

IN 395 – Internship Seminar
Developing Intercultural Competence in an Internship Setting
IES Abroad Milan

DESCRIPTION:

This seminar aims to provide students with the theoretical tools and professional skills necessary to work effectively across cultures. By developing students' competency at cultural analysis and interpretation, communication, problem-solving, and self-reflection, the course enables students to make the most out of their international internships and equips them to excel in future intercultural settings. Through readings and lectures, class discussions and activities, a group research project, and a final paper, the seminar will exercise students' abilities to think critically about cultural values, attitudes, and practices and styles of communication, helping them become more adept at managing cross-cultural interactions and more effective at integrating into foreign cultural environments.

The first half of the course focuses on *cross-cultural awareness*: it explores how social, economic, and political contexts affect cultural attitudes and values by introducing students to theoretical tools for analyzing national and organizational cultures. Lessons encourage students to assess their own cultural profiles and levels of comfort with cultural difference and to perceive, contextualize, and adjust to norms and values shaping professional life in Italy (including those impacting professional relationships, communication, time management, and leadership style). The second half of the class focuses on *intercultural competence*: it examines specific skills that help in the effective navigation of cultural difference (e.g., intercultural communication, relationship building, and conflict management) and helps students assess their own aptitude with regard to these soft skills so as to can better market their intercultural competence and international internship experience.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 22

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: lectures, in-class exercises, presentations

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

Sponsor's Report: 30%

Participation: 15%

Assignments: 20%

Group Project: 15%

Final Paper: 20%

1. *Sponsor's report:* Regular attendance is required at the workplace (10 hrs. per week minimum) or automatic failure. The workplace supervisor will evaluate students according to criteria such as attendance, punctuality, motivation, task completion, and integration into the workplace environment.
2. *Participation:* Presence at seminar meetings is mandatory. Students are expected to come to class prepared – having read assigned readings, completed assignments, and ready to actively participate in class discussions and activities. Active participation during the course will be evaluated in terms of attitude, contribution to class discussion, constructive response to others, and preparation for class.
Preparation for class may be monitored by periodic reading quizzes.
3. *Assignments:* Students are required to complete the following assignments:
 - a. A journal, to be submitted on Moodle, composed of five (5) one-page entries. Entries are due **Monday evenings at 11:59pm** (see below). Journals allow students to track their

experiences, cultural observations, and feelings toward the internship over the course of the semester. They also ask students to make a connection between something that we've discussed in class and something outside of it. See "Assignment Guidelines" on Moodle for a detailed account of this assignment.

- b. Contribution to the class's Moodle forum, at instructor's discretion (see below).
 - c. Various short assignments, including a 'Self-Evaluation and Cultural Profile' and an updated resume assignment.
4. *Group Project*: Students will conduct a group research project on Italian culture and social life to be presented in class. See "Group Project Guidelines" on Moodle for a detailed account of this assignment.
 5. *Final Paper*: Students are expected to submit a final paper of 5-6 pages that describes how their internship experience has impacted their professional aspirations and what they learned about intercultural communication and engagement of cultural difference. See "Assignment Guidelines" on Moodle for a detailed account of this assignment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will leave the course able to

- Recognize their own cultural biases and personal attitudes toward cultural difference.
- Perceive and elaborate key attitudes, values, and facts that shape 21st century Italian and Milanese culture.
- Identify key dimensions constituting organizational cultures and dynamics
- Compare Italian social and professional life in relation to the U.S.
- Better adjust their behavioral, communicative, and social practices in relation to the cultural practices and values they encounter.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

IES Abroad Milano allows a maximum of **TWO** excused absence per semester. Each further absence will automatically result in a deduction of two percentage points (2/100) from your final grade. **FOUR** absences during the semester (including the one excused absence) will result in a failing grade for the course.

EXPECTATIONS:

- Cell phones should not be seen or heard during class unless their use is requested by the instructor.
- *A professional attitude and behavior is expected in class* (this means: arrive on time and remain for the duration of class; exhibit the attitude you would around professional colleagues and supervisors; refrain from conducting private conversations in class; use appropriate language and exhibit professional behavior; come to class prepared and ready to contribute to the ongoing class discussion; submit assignments in a timely manner).
- It is not possible to pass the class, even when taken pass/fail, without regularly attending and actively participating in the seminar sessions.
- Assignments more than 24 hours late will not be accepted.



CONTENT:

1) Welcome & Introduction

- Outline syllabus and course objectives
- Discuss interviews and internship first impressions
- “How ethnocentric am I?” – Self-assess using the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)
- *Reading: Adecco, “The Soft Skills Imperative,” pp. 1-19.*

UNIT I: CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

2) Intro to Ethnorelativism

- Outline the Cultural Analysis Toolkit and the difference between individual and national values
- Elaborate the implications of relationship-oriented cultures
- Discuss internship impressions and expectations
- *Readings: “Cultural Analysis Toolkit,” pp. 3-34; Meyer, “Peach versus Coconut,” The Culture Map, pp. 174-177.*

Assignment: Complete ‘Self-Evaluation and Cultural Profile’ on Moodle and bring to class.

3) Italian Identity & Citizenship

- Module: “Citizenship & the State”
- Discuss Kohls' "Values Americans Live By"
- Elaborate discussion of national cultural values
- *Readings: David Segal, “Is Italy Too Italian?” The New York Times (July 31, 2010); L. Robert Kohls, “Values Americans Live By (1984)”;* Erin Meyer, “The Head or the Heart,” *The Culture Map*, pp. 163-173; Jason Horowitz, “Rome is a Dump, *New York Times* (Dec. 24, 2018)

Assignment: Journal entry 1 due

4) Italian Economy & Contemporary History

- Lecture: “A Short History of Contemporary Italy.”
- Analyze work site culture according to Hofstede’s Dimensions of Organisational Culture and Meyer's cognitive and affective trust
- *Readings: selection of contemporary news articles.*

Assignment: Take online Moodle reading quiz.

5) Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Italy

- Lecture: “La Bella Figura & Other Cultural Lessons”
- Discuss contemporary race, ethnicity and gender issues in Italy
- *Readings: selection of contemporary news articles.*

Assignment: Journal entry 2 due

6) Networking Event

- Details TBD.
- Students will be asked to collect business cards from 4 guests at the event who are NOT colleagues.

Assignment: Post to Moodle forum before class.

UNIT II: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

7) Intercultural Communication

- Debrief the Networking Event
- *Lost in Translation!* – analyze case studies in intercultural communication
- Reading: Erin Meyer, "Listening to the Air," *The Culture Map*, pp. 29-49

Assignment: Journal entry 3 due

8) Intercultural Communication II

- Identify the role of communication styles in the workplace
- Discuss strategies for effectively adapting to different approaches to communication
- Reading: Erin Meyer, "How Much Respect Do You Want?" *The Culture Map*, pp. 115-142

Assignment: Post to Moodle forum before class.

9) Conflict Management

- *Conflict & Me* – self-assess personal attitudes and behaviors toward conflict
- Discuss the impact of culture on modes of addressing conflict
- Reading: Erin Meyer, "Disagreeing Productively," *The Culture Map*, pp. 195-218

Assignment: Journal entry 4 due

10) Skill Leveraging

- Present research projects
- Evaluate personal skills developed during internship experience
- Reading: Andy Molinsky, "Customize Your Cultural Behavior," *Global Dexterity*, pp. 85-101

Assignment: Journal entry 5 due

11) April 30: Making the Most of Your Internship

- Discuss how to integrate your experience abroad into your future goals
- Evaluate resume update in one-on-one meeting with instructor

Assignment: Update your resume, write job description, and upload elevator pitch.

→Final paper due at 11:59pm.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Adecco Group, "The Soft Skills Imperative," White Paper, pp. 1-19.

IES Abroad, "Cultural Analysis Toolkit," pp. 3-34.

David Segal, "Is Italy Too Italian?" *The New York Times* (July 31, 2010)

L. Robert Kohls, "Values Americans Live By (1984)," Washington DC: Meridian House International (1984), pp.1-8.

Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*, New York: Public Affairs (2014), pp. 163-173.

Jason Horowitz, "Rome is a Dump," *New York Times* (Dec. 24, 2018)

Andy Molinsky, "Customize Your Cultural Behavior," *Global Dexterity: How to Adapt Your Behavior Across Cultures Without Losing Yourself in the Process*, Boston: Harvard Business School (2012), pp. 85-101.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Andrew Rosenbaum, "How to Avoid Being the 'Ugly American' When Doing Business Abroad," *Harvard Business School 'Working Knowledge'* (Jan. 2003)

Alessandro Fernandez, "The First Steps to Business Success in Italy," *Living in Italy* (May 31, 2007)

IES Abroad, "How to Put Study Abroad on A Resume"

IES Abroad, "How to Talk About Study Abroad in An Interview"

IES Abroad, "Making the Most of Your Study Abroad Experience"