



IN 395 INTERSHIP SEMINAR ON GLOBAL WORKPLACE CULTURES

IES Abroad Cape Town 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.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 22

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

INSTRUCTOR/FACILITATOR: Marlon Swai

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 the host location, 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 at least 176 clock hours at the internship placement site. Students who fail to complete the requisite number of hours at the placement will earn an automatic grade of "F."

A social event may be planned 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 – 15%
- Final analytical paper – 35%

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 connect course topics and concepts to their personal experience (250-500 words each). 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.

Final analytical paper

The final paper (1250-2500 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:

1. ***Pre-conception/perceptions prior to arrival in Cape Town***
 - Reflection on personal conceptions (or misconceptions), what was known/understood concerning South Africa's social, economic, political, and cultural dynamics/context prior to arrival. Also include how this (by the end of the course) would have been confirmed, reinforced, contradicted, or furthered by their experiential learning process in the IES Abroad program and outside the IES Abroad Program.
2. ***Internship site***
 - Describe the organisation or company you worked in, the sector in which they operate, where they are located, observations about the structure of the organisation and colleagues who work there.
3. ***Internship experience***
 - Description of your position, main tasks, duties and responsibilities; some of the knowledge, competencies, and abilities needed, cultural differences in time management, organizational structure, hierarchy, decision making, communication styles, etc.
4. ***Challenges and positive experiences, and lessons learned***
 - A reflection of personal experiential learning (the 'highs' and 'lows').
 - This should highlight and explain why these are 'highs' and 'lows' as well as give an indication about what your expectations prior to the internship and class were.
 - You should write about and explain lessons learnt from your challenges, successes and/or failures in the whole learning journey.
 - These reflections should be focused on your encounters with colleagues, community(s) as well and how you feel about the whole learning journey.
5. ***Engaged scholarship and individual skills development***
 - A reflection on theoretical and analytical concepts learned in class, and how useful you think these theories and concepts are in making sense of what is happening in your internship.
 - This includes reflection on content knowledge and analytical skills gained throughout the course, coupled with practical non-academic skills such as interpersonal, cross-cultural communication, and gaining rapport, as well as teamwork development.
 - This should include a discussion of how to balance being observers (trying to understand the world/society around them) and participants in an internship.
6. ***Recommendations***
 - In light of the above, here you should reflect on what you did best and give advice on how other students can benefit from your experience. Coupled with this, please consider and include areas you could improve upon.
7. ***Future applications***
 - In light of the above, here you can speculate how the internship and learning may contribute to future career and academic goals and how your internship may enrich your resume.
8. ***Conclusion***
 - Compare what you have learned and experienced to the personal goals you outlined in week one, and to what extent these were achieved by the end of your experience.

Students should draw on journal entries and lecturer feedback from these journal entries to write your paper. Students should use class readings as sources, and ensure in text citation and reference lists are included.

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.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

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

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Required Readings/Assignments
Session 1 - 5 June	<u>Introduction: Leading across cultures tools and framing</u> • 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	<u>Readings</u> - Mendez, Deirdre (2013). Cultural Analysis Toolkit: Navigating International Business Culture, The University of Texas at Austin CIBER: 3-44 - "Defining Culture, Heritage and Identity." <i>South African History Online</i>, 14 Oct. 2011, www.sahistory.org.za/article/defining-culture-heritage-and-identity. Accessed 28 May 2026. <u>Recommended reading</u> - McIntosh, Janet. "Listening versus Lingwashi: Promise, Peril, and Structural Oblivion When White South Africans Learn Indigenous African Languages." <i>Signs and Society</i>, vol. 13, no. 1, 2025, pp. 1-25. - Oludaja, Bayo. (2000). Verbal Communication Styles: Some implications for listening. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Listening Association <u>Assignments:</u> Personal Cultural Profile Assignment Sample: Take the self-assessment on p. 34 of the <i>Cultural Analysis Toolkit</i>. Be ready to discuss your own

		profile and cultural biases. In particular, be ready to describe your own communication style and what you can do to adapt to the communication style of your supervisor and host culture. Journal Entry 1: Internship goals
Session 2 – 19 June	<u>Socio-Economic Overview</u> Engagement with the local historical and current social and economic context and some of the implications for the economy, employment and social relations.	<u>Review:</u> <i>End the Lie</i>. Directed by Alan Lowery, Carlton Television 1998. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgggPRLeic Accessed 20 May 2026 - Klein, Naomi. "Democracy Born in Chains: South Africa's Constricted Freedom." <i>The Shock Doctrine</i>, 13 Feb. 2011, tds.naomiklein.org/articles/2011/02/democracy-born-chains.html. <u>Assignments</u> Journal entry 2: Local context expectations and impressions
Session 3 – 26 June	<u>Approaches to intercultural engagement</u> Guest Speaker – Mr. Riaz Solker (Filmmaker, Educator) - Discussion about unique features of the South African cultural landscape - Small group discussions on interns' cultural biases before general class discussion on culture. - Class discussion on current local economic profile, challenges and impact on internship placements. - 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 awareness	<u>Readings:</u> <i>Sodium Day</i>. Directed by Riaz Solker, 2022. (film) - The Culture Factor (n.d.). Country comparison tool: South Africa. Available https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=south+africa Accessed 21st May 2024 - Afrolingo (n.d.) 5 top aspects defining the South African Culture. Available . https://afrolingo.co.za/blog/5-top-aspects-defining-the-south-african-culture/ Accessed 21st May 2024. <u>Assignment:</u> Journal Entry 3: Journal entry: intercultural engagement observations
Session 4 – 3 July	<u>Networking - Thinking Critically about:</u> - International career paths - Work in the 21st century - Networking skills - Understanding social media & networking	<u>Readings:</u> - Building a Network. http://www.manager-tools.com/2006/05/building-a-network Accessed: 30 October, 2012. (podcast). - Raj, M.; Fast, N. & Fisher, O. (2017). Identity and Professional Networking. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i>. Vol

		43(6) pp 772-784 - Canham, Hugo, and Christoph Maier. "In the Blood: The Consequences of Naturalising Microsegregation in Workplace Social Networks." <i>Group & Organization Management</i>, vol. 45, no. 5, 2020, pp. 674-708. <u>Assignment</u> Journal Entry 4: Networking
Session 5 – 10 July	<u>Ethical engagement</u> ● Engagement with working ethically across cultures; mediating complicity in ethically corrupt systems	<u>Readings:</u> - It's impossible to live a totally ethical life but it's fun to try https://qz.com/1327804/its-im-possible-to-lead-a-totally-ethical-life-but-its-fun-to-try/ Accessed 23rd May 2019 - The folly of purity politics https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/01/purity-politics/513704/ Accessed 23rd May 2019 - Don't think of yourself as a good person, think of yourself as "good-ish" https://qz.com/1508190/the-key-to-being-a-better-person-think-of-yourself-as-good-ish/ 23rd May 2019 <u>Assignment:</u> Journal Entry 5: Work ethics
Session 6 – 17 July	<u>Culture, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging</u> Guest Speaker – Ms. Aika Masomi (Tutu Foundation) Discussion of host location's evolving social environment, with an emphasis on DEIA issues	<u>Reading:</u> - Wainaina, Binyavanga. "How to Write About Africa." <i>DevelopmentEducation.ie</i>, 7 Dec. 2011, developmenteducation.ie/blog/2011/12/07/how-to-write-about-africa/. - 5 ways intersectionality affects diversity and inclusion at work. (22 July 2020). <i>World Economic Forum: The Future of Work</i>. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/diversity-inclusion-equality-intersectionality/?DAG=3&gclid=CjwKCAjwkeqkBhAnEiwA5U-uMyvTbA177FecO3OpNY-hdpxVqllcj2RAgahWPQMPnN-gg6lATnA6RwRoCxTYQAvD_BwE Accessed 28 May 2024. - Department of Higher Education and Training (2023) <i>Fact Sheet -Characteristics of the South African Labour Force</i> - Phila, K. (3 June 2023). Transforming the labour

		market fast is vital for SA's economic growth. <i>Mail & Guardian</i>. Available from https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/opinion/2023-06-03-transforming-the-labour-market-fast-is-vital-for-sas-economic-growth/. <u>Suggested:</u> - Adichie, C. (2009). The danger of a single story. <i>TED</i>. (both video and transcript available) at https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en Accessed 21st May 2024. <u>Assignment:</u> Journal Entry 6: Social issues in host culture
Session 7 – 24 July	<u>Reflection and Consolidation</u> • Workshop on leveraging the international internship experience in career planning ○ Hard and soft skill self-assessment ○ Résumés • Skill-building activity related to giving an effective oral account of the internship experiences. What do you think are the three main new skills you have acquired from your internship? Think critically. These may be hard skills such as learning how to use social media for an organization, or they may be "soft skills" such as working with people from different cultures. • Students share "lessons learned" from their internship experiences	<u>Readings:</u> Minimum 2 readings on career planning, motivation, or resume writing; sample readings include: - Hajo Adam, Otilia Obodaru, Jackson G. Lu, William Maddux, and Adam Galinsky. "How Living Abroad Helps You Develop a Clearer Sense of Self." <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, May 22, 2018. Available at https://hbr.org/2018/05/how-living-abroad-helps-you-develop-a-clearer-sense-of-self - Perna Mark C. "An Internship Advantage Is Powerful. Here's How To Make It A Win-Win." <i>Forbes</i>, April 8, 2022. Available at https://www.forbes.com/sites/markperna/2022/04/08/an-internship-advantage-is-powerful-heres-how-to-make-it-a-win-win/?sh=161fae6f2b73 - "Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce." <i>National Association of Colleges and Employers</i>, April 2021. Available at https://www.naceweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2021/resources/nace-career-readiness-competencies-revised-apr-2021.pdf <u>Assignments:</u> - Update resume to reflect internship experience - Final Analytical Assignment due

REQUIRED READINGS:

- "5 ways intersectionality affects diversity and inclusion at work." (22 July 2020). *World Economic Forum*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/diversity-inclusion-equality-intersectionality/> Accessed 28 May

2024.

- Afrolingo (n.d.). "5 top aspects defining the South African Culture."
<https://afrolingo.co.za/blog/5-top-aspects-defining-the-south-african-culture/> Accessed 21 May 2024.
- Adichie, C. (2009). "The danger of a single story." *TED*.
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story Accessed 21 May 2024.
- *Apartheid Explained* (video). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f2k6iDFCL4> Accessed 20 April 2024.
- The Culture Factor (n.d.). "Country comparison tool: South Africa."
<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=south+africa> Accessed 21 May 2024.
- "Defining intercultural competence" (video). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJqBhLgSNQY> Accessed 23 May 2019.
- Department of Higher Education and Training (2023). *Fact Sheet - Characteristics of the South African Labour Force*.
- "Don't think of yourself as a good person, think of yourself as 'good-ish'." *Quartz*.
<https://qz.com/1508190/the-key-to-being-a-better-person-think-of-yourself-as-good-ish/> Accessed 23 May 2019.
- "The folly of purity politics." *The Atlantic*.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/01/purity-politics/513704/> Accessed 23 May 2019.
- Garman, Anthea, and Vanessa Malila. "Listening and the Ambiguities of Voice in South African Journalism." *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, vol. 43, 2017, pp. 1–16. (NEW – replaces *Oludaja* 2000)
- Harris, L., & Rae, A. (2011). "Building a personal brand through social networking." *Journal of Business Strategy*, vol. 32, no. 5, pp. 14–21.
- Invest Cape Town (n.d.). "Cape Town's Economy and Infrastructure."
<https://www.investcapetown.com/why-cape-town/economic-landscape/> Accessed 21 May 2024.
- "It's impossible to live a totally ethical life but it's fun to try." *Quartz*.
<https://qz.com/1327804/its-impossible-to-lead-a-totally-ethical-life-but-its-fun-to-try/> Accessed 23 May 2019.
- "The Jimmy Fallon Effect: 10 Qualities Of Great Networkers." *Careerealism*.
<http://www.careerealism.com/networkers-qualities-jimmy-fallon/> Accessed 23 May 2019.
- Lebedko, M. (2014). "Globalization, Networking and Intercultural Communication." *Intercultural Communication Studies*, vol. XXIII, no. 1.
- Letsebe, K. (9 January 2024). "Emerging HR trends to watch out for in 2024." *CHRO South Africa*.
<https://chro.co.za/articles/emerging-hr-trends-to-watch-in-2024/> Accessed 19 May 2024.
- McIntosh, Janet. "Listening versus Lingwashing: Promise, Peril, and Structural Oblivion When White South Africans Learn Indigenous African Languages." *Signs and Society*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2025, pp. 1–25. (Already in Session 1 – retained)
- Mendez, Deirdre (2013). *Cultural Analysis Toolkit: Navigating International Business Culture*. University of Texas at Austin CIBER, pp. 3–44.
- Phila, K. (3 June 2023). "Transforming the labour market fast is vital for SA's economic growth." *Mail & Guardian*.
<https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/opinion/2023-06-03-transforming-the-labour-market-fast-is-vital-for-sas-economic-growth/>
- Raj, M., Fast, N., & Fisher, O. (2017). "Identity and Professional Networking." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, vol. 43, no. 6, pp. 772–784.
- Smit, W. (7 June 2023). "Tackling inequality in the city – Cape Town." *Social Europe*.
<https://www.socialeurope.eu/tackling-inequality-in-the-city-cape-town> Accessed 21 May 2024.
- "Tips for working in intercultural environments." *Kwintessential*.
<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/blog/culture/intercultural-understanding> Accessed 23 May 2019.

- White, L. (n.d.). "Culture." *Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/culture> Accessed 22 May 2023.
- "Why South Africa is still so segregated" (video). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVH7JewfgJg> Accessed 20 April 2024.
- "Work contracts are a complex web of social and cultural dynamics." *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/work-contracts-are-a-complex-web-of-social-and-cultural-dynamics-75074> Accessed 23 May 2019.
- **RECOMMENDED READING**
- Ang, S., & Van Dyne, L. (2015). "Cultural Intelligence and Competencies." *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed., vol. 5.
- Auzenne, M., & Horstman, M. "Your Résumé Stinks!" *Manager Tools* (podcast). 2005.
- Auzenne, M., & Horstman, M. "Building a Network." *Manager Tools* (podcast). 2006.
- Bock, J., et al. (2012). "The Effects of Cultural and Structure on Strategic Flexibility." *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 49, no. 2, pp. 279–305.
- Casoojee, Aisha. "Communication Intervention in South Africa: Advocating for the Listening and Spoken Language Approach." *South African Journal of Communication Disorders*, vol. 71, no. 1, 2024. (NEW – clinical listening perspective)
- Cowan, K. (2012). "10 tips on writing a successful CV." *The Guardian*.
- Cross, R., and Thomas, R. (2011). "Managing Yourself: A Smarter Way to Network." *Harvard Business Review*.
- De Klerk, S. (2010). "The importance of networking as a skill." *South African Journal of Business Management*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 37–49.
- Early, P. C., and Mosakowski, E. (2004). "Best Practice: Cultural Intelligence." *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 139–146.
- Johnson, K.M. (2017). "The Importance of Personal Branding in Social Media." *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 21–27.
- Kaschula, Russell H. *Languages, Identities and Intercultural Communication in South Africa and Beyond*. Routledge, 2022. (NEW – comprehensive South African intercultural framework)
- Peterson, Brooks. *Cultural Intelligence*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2004.
- Rosenbaum, A. "How to avoid being the ugly American when doing business abroad." *Harvard Business School*.
- Tujela, E. (2014). "Developing Cultural Intelligence for Global Leadership Through Mindfulness." *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 5–24.

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
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