Accommodator (doing and feeling)

People with this learning style are strongest in Concrete Experience and Active Experimentation. This style is basically the opposite of the Assimilator style. Accommodators are doers; they enjoy performing experiments and carrying out plans in the real world. Out of all four learning styles, Accommodators tend to be the greatest risk-takers. They are good at thinking on their feet and changing their plans spontaneously in response to new information. When solving problems, they typically use a trial-and-error approach.

Cherry, K. (n.d.). Kolb's Learning Styles. Retrieved from <http://psychology.about.com/od/educationalpsychology/a/kolbs-learning-styles.htm>

Entry 2

What are your goals for your study abroad experience? What do you hope to learn, and how do you hope to grow? Reflecting on the program's goals and learning objectives and our discussion about goal-setting and transformative learning, identify at least five goals for your semester in Belgium. Include strategies or methods for each goal (i.e. ways you can accomplish the goal).

For example, a goal might be: **Familiarize myself with European geography**

Learning Methods:

1. Carry a map of Europe with me and trace my travels.
2. Practice with the European geography quizzes on Sporcle.com
3. Label blank maps with countries, cities, rivers, etc.

Entry 3

Not everyone is in favor of European integration. In fact, it is one of the most fiercely contested and politically divisive topics in Europe, especially in the countries most negatively affected by the recent Eurozone crisis. Public favor for integration efforts has fallen particularly in Greece and Spain, two countries that have a strong pro-European history. With unemployment rates above 25%, citizens of Greece and Spain are increasingly questioning whether a united Europe is right for them. Do some quick research about globalization and international cooperation. What are some of the effects—good and bad—of globalization? Do you think integration efforts are good or bad for Europe?

Entry 4

Many European countries share open borders with each other through what is known as the Schengen Agreement, which allows for the free movement and migration of people within the Schengen Area. Immigration is a controversial subject in reference to European integration efforts, and many Europeans hold a negative view of immigrants, especially immigrants of Middle Eastern descent or Muslim faith. Research the term "nativism." Why do you think it is common for people to have a "nativist" reaction to immigrants? How can nativism be dangerous?

Entry 5

One of Europe's most marginalized populations is the Romani people (Gypsies). Hundreds of thousands of Romanies were killed alongside Jews during the Holocaust, and they are frequently scapegoated still today. Referring to the articles you received about the Roma, reflect on the impacts of stereotyping and inequality. Research the term "xenophobia" and contemporary examples of "antiziganism." Why do you think the Roma are treated with such hostility in modern Europe, and what do you think causes such antipathy toward "foreigners" around the world? Is it a problem? If so, how can it be fixed?

Entry 6

Reflect on your experience in Global Awareness and Competence so far this semester. What have you learned, and what has interested you most? Has there been anything hindering your learning? How could the pre-departure orientation program be improved?

APPENDIX C: PAPERWORK

FHU Abroad

Belgium

Emergency Information

Emergency Contact Information

PRIMARY CONTACT

NAME _____

RELATION TO STUDENT _____

PRIMARY PHONE NUMBER _____

SECONDARY PHONE NUMBER (IF AVAILABLE) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

SECONDARY CONTACT

NAME _____

RELATION TO STUDENT _____

PRIMARY PHONE NUMBER _____

SECONDARY PHONE NUMBER (IF AVAILABLE) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Health Information

Should an emergency arise while you are abroad, it is important that we are aware of any medical conditions that you may have. Any information that you choose to disclose is kept confidential and cannot be used to disqualify you from the program. You may attach a separate sheet or write on the back of this form as needed.

Please list any known severe allergens (and the symptoms of your allergic reaction):

Please list any medical or health conditions that we should be aware of (e.g. diabetes, asthma, heart conditions, etc.):

Health Insurance Information

Please fill out the requested information concerning the health coverage you will have while you are participating in the FHU Abroad study abroad program in Belgium. (Travel insurance will also be provided for all participants.)

Primary Insurance Provider _____

Policy Number _____

Participants who do not have a health insurance policy must sign the **Travel Insurance Waiver Form**.

I intend to submit the Travel Insurance Waiver Form.

Student's Name _____

Student's Signature _____

Insurance Waiver

Freed-Hardeman University believes that organized off-campus activities are an important part of the student's overall learning experience. Off-campus activities, however, frequently involve significant risks, both to the participants and to the university.

By signing this form, the below-signed student agrees as follows with regard to the study abroad program in Belgium:

1. That the student is not currently maintaining any form of health, accident, disability or hospitalization insurance, and
2. That the student will be responsible for any and all costs associated with injury or sickness or any other circumstances that would ordinarily be covered by such insurance during the entire term of the off-campus activity, which in this case is the academic semester in Belgium, and
3. That the student will not hold the university liable or responsible in any way for such costs.

Student's Name: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Payment and Withdrawal Policy

I understand that upon the acceptance of my application for the FHU Abroad study abroad program in Belgium, I am entering into a contract with the Freed-Hardeman University FHU Abroad Office. As part of my acceptance I have completed an accurate application form and paid a \$300 deposit. If I intend to use financial aid to pay for the program, I am responsible for making all arrangements through the Office of Financial Aid.

Payment Schedule.

- (1) A **deposit of \$300** must be made at the time of formal application to the program.
- (2) A **second payment of \$1200** must be paid by March 10, 2014.
- (3) A **third payment of \$1250** must be paid by April 7, 2014.
- (4) A **fourth payment of \$1500** must be paid by May 5, 2014.
- (5) The **final payment covering the remainder of the program fee plus tuition** will be due with the fall semester bill during the summer.

Withdrawal/Ineligibility Policy.

Should I withdraw from or become ineligible to attend the program, the following penalties apply. For penalty purposes, time will be determined by the date of receipt of my written notice of intent to withdraw from the program, or when the FHU Abroad Office receives notification that I have become ineligible to participate in the program.

- A. If I withdraw from or become ineligible to attend the program between **one hundred and twenty (120) and ninety-one (91) days** prior to the start of the program, I will be responsible for a withdrawal fee equal to **twenty-five (25) percent** of the total program fee. Any outstanding charges will be applied to my student account.
- B. If I withdraw from or become ineligible to attend the program between **ninety (90) and thirty-one (31) days** prior to the start of the program, I will be responsible for a withdrawal fee equal to **fifty (50) percent** of the total program fee. Any outstanding charges will be applied to my student account.
- C. If I withdraw from or become ineligible to attend the program **thirty (30) or fewer days** prior to the start of the program, I will be responsible for **one hundred (100) percent** of the total program fee. Any outstanding charges will be applied to my student account.
- D. I understand that my acceptance is contingent upon my not being on academic or disciplinary probation at FHU, and that should I be placed on academic or disciplinary probation subsequent to signing this contract I will be dismissed from the program. I understand that I may become ineligible for inappropriate behavior, as determined and decided by the director of the FHU Abroad program. I may also become ineligible by being sanctioned for an FHU violation, by withdrawing from FHU, or by not attending all mandatory pre-departure orientation sessions or makeup sessions. Should I be placed on probation or become ineligible as stated above, I understand that my student account will be charged pursuant to the policies stated in this contract.
- E. I understand that if I do not have a **2.5 GPA** at the **time of application** or at the **end of the spring semester before departure**, I will be considered ineligible and dropped from the program. I will be responsible for all applicable fees.
- G. If I withdraw from the program, I must inform the FHU Abroad Office **in writing**.

I have received a copy of this contract, and I have read and understand this contract, and I agree to comply with its terms and conditions.

STUDENT'S NAME (PRINTED)

DATE

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

Contract of Behavior and Conduct

Students enrolled in the FHU Abroad study abroad program in Belgium are required to abide by the FHU student handbook that can be found on the FHU website. In addition to the official Freed-Hardeman University student handbook, students will agree to abide by specific conditions relevant to the study abroad environment.

First time offenses for the following policy violations will result in **automatic suspension** from the university:

1. Purchasing **illegal drugs**, possession of illegal drugs, or consumption of illegal drugs. Underage consumption of **alcohol** is also prohibited.
2. **Physical assault or threatening behavior**, including the use of abusive language.

Students who have committed either of these offenses will also be required to leave the overseas campus and return to their home **within forty-eight hours**, or a reasonable time frame established by a university official, **at the expense of the student**.

The following policy violations may result in suspension, dismissal from the program, or other disciplinary action such as travel restrictions, at the discretion of the director of the FHU Abroad program:

1. Violation of any laws.
2. Traveling alone.
3. Failure to submit accurate travel plans and information to the appropriate personnel.
4. Failure to obtain and use adequate lodging during travel.
5. Failure to comply with attendance requirements, including classes and other meetings.
6. Disrespect shown toward any university personnel or others associated with the study abroad program.

At the discretion of the director of the FHU Abroad program, students found in violation of these or other behavior and conduct policies may be required to leave the overseas campus and return to their home **within forty-eight hours**, or a reasonable time frame established by a university official, **at the expense of the student**. Violation of any other rule, requirement, condition, or stipulation established by the FHU student handbook or by the director and personnel of the FHU Abroad program may also result in suspension, dismissal from the program, or other disciplinary action such as travel restrictions, at the discretion of the director of the FHU Abroad program.

Contract of Behavior and Conduct

By signing this contract, I—the undersigned student—understand and agree that I will:

1. Follow all instructions and abide by all regulations regarding housing, facilities, study, and travel as determined by the FHU Abroad Office and FHU Abroad personnel.
2. Obtain permission from FHU Abroad personnel for any travel outside the city of residence and provide information related to my travel plans, including where I will be and when I will return.
3. Pay any expenses incurred by Freed-Hardeman University on my behalf during in the study abroad experience within 90 days of the expense.

In addition, by signing below I acknowledge and agree to abide by the terms and conditions of this contract and the general rules and regulations of Freed-Hardeman University. I understand and agree that my failure to comply with any part of this contract may result in suspension, dismissal from the program, or other disciplinary action such as travel restrictions, at the discretion of the director of the FHU Abroad program, and that if I am dismissed from the program I must return home at my own expense.

Name (print)

Signature

Date

Release and Indemnification Agreement

WHEREAS, the undersigned is a student at Freed-Hardeman University (hereinafter referred to as “the university”) who has voluntarily applied for acceptance to attend and participate in the university’s study program conducted in **Verviers, Belgium** (hereinafter referred to as “the Study Abroad program”).



WHEREAS, it is understood and mutually agreed that the university has undertaken the arrangement of transportation, lodging, meals, and travel accommodations in connection with the Study Abroad program solely as an accommodation to the undersigned, and such undertakings cannot be regarded as sponsorship by the university or any provider of such services; and

WHEREAS, the undersigned is aware of and has carefully considered the risks associated with the Study Abroad program;

NOW THEREFORE, the undersigned, for and in consideration of being allowed to participate in the Study Abroad program, agrees to the following terms:

1. The undersigned does hereby release, hold harmless and indemnify Freed-Hardeman University, its officers, trustees, agents, and employees from and against any and all liability, loss and damages, including reasonable attorneys’ fees and court costs, which they or any of them may suffer as a result of claims, demands, suits, costs or judgments against them or any of them, by reason of bodily injury, including illness, or other personal injury or property loss suffered by the undersigned arising from or related to acts or omissions of Freed-Hardeman University, its officers, trustees, agents and employees in connection with travel and transportation to and from the Study Abroad program, and during the entire time the undersigned is in a foreign country, or elsewhere as a part of the Study Abroad program, and in connection with any accident or injury that may occur during the activities associated with the Study Abroad program.
2. The undersigned agrees to comply with the rules and regulations of the Study Abroad program and its duly constituted authorities that may be in force during the undersigned’s participation. The undersigned agrees to act at all times during the Study Abroad program prudently and to accept full responsibility for his/her own actions and inactions, conduct, health, and safety while a participant in the Study Abroad program.
3. The undersigned does hereby release, hold harmless and indemnify Freed-Hardeman University, its officers, trustees, agents, and employees from and against any and all liability, loss and damages, including reasonable attorneys’ fees and court costs, which they or any of them may suffer as a result of claims, demands, suits, costs or judgments against them or

Release and Indemnification Agreement

any of them, by reason of bodily injury, including illness, or other personal injury or property loss suffered by the undersigned arising from or related to acts or omissions of other students participating in the Study Abroad program, or of any provider of any service, goods, or transportation engaged in connection with the Study Abroad program.

4. The undersigned agrees that the university is not responsible for the welfare of the undersigned during periods of independent travel or during any absences from supervised activities; the undersigned accepts all responsibility for his/her own welfare during such periods of independent travel or during any such absences from supervised activities and agrees that the university is not liable for any consequences of the actions of the undersigned that may arise during such periods, and further accepts responsibility for reimbursement either to any injured party or to the university should such occasion arise.
5. The undersigned agrees that the university shall not be and is in no way liable for any loss, damages, or theft of any personal belongings or possessions of the undersigned during the course of the Study Abroad program.

This Agreement constitutes the entire Agreement of the parties hereto; shall be binding on their representative successors, assigns, heirs, and personal representatives; and shall not be amended or altered in any manner except in writing duly executed by an executive officer of the university and the undersigned student.

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

Student's Signature: _____

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian: _____

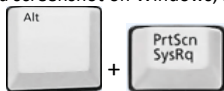
APPENDIX D: VIRTUAL SCAVENGER HUNT

Verviers Virtual Scavenger Hunt

In groups of 3-4, use the Google Maps link that was emailed to you to complete this “virtual scavenger hunt” of Verviers (pronounced “Vare-vee-aye”). Find the following locations in Google Street View, and then take a screenshot of what you see. (See the bottom of this page for an explanation of how to take a screenshot on Windows and Mac OS X.) Once your group has completed the scavenger hunt, email me a document with all of your screenshots along with the names of all of your group members.

- The FHU facility
- The front of Verviers-Central train station
- A yellow TEC bus
- The waffle (*gaufre*) and crepe stand in Place Verte
- The Centre Hospitalier Peltzer - La Tourelle (hospital)
- Cobblestone sidewalks
- Hôtel de Ville (Town Hall)
- The Grand-Théâtre du Verviers
- La Vesdre (the river that runs through Verviers)
- Two different fountains or monuments (Verviers has dozens!)
- An American fast food restaurant (try looking in Place Verte)
- La Poste (the Post Office)
- Binh Long Chinese restaurant
- Carrefour Market grocery store
- A cell phone store (e.g. The Phone House)
- Pita Fleurs restaurant

To take a screenshot on Windows, hold down



Windows captures only the currently active window and **copies** it to the clipboard. You can then **paste** the screenshot into a document (e.g. Microsoft Word) or email.

To take a screenshot on Mac OS X, hold down



and then use the crosshairs pointed to draw a rectangle around the area you want to capture. The file will automatically be saved on your desktop.

APPENDIX E: INDEPENDENT TRAVEL EXERCISE

In groups of 3-5, plan a “mini independent travel,” completing each of the following five tasks involved in the planning process with the help of your mentor.

The travel dates that you should use for this exercise are:

Saturday, September 20, 2014 – Wednesday, September 24, 2014

1. Pick your destinations (5-10 mins.)

Using the map of Europe (attached), talk with your mentor about suggestions for independent travel destinations. As a group, select **two** destinations to use in today’s exercise.

2. Plan your transportation (15 mins.)

Plan your transportation from Verviers on to both of your destinations.

Use a rail planner:

- eurail.com (“Plan Your Trip” > “Timetable”)
- bahn.de
- Eurail “Rail Planner” app

Search for flights:

- whichairline.com
- ryanair.com, easyjet.com, etc.

3. Reserve your accommodations (10 mins.)

Don’t actually reserve anything! Practice searching for accommodations using one of these websites:

- hostels.com
- hostelworld.com

Pay attention to the following things:

- Amenities (e.g. luggage lockers, internet access, linens included, free breakfast)
- Price
- Location
- Ratings and reviews

4. Plan your time (5-10 mins.)

Talk with your mentor about the resources he/she used when traveling, such as:

- Wikitravel.org
- Tripadvisor.com
- Ricksteves.com
- Lonelyplanet.com

5. Write an itinerary (5-10 mins.)

Assign one person to write out the itinerary for your exercise. Email your completed itinerary to me at the end of the exercise, along with the names of all of your group members.

Use the sample itinerary (attached) as a guide. Your itinerary must include at least:

- All transportation plans (including reservation fees for any trains requiring reservations, and the cost of airfare for any flights)
- Lodging plans for each night (including name, phone number, and cost/bed)

EUROPE



Sample Itinerary

Saturday, September 20

Train: Verviers→Marseille

Verviers Central to Bruxelles Midi	13:34-15:03	IC 536
Bruxelles Midi to Marseille St. Charles	15:20-20:47	TGV 9834

(€10 reservation fee)

Lodging: Vertigo Vieux-Port

Phone: 04 91 91 07 11
(€26/room; 3-bed room)

Sunday, September 21

Marseille – Vieux-Port (Old Port), Phare de Sainte Marie (Lighthouse), La Vieille Charité, Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, Calanques

Night Train: Marseille→Barcelona

Marseille St. Charles to Geneve	19:09-22:33	TGV 6874
Geneve to Barcelona Estacio de Franca	23:35-09:43	EN 274

(night train—€30/person reservation fee; 4-bed couchette)

Monday, September 22

Barcelona – Barceloneta, Sagrada Familia, Casa Milá, Park Güell

Train: Barcelona→Madrid

Barcelona Sants to Madrid Puerta de Atocha	19:00-21:52	AVE 3192
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(€10 reservation fee)

Lodging: Los Amigos Sol Backpackers Hostel

Phone: (+34) 91 559 2472
(€19/room; 4-bed room)

Tuesday, September 23

Madrid – Museo del Prado, Palacio Real, Plaza Mayor, Puerta del Sol, El Retiro, Santiago Bernabeu (Real Madrid stadium)

RyanAir Flight: Madrid→Milan (Bergamo)

FR 5991	18:20-20:35
---------	-------------

(€21.99 airfare)

Terravision Shuttle Bus: Bergamo→Milan

(€10 bus fare)

Lodging: Hostel Galla

Phone: 39 02.39561321
(€15/room; 4-bed room)

Wednesday, September 24

Madrid – Museo del Prado, Palacio Real, Plaza Mayor, Puerta del Sol, El Retiro, Santiago Bernabeu (Real Madrid stadium)

Milan – Teatro alla Scala, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, Duomo, Castello Sforzesco, *The Last Supper* (Santa Maria delle Grazie), San Siro

APPENDIX F: BELL RINGERS

_____ Name

1. Academics

Major(s):

Minor(s):

Classification next semester:

2. Hometown

3. Favorite kind of candy

4. Favorite kind of pizza

5. Have you traveled internationally before? Yes No

If yes...

How many times?

Where did you go?

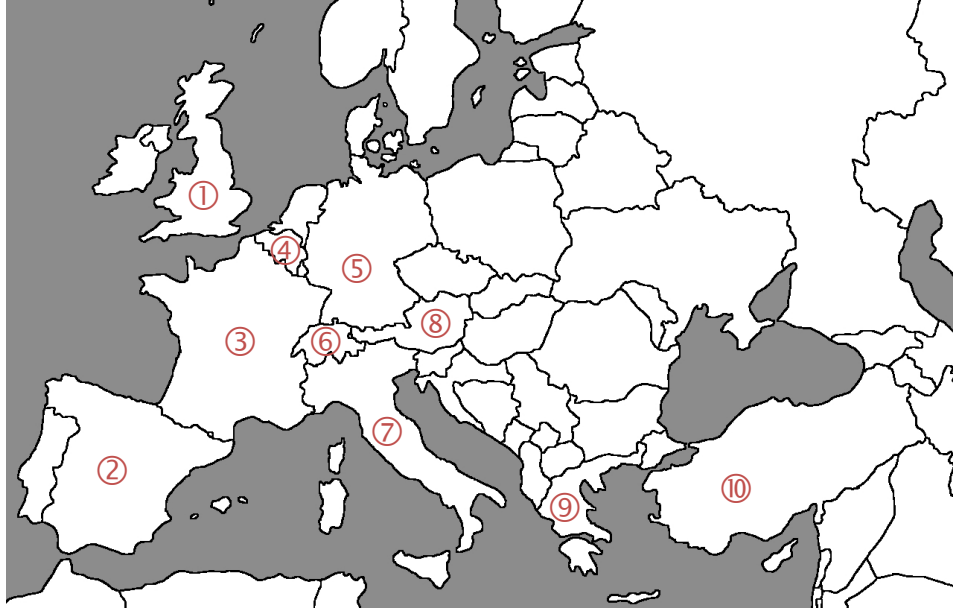
How long was your longest international travel experience?

6. What made you decide to study abroad?

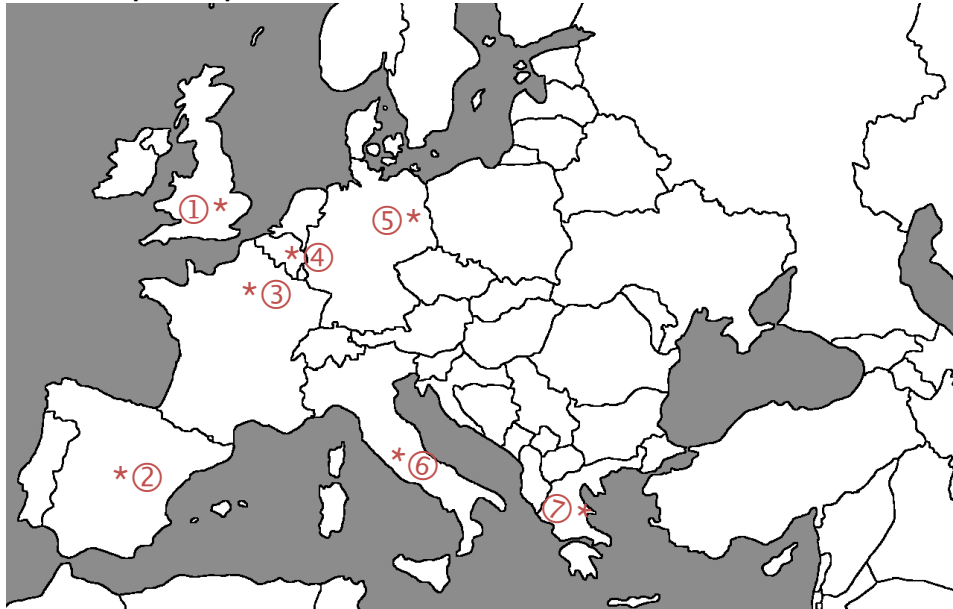
7. What are your goals for your study abroad?

How well do you know Europe?

What countries are these?



What European capitals are these?



Name _____

Countries

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

Capitals

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

Match the city with the river that flows through it:

Paris

Thames

Rome

Seine

London

Rhein

Cologne

Danube

Verviers

Tiber

Vienna

Vesdre

Scenario 1

You and four other friends are visiting Rome during free travel. You are getting ready to leave your hostel for the airport to catch a flight to Athens—which departs in three hours—when you realize that you can't find your money pouch, which contains your passport, Eurail pass, and credit card. Below, describe what your options are and list the steps that you would take next.

Scenario 2

You are walking through El Rastro flea market in Madrid, and you become separated from one of your travel companions. After spending half an hour trying to relocate him, you and your other travel companions decide to check back at your hostel. A few more hours go by, and by evening, your friend has still not appeared. Your attempts to contact him yield no results. What do you do?

Scenario 3

You are with your friends in Dublin city center in the middle of the afternoon when someone on a bike rides by and swipes your cellphone from your hands. What do you do?

Traveling by Metro

Using the metro map of Prague, try to fill in the information below. Don't worry if you aren't sure what to do. Using a metro network is a lot like "connecting the dots," but it can be complicated trying to navigate all of the metro lines and stations. Just do your best, and by the time you return from your semester abroad, you'll be an expert at using a metro system.

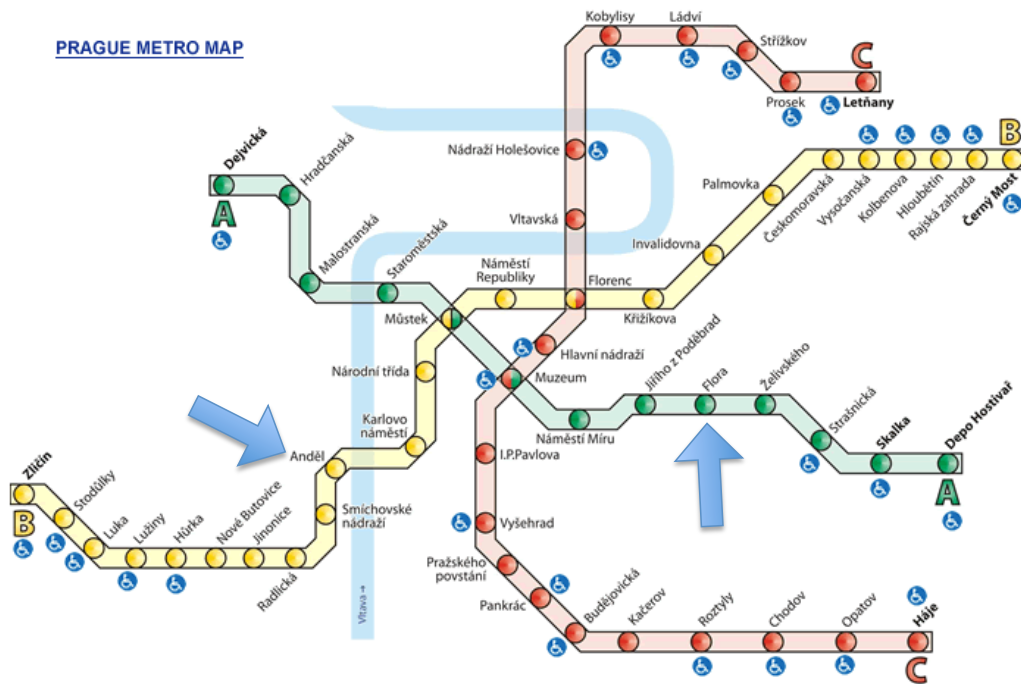


Figure out how to navigate from the ANDĚL station to the FLORA station, and then fill in the information below.

- 1) Depart from Anděl station on metro line _____ in the direction of terminal station _____ . (Hint: A terminal station is where a metro line ends or "terminates.")
- 2) Arrive at connection station _____ .
- 3) Change to metro line _____ in the direction of terminal station _____ .
- 4) Arrive at Flora station.

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