

IP101: The Global Learning Experience

Fall 2017

Instructors: Sue Griffin and Dr. Célia Bianconi

1 Credit		
Phase I:	Getting ready to go	1 session
Phase II:	I'm abroad!	3 sessions
Phase III:	Welcome home! Now what?	1 session

Pass/Fail

Your final grade will be posted approximately one week after the date for the close of the course, which is **January 10th**. If, in order to graduate on time, you need your grade submitted before then, please be sure to email Sue (griffins@bu.edu) or Célia (cbianc@bu.edu).

Course Description:

The main objectives of this 1-credit course are to enable you to enhance your learning in a study abroad location and to help you to better understand and reflect upon the experience. The course will provide you with tools for analyzing your learning process and identifying cultural patterns, differences, similarities and values. Ultimately it will help you navigate towards becoming a global citizen while remaining an ambassador for your own culture. These topics will be approached in a non-site specific way, however you will also need to complete exercises and assignments related to your host country/site.

The course will examine theoretical aspects of interacting with other cultures and methods of learning, as well as providing practical exercises in which you will need to observe, document, research and reflect upon assigned topics. It will require you to take stock of your experience, your personal growth and learning. It will also challenge you to think critically about the host country and your own identity. Ultimately, the course will help focus your approach to your experience abroad, but personal growth will depend on your own engagement in this process.

The readings and lectures are brief and assignments have been designed so that they should not feel onerous. Sessions may be completed over approximately a two-week period.

Finally, this course will not deal with logistics or practical issues about studying abroad (safety, money, packing, etc.). Please check with your program manager about these issues.

Course objectives

Enhance students' preparation for studying abroad through i) learning basic information about the host culture ii) setting goals for the study abroad experience iii) developing an awareness of students' own cultural values iv) developing an understanding of the concept of inter-cultural competence and iv) preparing students to interact with people in the host country and their own peers.

Enable students to reflect upon the study abroad experience while it is happening through i) structured reflections ii) the development of an awareness of cultural difference and of culture's role in shaping beliefs,

practices and perceptions iii) the development of new perspectives on students' own culture and iv an understanding of the stages of cultural adaptation.

Prepare students for a successful re-entry into their home culture through i) a recognition of possible issues connected to re-entering the home culture and ii) the practical application of their experiences in academic and professional goals.

Support students in the reentry process by i) providing information on reverse culture shock and how to manage the re-adaptation process ii) providing an outlet for student reflection on the personal impact of study abroad iii) presenting practical, on-campus involvement with international students and/or incoming study abroad students.

Materials used in the course

- All readings and videos required for the course are available online.

Assessment:

In order to pass the course, you must complete all online assignments. Although this is a pass/fail course, keep in mind that ultimately the more you invest, the more you will gain from this course and from your study abroad experience in general.

Interaction between participants

For this course we will be using a Facebook Group page. This page is private and by invitation only. By becoming a member of this group, you are not friending anyone. People will only be able to see what you have made public on your personal Facebook page.

All assignments require that you post one original response but we strongly encourage you to read and comment on what others post too. Not only can we learn from what others experience but you'll be amazed how reassuring it can be to discover that you are not alone in this journey.

Finally, we ask that you do not share anyone else's posting without first asking for permission. This is a closed group and we should respect one another's privacy. This course also adheres to BU's Academic Conduct Code found here <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>

Recommended Completion Dates

This semester we have students from a number of different programs taking the course, which also means that the dates on which your programs begin and end vary dramatically. Instead of a strict deadline for each of these assignments, we have designed a recommended schedule to guide you. If you finish an assignment ahead of time or a few days late, that's fine. Just make sure you complete all assignments in a timely fashion order to receive credit. January 10th is the only non-negotiable date. Any postings made after that date will not be counted.

Phase	Session	Assignment	Complete
I	1	1. Goals 2. Research	From 2 weeks prior to departure to 1 week after arrival in-country
II	1	1. Sights, Sounds, Tastes and Smells	From 1 week to 4 weeks after arrival in your host country
		2. Hypothesis	From 3 to 6 weeks after arrival
	2.	1. Coping Strategies	From 4 to 8 weeks after arrival
		2. Stereotypes	From 6 to 9 weeks from arrival
	3.	1. Goal Re-Evaluation	From 1 to 3 weeks prior to departure
III	1.	1. Video	From 1 to 3 weeks after return (up until January 10th.)

Phase I: Getting ready to go

This initial phase of the course is introductory and will take one week to complete, depending on the amount of time devoted to it. It addresses the importance of setting academic, cultural, personal, and professional goals for study abroad as well as asking you to complete some light research on the host culture in order to prepare for departure.

Session 1: Planning ahead

The purpose of this session is to welcome you to the course and to ask you to reflect - before you leave home - upon your objectives for this experience. You will also choose a research topic and will share your findings.

Video 1: Welcomes and Introductions. The session begins with a welcome video from Célia and Sue. After watching the video please post a picture and a brief introduction. Choose a picture of something that matters to you (person, place, animal, object) and tell us a little about yourself and why you have chosen this particular picture. Remember to respond to at least one other person's posting.

Reading 1: "Four Things You Should Ask Yourself Before Studying Abroad"

(<http://www.diversityabroad.com/study-abroad/articles/four-things-you-should-ask-yourself-before-studying-abroad>)

Assignment 1: "My Study Abroad Goals". Indicate your top two goals in each of these areas and explain how you plan to achieve them. The goals listed here are meant as examples and you should feel free to include others.

Personal	Academic	Cultural	Professional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain independence • Grow in confidence • Gain self-awareness • Feel challenged • Become more flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfill the requirements of my major/minor • Take a class I can't take at home • Discover new perspectives in my area of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen my knowledge of the host culture • Improve my foreign language skills • Make friends with people from the host culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills I will need in my future profession • Extend my network • Experience a different work environment

Assignment 2: Choose between Option A or Option B

Option A: Visit Hofstede’s 6 Dimensions of National Culture: Visit <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html> and read through the summary of each of these cultural dimensions. Then click on “Cultural Tools” followed by “Country Comparison”. Input your country of origin, followed by the name of your host country and read through the comparison. You’ll see a chart comparing the two countries, followed by a summary of how the dominant culture in your country of origin is reflected in the cultural dimensions. Now input these country names in the inverse order and read that summary.

With which aspects of this comparison do you agree and disagree? Explain why? What surprised you regarding the dominant cultural profile of your own culture and that of your host country? Which cultural differences might you wish to be alert to, or wish to research future?

Option B: Choose ONE of the following aspects of your host country or host city to research. Share your findings with the group. Topics include:

- Political system
- Health care
- Education
- Public Transportation
- Environmental protections
- Equal rights
- Media and technology
- Other (topic of your own choice)

Before you leave: Don’t forget to read or reread any pre-departure materials relevant to your program. We wish you a safe journey and a soft landing.

Phase II: I'm abroad!

Session 1: Arrival

You’ve already acquired some basic information about your host country in Phase 1 of the course. The first session of Phase 2 helps you to observe and understand your host culture in a principled way. It also gives you a chance to reflect on your first few weeks in your host country.

Assignment 1: Sights, Sounds, Tastes And Smells

Observe people acting in four different situations: (i) on the bus/train/underground, (ii) at the restaurant/bar/coffee shop, (iii) buying food at local shops/market, (iv) at home /work/ in class. What do you notice about physical proximity, about how people interact both verbally and non-verbally? What role does silence play in these interactions? What attitudes are you able to observe regarding hierarchy, age, and time?

Now think back to your arrival in your host country. What were some of the sights, sounds, tastes and smells that struck you as “different”. Did you find them pleasing or disagreeable? Reflect on how much you have

adapted to your new environment. Which of these sights, sounds, tastes and smells have you ceased to notice? Which of the initially disagreeable sensations now feel comfortable? Which continue to bother you?

Please include a photo with this posting so that we can better appreciate your daily environment. This can be anything that you find (or found) noteworthy: a street sign, a street scene, a photo of a store or coffee shop you frequent.

Assignment 2: Hypothesis

Please watch the video of the TedX Talk given by Pellegrino Riccardi on Cross Cultural Communication (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMMyofREc5Jk>)

What are some of the differences you have observed regarding your host culture? Taking into account that different cultures may operate according to different underlying values, are you able to form a hypothesis as to the reasons or values that explain these differences? What explanations do people from your host culture have? (Remember that you will need to accumulate additional data in order to test and refine this hypothesis as your semester abroad progresses.)

Session 2: Coping and Adjusting

Once the “honeymoon” period of your stay – where you delight in the novelty of the experience – is over, small challenges may take on larger proportions and you may find yourself feeling stressed or even overwhelmed at times. This session looks at taking stock of your situation, ways to manage your stress, along with concepts such as stereotyping, US identity, and changing attitudes towards one’s home or host culture.

Reading 1: “Coping with Stress Checklist” (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/coping-stress-checklist>)

Assignment 1: Which of these strategies are you already employing and how have you adapted these them to your study abroad experience? Which do you plan to incorporate into your daily routine?

Assignment 2: Stereotypes

Think back to what you first thought you knew about your host culture and country. Consider what your family and friends had to say on the subject. Which of those ideas have you discovered to be stereotypical and not useful to someone trying to adapt? What are some of the stereotypes you have encountered regarding the US? How do you counter these stereotypes of your host country and your home country?

Session 3: Getting ready to leave.

This session ends Phase 2 and is the last on-site session. Its purpose is to bring the course full-circle, by asking you to review the goals you set for yourself before leaving for your host country, as well as asking you to reflect on your time abroad. You will begin to reflect on the last several months as well as prepare for the re-entry process.

Reading 1: Chose one of the articles from the website **Life After Study Abroad** in the section “How to Deal with Reverse Culture Shock”. (<http://www.lifeafterstudyabroad.com/reverse-culture-shock/>)

Assignment 1: Goal Re-evaluation. Revisit the goals you set upon pre-departure. Which to you think you've achieved? Are there some you no longer find relevant or that you wish you had focused a little more on? What are some of the ways you think you've grown or changed as a result of your time abroad? What are some of the goals you have for your return to the US? How do you plan to realize these goals? Which article did you chose to read and what are your thoughts on what you read?

Phase III: Welcome home! Now put your experience to work

Session 1: Putting your Experience to Work

The purpose of this Session is firstly to bring the course to a conclusion and secondly to aid you to think of ways in which it may be possible to use study abroad experience personally, academically and professionally. You will reflect upon how the experience has benefitted you in terms of new skills and perspectives; and will think of ways in which you can "market" your study abroad experience on your resume, in cover letters, and in interviews. Additionally, you will be given tips for continuing with your international education and experience and using your experience within your own community.

Reading 1: Read this article from the Chicago Tribune about how your study abroad experience may help you to stand out from your peers in applying for jobs. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-10-18/business/sc-cons-1017-started-20131018_1_college-students-double-majors-study-abroad.

Assignment 1: Create a short video highlighting one or two ways that study abroad has benefitted you as well as one or two points you'd like to share with future study abroad students. You can use any program to create your video and we suggest you upload it to YouTube and share the link on our Facebook page. (Please list your video as "unlisted" rather than "private".)

Checklist of assignments

- Assignment
- My Study Abroad Goals
- Research (Option A or B)
- Sights, Sounds, Tastes and Smells
- Hypothesis
- Coping Strategies
- Stereotypes
- Goal Re-evaluation
- Concluding Video