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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Early Impact: Assessing Global-Mindedness and Intercultural Competence in a First-Year Honors Abroad Course

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Within the expanding field of study abroad scholarship, recent research on honors-based programming indicates an evolving understanding of how the goals of most study abroad programs align with those of honors programs (Camarena and Collins; Frost et al.; Markus et al.). The tradition of incorporating international experiences into honors education is longstanding, and recent descriptions of related programming highlight the diversity of disciplines, locations, aims, and pedagogies across institutions (Mulaney and Klein ix–x). One common thread, however, is a desire to facilitate not only academic but also intercultural competencies in order to prepare honors students for an increasingly interconnected

world. The following institutional case study is an investigation of the impact of a short-term, first-year honors abroad course in Turkey on students' global-mindedness and intercultural competence. The findings help us understand how the program contributed to student growth in subsequent semesters, how that growth links to important university goals for all students, and how the program contributed to the strengths of the honors program as a whole.

Honors international education literature is an important component of the large and growing field of general international education literature. Several large-scale surveys of alumni of higher educational institutions in the United States have demonstrated that study abroad has lasting impact above and beyond other influential components of higher education (e.g., Dwyer and Peters; Paige et al.). In a study conducted by the Institute of International Education (IIE), student participants reported that studying abroad increased their self-confidence, expanded their understanding of intercultural perspectives and issues, and strengthened their academic commitment, especially to foreign language study (Dwyer and Peters 156; Nguyen 22–23). In the Study Abroad for Global Engagement (SAGE) project, Paige and colleagues designed a retrospective tracer study of alumni who had been abroad between 1960 and 2007, with over six thousand who had studied abroad and approximately the same number who did not. Over eighty percent of respondents indicated that study abroad had a strong impact on their lives, far more than any other aspect of their undergraduate experience. Areas of their lives that were influenced included practicing voluntary simplicity, engaging in social entrepreneurship and international civic engagement, and obtaining a graduate degree. These studies reflect wide interest in understanding the depth, breadth, and longevity of benefits for all students who participate in international education through study abroad. It therefore seems natural for honors programs to develop study abroad opportunities because of the potential positive impact of international programs on their student learning outcomes as well as honors program and institutional goals. (See, for example, Frost et al.)

Recent scholarship that connects international education and honors programs often focuses on potential based on the idea that

honors students are gifted scholars who can benefit from innovative or deep programming in study abroad environments. The previous National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) monograph on international education, which was edited by Mulvaney and Klein, features numerous accounts of “deep approaches,” “critical thinking,” “high-impact,” and other special opportunities for research, international collaboration, and service learning that serve the needs and goals of talented students (Mulvaney and Klein, Introduction x). This valuable collection was explicitly intended to address the needs of honors administrators and faculty who aim to develop programs that will internationalize honors students’ experiences. This focus raises yet another question about how the health and vitality of the honors programs themselves benefit from new emphases on the opportunities mentioned above. While Otero argues that honors students are best served by faculty-led experiences that take their strengths into account in program design, we believe there is room for more study on how honors programs as a whole and as constituents of broad university missions are served by honors abroad programs.

Another uncommon focus for scholarship on international education, either within honors programs or not, is on the efficacy of study abroad experiences for first-year college students. One exception is a program described by Phame Camarena and Helen Collins in which first-year honors students are explicitly recruited into a three-week, service-oriented program in Mexico. Based on interviews with program alumni, the authors describe particular benefits for the first-year honors students, including increased engagement with the international community on campus, augmented service activities, and, in some cases, changed majors and career plans because of their participation in the program early in their career. The present institutional case study is intended to deepen current knowledge about the influence of first-year honors courses on students and programs. Additionally, the findings may foster further interest in the development of and research on study abroad courses for first-year honors students.

THE PROGRAM:**INQUIRY IN INSTABUL**

Elon University is a mid-sized private comprehensive university in North Carolina, with approximately 6,000 undergraduate students, 45% of whom majored in the liberal arts and sciences in 2016. Elon also houses nationally accredited and acclaimed professional schools of business, with 2,000 majors, and communications, with 1,300 majors. Honors is a small, highly selective program to which students apply while pursuing admission to the university. Approximately 40 honors fellows are enrolled each year and receive significant tuition scholarships. The program utilizes a cohort-based model in which students take one class per semester together for the first two years and produce a faculty-mentored honors thesis in their major during the second two years. The university is widely recognized for its commitment to engaged learning, and students participate in two experiential learning requirements, including undergraduate research, study abroad, service, internships, or leadership opportunities. According to the IIE, Elon is a national leader in study abroad among masters-level institutions, with approximately 75% of students participating in at least one international and/or domestic study away program. Thus, having a significant study abroad experience designed especially for the honors program so we could better contribute to the university commitment to global engagement seemed a natural fit.

The university's three-week January semester provided a framework for initiating a short-term study abroad program that could bridge honors students' fall and spring semesters. Their fall semester course is a multidisciplinary honors section of a university course called "The Global Experience." Their spring semester course is a discipline-based seminar with rotating disciplines and topics from one year to the next. We perceived an opportunity to connect these two experiences in which one has little explicit discussion about how academic disciplines work and the other has an explicit mandate to introduce how disciplinary inquiry works. We designed the winter-term program to take the themes from The Global Experience that

could be developed while traveling and studying in Turkey and then considered them through the lenses of the disciplinary expertise of the faculty leading the program. We called the course “Inquiry in Istanbul.” The two faculty members modeled disciplinary inquiry by addressing sites and objects encountered in the travel portion of the course from their specific disciplinary perspectives: history and religious studies. Desired outcomes for students included greater familiarity with how aspects of Turkish culture appear through the disciplines of history and religious studies. (See the syllabus in Appendix 1.) For example, we asked students to consider the various cultural meanings across time that one encounters in the Hagia Sophia, which is currently a state-owned museum, but has been a Byzantine cathedral and an Ottoman imperial mosque. While visiting a working mosque on another occasion, we asked students to move past the simple equation of seeing a mosque as merely a “Muslim church” and think, ask, and learn about the functions of a mosque that make it different from a church. On these days, students reflected on the inseparability of religion and political power in the past and comparative religious practices in their journaling and blogging about our site visits. In order to more deeply develop a sense for how disciplinary lenses might be applied to the study of Istanbul and Turkey, we assigned a short, post-return research project. Students worked on a short literature review from a discipline of their choice that treated some aspect of Turkish culture and history that caught their attention while traveling. Based on that review, we asked them to pose a research question that would engage that discipline and yield a hypothetical research project. Given the short time of the course, a full-fledged research project was not feasible, so we made the proposal of a research project the capstone experience.

We recognized that one of the most significant barriers to students’ participation in our study abroad program would be cost (Krummrich and Burton 169). Universities identifying global experiences as priorities often provide significant financial support so that students can take advantage of these opportunities. Within this framework we built our case to university administration. All honors fellows at Elon already received a \$1,000 grant to support

engagement in a study abroad or a domestic study away program; however, one key facet of the first-year honors course design was to provide seventy-five to eighty percent of the cost so that all students in the incoming honors cohort would have more equal access in terms of financial resources. We appealed to the administration by emphasizing that the proposed program would directly address one of the objectives in the university's mission statement that we develop "global citizens." We also noted the lack of parity with other fellows programs at our university, all of which offered comparable first-year, winter-term experiences. With the pilot program approved, we took the first cohort of first-year students to Turkey in 2013. The subsidy was a key enticement for many students who, if they could go on only one study abroad course, may not have picked Turkey. We designed the study of global-mindedness and intercultural competence described below to demonstrate (and to convince administrators) that the Turkey program was efficacious, especially in terms of the university mission pertaining to global citizenship and the vitality of the honors program.

THE STUDY

We collected three forms of data to determine learning, global awareness, and intercultural competence in students to contribute to a blended picture of the overall effectiveness of the Turkey program. Students were invited to complete a written survey that asked them to consider the effects of the program on their sense of global awareness and their interest in the region and/or other areas of the world, using both a ten-point scale and short-answer writing. (Details about the structure of this survey are below.) We invited the first cohort of the program to take the survey three times: before the program, at the end of the first year (after the program's completion), and at the end of their senior year (three years after the program's completion). The survey was supplemented with focus group discussions at the end of the first year, led by Vandermaas-Peeler (then the director of the honors program), which added nuance to the survey data. Finally, we collected and analyzed student writing in a tightly guided reflection assignment. The

assignment gave students an opportunity to reflect on their experiences through the lens of a central course theme: constructions of the Middle East in the minds of Westerners. After the course was complete and the assignment was used for student evaluation, Carignan reread these essays using an original scale to determine whether and how students demonstrated intercultural competence in light of the course theme.

Surveys and Interviews

In the fall of 2012, all first-year honors fellows, both those who were enrolled in the Turkey program and those who were not, were invited to participate in a survey of global-mindedness to determine how students perceive their connections to a larger world community (Clarke et al.; Hett). Of the 40 first-year students in the program, 32 students (70% of whom were women, matching the program demographic) completed the survey in the fall; 12 were enrolled in the Turkey course, and 20 were enrolled in an on-campus, winter-term course. In April, near the end of the spring term, 35 students completed the survey a second time; 11 of the 15 students who participated in the Turkey course completed the survey, and the remaining 24 participated in one of many different on-campus winter-term courses. Thus, the response rate was high, with nearly 80% of the cohort taking the survey both times.

The global-mindedness survey (see Appendix 2) includes thirty questions rated on a five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (adapted from Hett; found in Clarke et al. 174). The survey has demonstrated reliability and validity (Kehl and Morris 71). There are five subscales including responsibility (seven items: e.g., “When I see the conditions some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it.”); cultural pluralism (eight items: e.g., “My opinions about national policies are based on how those policies might affect the rest of the world as well as the U.S.”); efficacy (five items: e.g., “I think my behavior can impact people in other countries.”); global-centrism (five items, reverse-scored: e.g., “American values are probably the best.”); interconnectedness (five items: e.g., “I feel a strong kinship with the worldwide human

family.”). In addition to taking the survey, students who participated in the study abroad course in Turkey were invited to take part in a longitudinal data collection project comprised of focus groups conducted just after their study abroad experience and surveys at the end of their senior year, in which they responded to questions related to academic development and global awareness. Eight of the fifteen students participated in this longer-term assessment.

For the qualitative data, Carignan reread the reflection assignment mentioned above, looking for evidence of intercultural competence. We used two items from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) rubric for intercultural competence: 1) the understanding that a person’s cultural perspective will shape his or her perceptions of another culture, and 2) the ability to shift perspective to that of another culture (AAC&U; Deardorff, *SAGE Handbook*; Hammer; Vande Berg). Because there was no baseline pre-test, the results cannot indicate *growth* or *development*; instead, any demonstration of intercultural competence came through the ability to apply the target course theme. In a deliberately ironic way that tried to capture the Saidian argument that the East is a Western construction that serves the purposes of Westerners, we called the course theme “East vs. West.” The prompt read as follows:

Following Edward Said, we understand that “Westerners” construct the “East” in our imagination for purposes of self- and group-identification and promotion. We often do this through binaries: East = very religious, static, backwards, dangerous, and oppressive vs. West = secular and scientific, capitalist and developing, advanced, secure, and free. These are just some of the common simplifications that we have all encountered that often make it possible for “us” to dismiss or ignore cultures of the East on their own terms. *We would like you to reflect on how the things that you have read, seen, and learned about Turkey have complicated your own, or more widely held, simplistic constructs of “East” and “West.”*

Carignan scored the student writing for intercultural competence using a four-point scale (high, medium, low, or none) pertaining to

students' level of engagement with one or both of the intercultural competence characteristics. The results for this part of the assessment follow below.

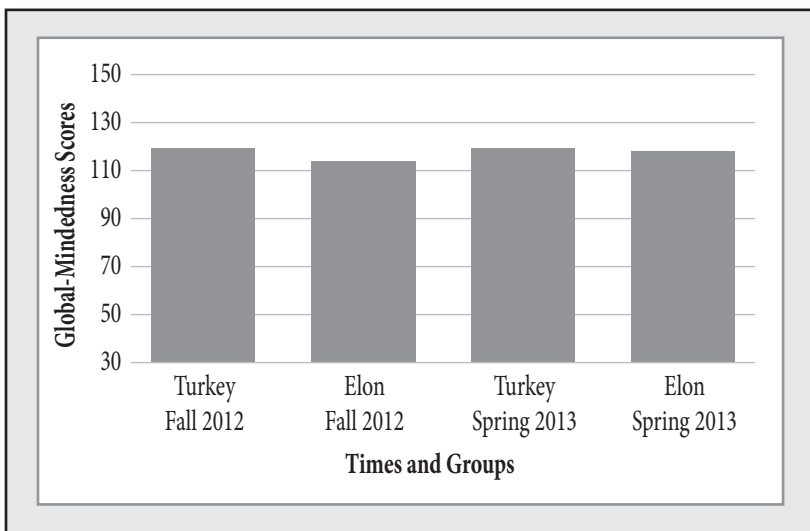
FINDINGS

Global-Mindedness Survey Scores

Scores on the global-mindedness survey can range from 30 to 150. The mean scores for students who participated in the Turkey course and those who did not are presented in Figure 1, for fall (pre-departure) and spring (post-return). None of the differences between those who did ("Turkey") and did not ("Elon") participate in the first-year honors abroad experience reached statistical significance. This index did not capture whatever differences may exist between the two groups.

The scores for each of the subscales are represented in Figure 2, and again, the patterns for each of the subscale scores highlight the similarities rather than the differences. As Figure 2 illustrates, the patterns are consistent across the two groups, suggesting the short-term experience did not impact the global-mindedness scores.

FIGURE 1. GLOBAL-MINDEDNESS SCORES COMPARED ACROSS TIME AND GROUPS



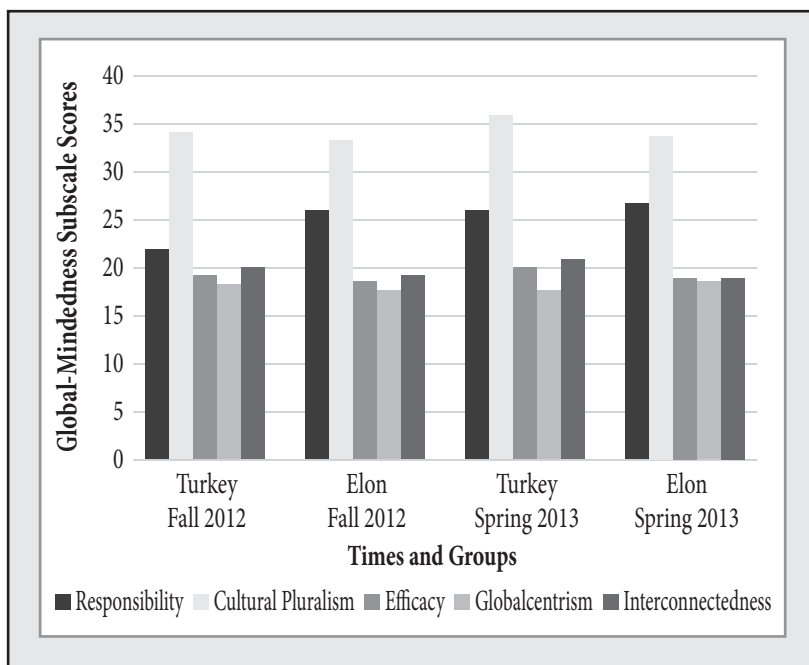
Results of Focus Groups

Students who participated in the first Turkey course were invited to speak to Vandermaas-Peeler about their experiences in the final days of the travel portion of the program and immediately after our return. The questions and a summary of their responses with representative quotations are included below.

Why did you apply to come to Istanbul? How important was the location in your decision? How important was the financial subsidy that you received from Elon?

Many students noted that the location, the funding, and the opportunity to travel with other honors fellows and professors in their first year were all significant factors in their decision to apply for the program. During admissions weekend, the honors program director described the

FIGURE 2. SUBSCALES OF THE GLOBAL-MINDEDNESS SURVEY COMPARED ACROSS TIME AND GROUPS



course, and this information turned out to be a recruiting tool. The following quotations illustrate these themes:

The place wasn't the initial reason—my desire was peaked after I knew that's where we were going. The financial subsidy was very important; I probably would not have applied to go without it.

* * *

They tell us that you are not students anymore, you are scholars. A scholar wouldn't let this opportunity go—this is what I came to college to do.

Looking back on it now, would you do it again? Why or why not?

All agreed that it was an invaluable opportunity that they would do again.

What are some of the things you found particularly interesting or valuable about this course?

For some students, the curriculum being different than their major course of study (e.g., science) was appealing. They liked the focus on history and religious studies and the cultural aspects of traveling to such a unique location. Many students mentioned cultural site visits (e.g., Hagia Sophia). Others noted course themes, such as nationalism and East-West constructs.

Besides the academic course content, what were a couple of the most important things you learned? (e.g., cultural, personal)

The majority of students talked about personal development. They discovered how much they enjoyed observing and interacting with others in a vastly different cultural setting than they were used to. One group talked about the time they got lost while exploring, and how this occasion was a great opportunity to communicate with locals to find their way back. Several students mentioned the challenges

and benefits of beginning to communicate in an unfamiliar language. Being in a Muslim, yet secular, country was a unique experience.

Did your participation in this course affect your choice of major(s)?

The overwhelming response was no, although one or two students mentioned double majoring in International Studies as a result of the course.

Do you plan to study abroad again? If so, when and where (tentatively)?

Overwhelmingly the response was yes, and several students commented that they were now considering new options, including countries that were not in Europe, because of their desire to experience vastly different cultures than their own.

Results of Exit Surveys

The first Turkey cohort participants were invited to respond to an exit survey in their senior year that consisted of eight questions related to their perceptions of their own global-mindedness and awareness, how the course may have influenced future plans and experiences at Elon, and issues germane to the Middle East and East-West dichotomies (discussed in a separate section). Eight of the fifteen students responded to the survey, and their responses were synthesized and coded for major themes.

In two related questions, students were asked to assess their own interest in issues related to the Middle East and issues pertaining to the world outside of the United States. These questions assessed interest in the specific region as well as one of the goals of developing “global citizens” who are concerned about the wider world. The mean rating, on a scale from 1 (not interested) to 10 (very interested) for issues related to the Middle East, was a 7.25. With regard to the issues outside of the U.S., the mean rating was higher, 8.63 with all scores a 7 or above.

For some students, it was the first time they traveled outside of North America, and for nearly all of them, it was the first time they traveled out of the traditional West, as exemplified in this quotation:

This study abroad experience was the first time I had ever officially been out of the country, so I do think this experience enlightened me to the world outside my bubble. Further, because it was such a good experience, I was more willing to step out of my comfort zone with other abroad experiences, which increased my awareness of world issues.

This rationale was a strong one for the selection of Turkey as destination and content. For many of the participants, it was a gateway experience that prompted them to seek more global experiences through additional study abroad programs, their thesis research, or independent projects. Several students linked their experiences in Turkey with ongoing engagement with global issues, greater perspective-taking, and a global mindset:

My time in Turkey was the first that required critical engagement with social, political, and cultural issues outside the United States. Since then, I've found that I genuinely care about international issues and will take the intentional steps to ensure that I am up to speed with new developments in certain parts of the world.

* * *

I am interested in what goes on outside the U.S. and think having a global mindset is important. I am not well read on political matters or the daily news, but I try to know about the main issues presented by the media. I think that going abroad helped open my mind to new cultures and care more about those in other countries that seemed abstract before I was there and had that direct connection.

Students assessed their own global awareness in response to this question: "On a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (extremely), how much do you consider yourself to be globally aware? Did the study abroad experience have any impact and if so, how? Please

comment.” The mean rating was 7.13, with scores ranging from 5 to 9. One of the most interesting themes that emerged was that students recognized the limitations of their own global awareness, which many educators will recognize as part of developing critical self-awareness. The quotations below illustrate students’ developing sense of cultural humility that emerged as they began to contemplate the complexities of global issues, as well as the limitations of their own knowledge.

I think, given my privilege in being able to attend college and study abroad, that I have more global awareness than the average American. However, the more I learn about the world, the less I think I know about it.

* * *

I would say that I am becoming more aware of how unaware I am. I don’t know about all of the wars, refugees, countries, traditions or challenges going on around the world. So often, I absorb the simplified version of history and current events that simplifies countries to being just their name . . . traveling and going to those countries is a good reminder that they are not just the country, but the people and culture. For example, the people in Turkey are not that different from us. They want to have a good meal, hang out with friends, feel safe and have a good laugh. But when we look at nations as the simplified version of their politics, we lose that connection and seem to only see our differences.

We are especially interested in the apparent cultural humility in these entries because in the context of these writings, it clearly suggests intercultural growth, but in a way that might reflect a backward movement in terms of global awareness and learning. Scholars of intercultural development have challenged a paradigm that might privilege intercultural competence over cultural humility and other forms of intercultural learning (e.g., Tervalon and Murray-Garcia). Students’ critical reflections about their own knowledge also align with the conceptual framework of “critical consciousness,” a form

of cultural sensitivity that goes beyond the standard notions of competence to a more nuanced reflection on one's own place in the world in relation to others (Kumagai and Lypton 783–84).

Reading for Intercultural Competence

Through close reading of an end-of-course reflection assignment, we were able to identify demonstrated intercultural competency skills (shifting perspective to that of another culture, see Hammer and Vande Berg et al.). We cannot argue that these skills were learned during the program, but we do argue that the program offered new opportunities to exercise such skills. In asking students to think about the utility and limitations of binaries often deployed in intercultural encounters between Westerners and people from the Middle East, we prompted students to complicate their understanding of the East/West binary as U.S. citizens in Turkey while reflecting on their experiences there.

Analysis of the students' final written reflection assignments indicates a range of levels of intercultural competence. For the analysis, Carignan read for two hallmarks of intercultural competence discussed above: shifting perspective and the recognition of culture-shaping perception. Because acquiring intercultural competence was not an explicit course goal or student objective, we had a separate rubric for grading the assignment. Figure 3 summarizes our findings. The evaluation rubric (see Appendix 3) allowed us to discriminate between excerpts that showed various levels of intercultural competence. Those in the "high" category intersected with our interpretation of shifting perspective, which reflects demonstrated ability to see one's own culture from the perspective of another and/or an articulated vision of how one's cultural perspective actively shapes perception. The "high" category also includes those writings that showed an ability to articulate that one's culture, whether Western, American, European, Turkish, Istanbulite, Middle Eastern, or Eastern, impacts all encounters and shapes perceptions, especially perceptions of difference. One positive finding in Figure 3 supporting the development of intercultural competence

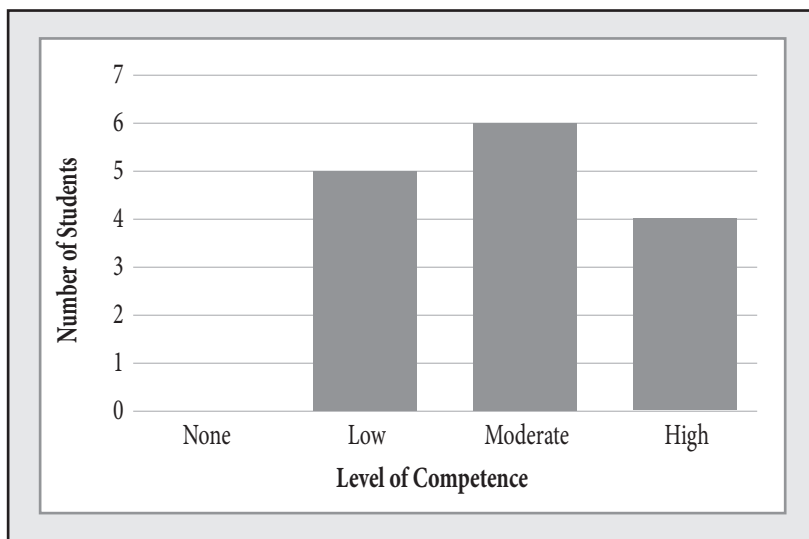
was that all of the students showed some attempt to shift their view by complicating a merely binary way of seeing Turkey.

Examples in the “high” category show deliberate attempts to shift perspectives through a critical engagement with the binary construct. One student wrote:

The problem with this [binary] system is that there is not always a clear distinction between the two groups and it is debatable who really has the power to divide people into these groups. In most cases, as in the case of Orientalism, it is the group who deems themselves to be superior who separates those who are dissimilar into the ‘other,’ lesser group. This binary can also be described as an ‘us/them’ mentality and through readings, lectures, and adventures in country, it is apparent that Turkey has been influenced by this concept in many ways.

The student engages a fairly explicit Saidian point that the imperial West orientalized the East, and we can see it in Turkish culture. It is highly interculturally competent in that the student obviously

FIGURE 3. LEVEL OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN FINAL REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT



recognizes how cultural lenses, in this case the Western lens that orientalizes the East, shape the nature of perception. The excerpt does so while *also* shifting the perspective to that of a Turk.

The following passage also reveals a high level of critical engagement:

[Our tour-guide] expressed frequently that Turkey is secular, that the people do not practice Islam very strictly, and that many women do not cover their heads daily. All of this derives from Atatürk's decision to secularize the nation. It occurred to me that perhaps Turkey is fighting back against an invented perception with a display of itself that is just as intentionally invented. This realization was confusing, because I was perplexed by how emphatically Turkey tries to portray itself as secular, when the minarets and the calls to prayer and the covered women were all around me. I know that Islam is a faith that displays itself in daily life, that is more easily recognizable than Christianity, which can often fly under the radar. However, this conflict between the ever-present signs of Islam and the Turkish people's assertion that they are not actually as religious as Westerners think, absolutely complicated this binary-centered view of the East-West dynamic. It has been hard for me to reconcile my experiences with this perception and even with my knowledge of this perception's inaccuracies.

This student explicitly engages the perceptive act in a way that is tentatively trying to construct meaning from observation while also respecting that a culturally based perspective (binary East/West perspective) shapes that perception and complicates making sense of the perception. At times like these, what students call "confusions," academics prefer to call "interesting" or "productive confusion."

Entries placed in the "moderate" category showed the ability to recognize the limitations of simplistic binaries but failed to shift perspective or discuss the perception-shaping influence of culture. One student wrote:

As we can see, there are several misconceptions that we Westerners have about the East. The East is not merely made of religious nations under oppressive rule with limited rights and backwards thinking. Though there may be areas of concern, like human rights in Turkey, there is a lot of advancement as well. Furthermore, while it is important to revoke these misconceptions, I believe it is most important to realize the diversity and vastness of “the East.” Just like there is diversity in the United States and “the West,” there is diversity in “the East.” Attributing a single term to anything east of Europe and not realizing its richness is, to me, the biggest blunder Westerners make.

This reflection is moderate for the way it attempted to gain a critical understanding of the deployment of the East/West binary, but only applies it to a kind of relativistic sense of difference rather than an attempt to explore how this binary is at work in his/her interpretations of Turkey. Other samples from the moderate category recognize the limits of the “East/West” binary but fail to demonstrate an attempt to shift perspective. One such example was a reflection that critiqued the widely held view that Istanbul’s Topkapı Palace is often called “the Versailles of the East” and does not let it be a unique site on its own terms. The entry itself, however, does not explore how a Westerner’s knowledge of Versailles might shape their experience of Topkapı Palace in any way. (See the full excerpt in Appendix 4.)

Samples from the “low” category reveal mere attempts to indicate surprises that students may encounter when they go to Turkey armed with simplistic prejudices or expectations. We found these to be valuable moments for the students, and they only ranked “low” in terms of the features of intercultural competence because of the lack of effort or ability to shift perspective or see how their own perceptions were shaped by an aspect of their own culture. Interestingly, the “low” intercultural competence entry quoted below comes from a student who had a “moderate” passage discussed above.

Over the years, Eastern and Western countries have developed at different speeds and in distinctive ways. Due to

some cultural and societal dissimilarities, many people believe that the East is not as complex as the West and that it is more religious and oppressive. However, after studying in Turkey, it is clear that these opinions are generalizations of the minorities and do not accurately portray the East to the rest of the world.

This excerpt implies that a final, accurate picture of the East exists that is somehow beyond one's cultural perspective. So, while an important course goal that sought to complicate our understanding of Turkish culture has been met, the excerpt does not attempt to shift perspective or probe the nature or source of the accurate portrayal.

This analysis reveals our course offered students the opportunity to critically engage the nature of perception and the cultural constructs that enable and shape it. These levels of engagement seem to align with the desired features of intercultural competence in which students learn to shift cultural perspectives and see that perception is inescapably shaped by culture. While we join most study abroad educators and administrators in highly valuing these characteristics because they show a deep impact from the experience, neither our course nor even the reflection assignment was explicitly pointed at developing them. Insofar as this study has established a baseline, we were encouraged to see that intercultural competence was detectable in the work students did in our course. It was also refreshing to behold the inherent complexity of learning offered by one student's appearance in two of the levels of intercultural competence, which serves as a clear reminder that development is often uneven and incomplete at any intermediate stage. Beyond this course, this study may also imply that some course assignments related to discipline-based content goals can be useful for gauging developing intercultural competence, which stands as an alternative to the common survey method for those determinations.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

Focus group data indicate self-reported increased awareness of and interest in Middle Eastern history and contemporary political affairs. The data are somewhat corroborated by the reflections where students made efforts to see the world from the perspective of Turks. Together these data also show a noticeable effort to express a new cultural humility as students became more directly aware of how much they did not know. The close reading of reflections for intercultural competence revealed that some students were able to use the opportunity afforded by the course to apply advanced levels of intercultural competence to their experience in Turkey. The survey responses do not show an important difference between the honors fellows who traveled to Turkey and those who did not. We think that this may be due to the fact that the survey was not specific to the course material, whereas focus-group questions and reflection prompts yielded better information about how students engaged with difference and thought about the world. We were encouraged enough by these findings that subsequent courses had a more pronounced component in intercultural training and learning so that more students would have opportunities to exercise these abilities. An important lesson learned through these subsequent programs is that students' intercultural competence can be more convincingly increased when deliberate intercultural training is a part of the pre-departure exercises and the course. Assessments of those programs are part of a recently published multi-institutional study (Rathburn et al.).

Insofar as we cast this program to administrative sponsorship based on the promise that it could provide opportunities for talented students to exhibit gains in the specific mission goal of creating global citizenship, our data demonstrate that this was a good investment. The honors abroad program is now a fixture of the honors program. We agree with Camarena and Collins who write, "The real value of a study abroad experience for honors students must, however, be measured in terms of the goals and needs of a particular program within the context of its own institution of higher education" (85–86). One important indicator of the positive

impact of the first-year study abroad experience is program retention; whereas the general honors retention rate across four years at Elon is 76%, the retention rate for students who have participated in the first-year honors abroad program is 98%. (Only 2 out of 90 participants in the honors abroad programs over six years left the honors program before graduation.) Even while acknowledging some self-selection may be at work, this figure is a good sign. We see room for more research that would measure the effectiveness of honors abroad programs for strengthening honors at any given institution and for contributing to broader institutional goals pertaining to global learning and international experience. We suspect that those benefits are more likely when the honors abroad program occurs early in students' academic careers. And in keeping with current trends in understanding long-term benefits of study abroad programs, we believe that more longitudinal studies will be helpful in identifying those benefits. Those who consider designing such studies should bear in mind the major benefits of having multiple measures, such as surveys, focus groups, and analyzed reflections, which amplify nuances in the process and forms of global learning that would have been opaque using only one measure.

Other potential concerns for honors directors who are considering starting study abroad programs include environmental impacts of travel, social disturbances caused by taking only a selection from an honors cohort, and safety. Flying a group of students around the world leaves a significant carbon footprint that may be a factor in deciding whether to engage in this process. As for the social effects on the cohort, we have not found any serious harm done by the fact that some students did and some did not go on the program; however, we recognized the possibility of invidious distinction in our cohort-based program, so we created a small domestic trip as an alternative for those who stayed home. The safety issue is ever-present for any traveling course, and since Turkey appeared on the State Department's official travel warning in 2016, our university has not permitted us to return. We have rerouted the program to Italy, where teaching staff have commensurate experience and ability, but that change in venue has elevated the cost of the program, which

was not anticipated in the original budgeting. Fortunately, for our school and our honors students, the benefits appear to greatly outweigh these concerns. We are able to maintain the course's focus on cultural and historical diversity in Italy, and new cohorts continue to take advantage of opportunities for intercultural growth and for engaging difference.

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APPENDIX 1

Syllabus: Inquiry in Istanbul, Winter Term 2013

Professors Lynn Huber and Michael Carignan

Course Description

Istanbul has been a cultural crossroads for millennia. In light of this, this course uses the city of Istanbul itself as a classroom, encouraging students to explore the city as a site of historical and religious significance and to investigate the contemporary relevance of this city to East and West. This course is designed to introduce first-year fellows to trajectories in academic inquiry by exploring the city as a rich site of cultural and historical significance. In this iteration of the course (Winter 2013), the tools of historical inquiry and religious studies will be used to explore select aspects of the city, including the monuments, historical sites, cultural groups, business and political movements. These will provide entry ways for academic interrogation about how a city shapes communal and individual identities. In particular, students will be asked to focus upon “city as religious center” and “city as cultural and political crossroads.” While we will address these three aspects as unique areas of inquiry, we also anticipate that these foci will overlap as we explore particular periods of Turkish history and as we explore different areas of Istanbul and parts of Turkey (i.e., when we visit Ephesus).

Learning Goals

- Students will be able to articulate a basic understanding of the history of Istanbul specifically and Turkey more generally as a cultural and political crossroads;
- Students will be able to discuss the role Istanbul and, to some extent, Turkey have as a religious center and as a locus of rich religious history and diversity;
- Students will demonstrate an ability to interpret aspects of Istanbul using tools appropriate to the fields of history and religious studies;
- Students will learn to “read” sites for their historical and religious meanings;
- Students will develop a research question based upon their study in Turkey.

Assignments & Grading

Participation (20%): A successful study abroad experience requires active participation and engagement. The course instructors expect that students will come to scheduled events on time and fully prepared. While on-site, students should try to maintain and exhibit an attitude of inquisitiveness and attentiveness. This means listening to course instructors, guides, and your peers. Positive participation in study abroad also includes

a willingness to be flexible and to practice patience with others and events (sometimes we will be lost, sometimes we will have to wait, sometimes there will be changes).

Participation also includes posting an update on the course blog at least twice during our time abroad. Students will sign up for particular days to make sure the semester is covered. The course instructors will facilitate posting so that students don't incur any costs.

Students should be aware that during a study abroad course, behavior that occurs "outside" of class (i.e., in the evening) can easily impact time "inside" class. Consequently, any behavior that disrupts the student's learning process or the learning of others can negatively impact a student's participation grade.

Reading & On-site Writing (10%): Students will complete daily reading assignments related to the sites and topics of the day. Many course readings will be "primary" sources, which demand close analysis and a critical eye. There will also be secondary source readings that introduce students to a particular historical or religious perspective.

Students will be asked to write short responses that critically engage readings linked to sites and experiences on the ground. These responses may be assigned at the end of class day to be handed in the next morning. These short assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale. Students can expect that there will be no less than five and no more than 10 on-site writing assignments.

Course Journal (10%): Each student will keep a course journal in which observations, questions, perspectives related to the course and her/ his research question (see below) are recorded. Journal questions are provided below, and students are expected to have at least 14 entries by the end of our time in Turkey. Entries should be at least 2–3 handwritten pages and should reflect thoughtfulness and specific attention to ideas and questions raised in class or on-site or in readings. *This is NOT a personal journal!* The journals, which will be collected at least once while we are in Turkey, will be graded on a high pass, pass, low pass, fail scale.

Final Reflective Essay (10%): At the end of our time in Turkey, students will be given a prompt for a final essay that draws together themes raised in the course. The essay will be 4–5 single-spaced, typed pages and will be turned in to the course instructors at the beginning of the spring semester.

Capstone Assignment (50%): After arriving in the U.S., students will propose a research project on one of the course themes, topics, sites. This project anticipates students' actual thesis proposal in their junior year by imitating the formatting for that proposal: project description, significance, annotated bibliography, timeline and activities for completion.

Keeping a Course Journal

The course journal is intended to provide students an opportunity both to think through the course material and to begin the process of articulating a research question for the Capstone Assignment. While the journal is reflective (i.e., it doesn't require citations, it isn't necessarily written to argue a point), entries should be given some thought and should directly engage elements of the course. Although correct spelling and grammar are not necessarily expected, we would encourage you to try and develop complete thoughts. Possible prompts to start your writing might include:

- Explain how something on-site or in the readings challenged an assumption you have held. What was the assumption that you held and where did you develop this assumption? How did this particular thing or idea challenge you? Do you think that this challenge will shape the way you approach other things or ideas?
- Did you learn something new or surprising while on-site or through the readings? Explain.
- In our time in Istanbul, we will be approaching many sites from a historical perspective. If your primary academic interests lay in another field, what type of questions might that field raise about the day's sites or readings? For instance, how might someone in economics approach the Hagia Sophia? What types of questions would she or he bring to the site?
- Was something from the course confusing? Try to "talk it through" in your journal entry.
- One of the ideas that we will be stressing is that Turkey/Istanbul is a crossroads between "East" and "West." How did you see this theme emerge today? Did you find it compelling? What is Turkey/Istanbul teaching you about the concepts of "East" and "West"? Explain.
- If one of the sites we visited or if something we saw or encountered today piqued your interest, what type of research questions might you bring to bear on it? In other words, even though this may not be the topic of your capstone assignment, what type of research questions does this thing or site or idea raise? What type of academic tools or skills would be necessary for answering these questions?
- Do you notice any connections between different sites we are visiting? Do seemingly different sites raise similar questions or exhibit similar purposes? What might ancient Ephesus, for example, share with the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art?

APPENDIX 2

Global-Mindedness Scale (Adapted from Hett)**Student Attitude Survey**

On the following pages you will find a series of statements. Please read each statement and decide whether or not you agree with it. Then circle the response that most recently reflects your opinion: **Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Unsure, Agree, Strongly Agree—5 point scale** There are no correct answers.

1. I generally find it stimulating to spend an evening talking with people from another culture.
2. I feel an obligation to speak out when I see our government doing something I consider wrong.
3. The United States is enriched by the fact that it is comprised of many people from different cultures and countries.
4. Really, there is nothing I can do about the problems of the world.
5. The needs of the United States must continue to be our highest priority in negotiating with other countries.
6. I often think about the kind of world we are creating for future generations.
7. When I hear that thousands of people are starving in an African country, I feel very frustrated.
8. Americans can learn something of value from all different cultures.
9. Generally, an individual's actions are too small to have a significant effect on the ecosystem.
10. Americans should be permitted to pursue the standard of living they can afford if it only has a slightly negative impact on the environment.
11. I think of myself not only as a citizen of my country, but also as a citizen of the world.
12. When I see the conditions some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it.
13. I enjoy trying to understand people's behavior in the context of their culture.
14. My opinions about national policies are based on how those policies might affect the rest of the world as well as the United States.

15. It is very important to me to choose a career in which I can have a positive effect on the quality of life for future generations.
16. American values are probably the best.
17. In the long run, America will probably benefit from the fact that the world is becoming more interconnected.
18. The fact that a flood can kill 50,000 people in Bangladesh is very depressing to me.
19. It is important that American universities and colleges provide programs designed to promote understanding among students of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
20. I think my behavior can impact people in other countries.
21. The present distribution of the world's wealth and resources should be maintained because it promotes survival of the fittest.
22. I feel a strong kinship with the worldwide human family.
23. I feel very concerned about the lives of people who live in politically repressive regimes.
24. It is important that we educate people to understand the impact that current policies might have on future generations.
25. It is not really important to me to consider myself as a member of the global community.
26. I sometimes try to imagine how a person who is always hungry must feel.
27. I have very little in common with people in underdeveloped nations.
28. I am able to affect what happens on a global level by what I do in my own community.
29. I sometimes feel irritated with people from other countries because they don't understand how we do things here.
30. Americans have a moral obligation to share their wealth with the less fortunate people of the world.

Scoring Key: Reverse score items: 4, 5, 9, 10, 16, 21, 25, 27, 29

Scoring: *Range of scores 30–150

*Sum all responses

*Higher scores indicate a higher level of global-mindedness.

Items Reflecting Theoretical Dimensions

Responsibility: 2, 7, 12, 18, 23, 26, 30

Cultural Pluralism: 1, 3, 8, 13, 14, 19, 24, 27

Efficacy: 4, 9, 15, 20, 28

Globalcentrism: 5, 10, 16, 21, 29

Interconnectedness: 6, 11, 17, 22, 25

APPENDIX 3

Evaluation Rubric for Intercultural Competence in the Reflection Assignment

High: indicates students made an effective attempt to see things, including themselves, from the perspective of Turks, or maybe more broadly Muslims or Middle-Easterners, especially if they used that perspective to think about themselves or our culture, indicating one or both of the core criteria: that they attempted to shift their perspective or understood that culture shapes perception.

Moderate: shows some signs of sensitivity to different perspectives and maybe less-effective attempts to shift their perspective or engage how their own culture shapes their interpretation.

Low: merely recognizes mistaken prejudices and makes little or no attempt to see culture as a shaping force of perception or to shift their perspective, but merely revises their original binary framework.

None: inhabits a simplistic binary thinking about Turkey as a mere “other.”

APPENDIX 4

Sample of Student Reflection Writing from the Exit Survey

The Topkapı Palace has confused many experts because it has such a unique style and meaning. It was designed for Sultan Mehmed II who chose Istanbul to be the capital due to its strategic location up on a hill near several waterways; perfect to protect and control trade and travel. However, experts have tried so hard to understand this complex unit, as it does not fit the Western definition of a “palace.” In fact, in the article “Splendors of Topkapı” in the *Smithsonian Magazine* that we read, it “has to decide what it is going to be—a Versailles or a Louvre.” These two places are common to Westerners, so they feel the need to compare historical sites such as Topkapı to them, when in reality, the Ottoman Palaces are just different but that does not mean that it is a bad thing. Instead of being critiqued for not being Western enough, it should be valued for its significance in the Eastern world.