



IN395 INTERNSHIP SEMINAR ON GLOBAL WORKPLACE CULTURES

IES Abroad Sydney Summer Internship Program

DESCRIPTION:

The internship seminar provides interns with a framework to analyze, reflect on, and leverage their international internship experiences. Discussion topics will focus on preparing interns for entering an international work environment with an emphasis on skill-building in critical thinking, teamwork, cultural intelligence, cross-cultural communication, and career planning. The seminar will introduce students to concepts and valuable context for navigating the general characteristics of workplaces in the host location and for adapting to their placement organization's workplace culture. Interns will also learn to identify and situate their host organization and location in relation to evolving economic, political, and social issues. In addition, the seminar will explore how IES Abroad's Global Pillars (Sustainable Living, Equitable Living, and Human Well-Being) can provide a prism through which to consider contemporary issues and challenges in the host location in a global context. Interns will engage with their host city beyond their placement to help them expand their global awareness, develop their intercultural competence, and consider their roles in creating a more sustainable future.

CREDITS: 6

CONTACT HOURS: 44

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

INSTRUCTOR/FACILITATOR: Fran Baxter

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

The seminar will provide a robust learning environment with active discussions and reflections on internship experiences, seminar topics, and assigned tasks and readings. Every class session will engage students in discussing their evolving internship experiences, observations, and questions related to living and working in Sydney, and the challenges they encounter. Interns will be expected to actively exchange ideas, viewpoints, and insights as the semester progresses and to contribute topics of interest about which they are curious or would like to deepen their knowledge. In addition to the seminar contact hours, students spend 32 hours a week at their internship site. Students who fail to complete the requisite number of hours at the placement will earn an automatic grade of "F."

Weekly course-related excursions and guest lecturers will help engage students with the local community and expose them to diverse work sectors and models. A social event may be held outside of regular class hours to provide students with the opportunity to practice their networking skills.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Internship supervisor evaluation – 40%
- Participation – 10%
- Weekly journal entries – 10%
- Group project – 20%
- Final analytical paper – 20%

Internship supervisor evaluation

The internship supervisor will use a rubric to assess students' performance in both practical job skills (deadlines, attendance, quality of work, communication, and initiative) and soft skills (enthusiasm and approach to work, critical thinking, intercultural understanding, receptivity to feedback, and job knowledge at the end of their assignment).



Participation

Students are expected to participate in class discussions and to share personal observations and experiences related to their internships and life in the host location. Their contributions should reflect their preparation for and engagement with course content. A rubric for participation will be posted on Moodle (see Appendix A).

Weekly journal entries

The weekly journals will consist of prompted entries asking students to reflect on their workplace activities, document observations, track their learning and development, and make connections between course topics and concepts and their workplace (500-750 words each) and the week's site visit or guest lecturer. A theme will be provided for each journal entry. The journals will not only help students prepare content for their final paper, but they also will provide an opportunity for reflection.

Group Project

In consultation with their instructor, students craft a research question on a topic related to social or sustainability issues in their city and then present their findings to the class in week 7 session 2 through a StoryMap, Miro storyboard, guidebook, video, podcast, etc. (15-minute presentation, with groups of two students). Students will be evaluated based on their active engagement with peers as they present.

Final analytical Paper

The final paper (1250-1500 words), due in week 8, will consist of a description and analysis of the overall internship experience as well as students' personal and professional development over the course of the semester. The paper should include:

- Company description
- Description of the sector to which it belongs
- Description of the job position, e.g., knowledge, competencies, and abilities needed, cultural differences in time management, organizational structure, hierarchy, decision making, communication styles, etc.
- Description of main tasks, duties, and responsibilities
- What students have learned from the experience
- How the internship will enrich their resume and apply to their professional career
- Recommendations to improve the internship and their performance
- Concluding remarks about their personal goals (outlined in week 1) and to what extent these were achieved by the end of their experience

Students will share an outline of their paper and seek instructor feedback in week 5.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the seminar series, interns will be able to:

- Analyze and differentiate general aspects of workplace culture in their host location from both the institutional or structural level and the societal or group level (i.e., how people think, act, and interact).
- Identify and examine how workplace cultures impact workplace dynamics and professional expectations and explain how they operate in their specific host organization.
- Evaluate their workplace performance and how their internship experiences have impacted their competencies in critical thinking, teamwork, cultural understanding and communication, and career planning.
- Identify and present, in both writing and speaking, their host organizations and the contributions they made there.
- Demonstrate a deeper understanding of the complexity of issues and challenges facing their location and organization in a global context;
- Express a heightened awareness of one's role in creating a more sustainable future.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Class attendance is compulsory. Unexcused absences will be subject to a 5% reduction in the final grade per missed class.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Required Readings/Assignments
Week 1 Session 1	Introduction to course objectives and expectation-setting for student internships Discussion of students' first observations, impressions, and questions Activity related to review of pre-departure readings, e.g., Personal Cultural Profile Assignment – implementation of the International Effectiveness Scale assessment.	Chen, G & Portilla, T (2010). <i>The Development and Validation of the International Effectiveness Scale</i>. The University of Rhode Island, DigitalCommons@URI, https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1031&context=com_facpubs Di Pietro, Giorgio. "International internships and skill development: A systematic review." <i>Review of Education</i> 10, no. 2 (2022): e3363. Available at https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/rev3.3363 Journal Entry 1: goals for your internship and how it may contribute to your future career
Week 1 Session 2	Engaging with the host location: Attending State of Origin Rugby League game. Looking at the importance of Sport to Australian culture and Working environments.	Rowe, D (2016). 'Great Markers of Culture': The Australian Sport Field. <i>Media International Australia</i>, 158(1), 26-36. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X15616515
Week 2 Session 1	• Discussion of key cultural concepts related to navigating workplace culture in the host location (i.e., trust-building, professional relationships, approaches to conflict, etc.) • Outline general economic profile and labor market in host location • Skill-building activity related to developing cultural intelligence	OECD (2023) <i>OECD Economic Surveys: Australia 2023</i>. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/1794a7c9-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/1794a7c9-en Australian Trade Commission (2023) <i>Why Australia: Benchmark Report 2023</i>. https://www.globalaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/ATIC_Benchmark%20Report_2023.pdf SBS (2024) <i>Cultural Atlas: Australian Culture</i>. https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/australian-culture/australian-culture-core-concepts Journal Entry 2: cultural intelligence
Week 2 Session 2	Engaging with the host location: Attending Bangarra Dance Company performance <i>Horizons</i>.	Aboriginal Heritage Office (2024) <i>A Brief Aboriginal History</i>. https://www.aboriginalheritage.org/history/history/

Week	Content	Required Readings/Assignments
Week 3 Session 1	- Overview of host location's evolving political profile - Discussion of key concepts related to navigating workplace culture in the host location (i.e., approaches to respect, authority, decision-making, leadership, power dynamics, etc.) - Skill-building activity related to the analysis of power dynamics in student workplaces	House, R, Javidan, M, Hanges, P & Dorfman, P (2002) <i>Understanding Cultures and Implicit Leadership Theories Across the Globe: an Introduction to Project GLOBE</i>. Journal of World Business, 37:3-10. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1090951601000694 Biddle, N, Gray, M, (2023) <i>Taking Stock: Wellbeing and Political Attitudes in Australia at the start of the post-COVID ERA</i>. Centre for Social Research and Methods, ANU, https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2023/3/Taking_stock_-_January_2023_Tracking_paper_0.pdf Journal Entry 4: Navigating Workplace Culture
Week 3 Session 2	Engaging with the host location: Visit to NSW parliament and guest speaker introducing group to Australia's differing levels of Government.	Parliamentary Education Office (2022). <i>Three Levels of Government: governing Australia</i>. https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/three-levels-of-government/three-levels-of-government-governing-australia
Week 4 Session 1	- Discussion of concepts related to intercultural communication relevant to the host location (i.e., high context vs. low context, expressivism and emotion, feedback styles, etc.) - Skill-building activity related to cross-cultural communication	Meyer, E (2025) <i>When Culture Doesn't Translate</i>. Harvard Business Review, Oct 2015. https://hbr.org/2015/10/when-culture-doesnt-translate Janke, T (2016) <i>True Tracks: create a culture of Innovation with Indigenous Knowledge</i>. TEDx JCU Cairns, Dec 21, 2016. https://youtu.be/WfS11_Dl6ew?si=rbGlfsiQXOeltl1 Journal Entry 3: Intercultural Communication
Week 4 Session 2	Engaging with the host location Corporate Social Responsibility – Volunteering with Take 3 for the Sea	F Shayan, N.; Mohabbati-Kalejahi, N.; Alavi, S.; Zahed, M.A. (2022) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). <i>Sustainability</i> 14, 1222. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031222

Week	Content	Required Readings/Assignments
Week 5 Session 1	Discussion of host location's evolving social environment, with an emphasis on DEIA issues	Readings: Two readings on social issues in the host location; sample readings include: Australian Human Rights Commission (2018) <i>A Blueprint for Cultural Diversity and Inclusive Leadership</i>. https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/leading-change-blueprint-cultural-diversity-and-0 Colella, L (2019) <i>Why is it so Difficult for LGBTQ+ Australians to Come Out in their Workplace</i> – Diversity & Inclusion Blog. Deloitte Australia. https://moodle.iesabroad.org/pluginfile.php/2768064/mod_resource/content/1/Why%20is%20it%20so%20difficult%20for%20LGBTIQ%2B%20Australians%20to%20come%20out%20in%20their%20workplace%20-%20Diversity%20%20Inclusion%20blog%20Deloitte%20Australia.pdf Journal Entry 5: DEIA issues in host culture
Week 5 Session 2	Engaging with the host location Attending American Chamber of Commerce July 4 Networking event.	Cross, R, Thomas, R (2011) <i>Managing Yourself: A Smarter Way to Network</i>. Harvard Business Review, July-August 2011. https://hbr.org/2011/07/managing-yourself-a-smarter-way-to-network
Week 6 Session 1	Discussion of host location's evolving relationship to sustainability, with a focus on policies, challenges, initiatives, and potential solutions offered by the host location	Readings: Thwaites, J, Glover, R, Allen, C, Boulton, J, Kestin, T (2020) <i>Transforming Australia SDG Progress Report: 2020 Update</i>. Monash Sustainable Development Institute, Monash University. https://www.sdgtransformingaustralia.com/wp-content/uploads/MSDI_TA2020_Summary.pdf City of Sydney (2024) <i>Sustainable Sydney: 2030-2050. Continuing the Vision</i>. https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/sustainable-sydney-2030-2050 Journal Entry 6: Social issues
Week 6 Session 2	Engaging with the host community Visit to Botanical Gardens of Sydney – participate in a Bush Tucker Session	Environment and Heritage Office (2024) <i>Native Biodiversity</i>. NSW Government. https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/sydney-nature/native-biodiversity

Week	Content	Required Readings/Assignments
Week 7 Session 1	• Networking • International career paths • 21st century careers	PWC Australia (2023) <i>2023 Future of Work Outlook</i>. https://www.pwc.com.au/important-problems/future-of-work/2023-Future-of-Work-Outlook.pdf Journal Entry 7: Networking
Week 7 Session 2	Group presentations and peer evaluation	
Week 8 Session 1	• Workshop on leveraging the international internship experience in career planning ○ Hard and soft skill self-assessment ○ Résumés ○ Interviews • Skill-building activity related to giving an effective oral account of the internship experiences	West, C (2016) <i>Leveraging Global Experiences in the Job</i>. International Educator, Sept/Oct 2016. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/career-planning-post-study-abroad-leveraging-international-experience-jdcmf#:~:text=The%20first%20step%20in%20career,environments%2C%20and%20perhaps%20language%20proficiency. University of Edinburgh Careers Services (2024) <i>Selling your International Experience</i>. https://edinburghtata.wordpress.com/when-you-are-back/selling-your-international-experience/ Assignments: • Update resume to reflect internship experience • Final Analytical Assignment due
Week 8 Session 2	Wrap-up session Intern-led discussion on: • Lessons learned, personally and professionally • Insights gained about the wider host location culture • Overall summer abroad experience	



Appendix A: IES Abroad Rubric for Participation

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Unsatisfactory (0)
Frequency of Participation	Actively participates in class by contributing to the quality of the discussion	Participates in class by following the topic of the debate but without standing out	Occasional participation with little contribution to the discussion	Rarely participates; contributes the least to the discussion	Does not participate in any class
Quality of Contributions	The student can argue and relate ideas and content seen in class. Their thinking is creative, and they can relate abstract concepts to everyday examples	Contributions are good: relevant and well-reasoned	Contributions are acceptable but occasionally lack depth or relevance	Contributions are limited in quality and relevance	Contributions are irrelevant or incoherent
Class Preparation	Comes to class well-prepared, having reviewed materials and completed assignments; contributes to meaningful discussions	Usually comes prepared, but occasionally may not have reviewed materials or completed assignments	Rarely comes prepared, often unprepared for class discussions	Consistently unprepared for class; hinders meaningful contributions	Never comes prepared for class