

Merrimack College
Department of World Languages and Cultures
Telling Stories: Exploring and Enhancing the Study Abroad Experience (WLC 4000)
Fall 2011 Course Syllabus

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Days and Location: Tuesdays 4:00-7:00 pm in Sullivan 102

Course Objectives:

- Gain a greater perspective on the personal, academic, and professional impact of study abroad
- Make a successful re-entry into life in the United States and Merrimack College
- Share new perspectives with the Merrimack College community and maximize new knowledge acquired through the study abroad experience
- Remain exposed to world events and developments of the host country where students studied
- Continue to learn about yourselves and the world

Student-Centered Learning:

Students returning from a summer, semester, or year abroad often lack the time and space in which they can reflect on their learning experiences with other student-returnees, professors, and administrators at their College. This interdisciplinary, open elective course will focus on student-centered learning and will be primarily student-lead. Therefore, the full participation and engagement of all students is essential for an enriching dialogue and for achieving learning outcomes.

The LEADS Learning Philosophy:

To optimally guide students to reflect and build upon their study abroad experience, this course follows the LEADS learning philosophy, which focuses on Lifelong, Experiential, Applied, Deep, and Seamless learning.

Required Readings:

Although there are no required textbooks for this course, students will be required to read 2 books of their choice (with instructor approval) for the comparative book review assignment, and many articles will be distributed to read for class.

Course Schedule

Class 1 (September 6): Academic Convocation

- 4:00-6:00 pm- Academic Convocation (Dinner included)
- Our class will meet for dinner following Academic Convocation
- Discuss overview of the semester and syllabus

Assignments for next class:

- Read article about the Nacirema people
- Reflection paper #1: What did you learn about your host country? What did you learn about the U.S.? What did you learn about yourself?

Thursday, September 8: International Potluck Dinner at Dr. McGovern's home
15 William Street, North Andover
5:00-7:30 pm

Class 2 (September 13): Introductions and Course Overview

- Introductions
- Study Abroad BINGO!
- Discuss Reflection Paper #1
- Discuss Nacirema article and Reflection Paper
- Discuss the Comparative Book Review assignment

Assignments for next class:

- Select 2 books for Comparative Book Review
- Prepare table for Study Abroad Fair

Class 3 (September 20): Study Abroad Fair

- 4:00-6:00 pm in the Sakowich 1st floor lounge: Set up a table for your country of study (bring photos, souvenirs, etc.) and talk with students and faculty about your study abroad experience.
- Email Lauren with your selected books for the comparative book review no later than September 20.

Assignment for next class:

- 1-page project proposal due

Class 4 (September 27): L'Auberge Espagnol

Assignment for next class:

- Headline check-in
- Movie Discussion: Discuss how your own study abroad experience relates to the film. Identify five scenes or quotes from the film that you can identify with through your study abroad experience.
- Read article from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about study abroad and professional development
- Reflection Paper #2: How did your relationships change with people in the U.S.? How did they develop with people abroad?

Class 5 (October 4): Career Development 1: Enhancing your Resume

- Discuss Reflection Paper #2
- Discuss article from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*
- Bring a résumé to class (ask Career Services for assistance)
Guest Speaker: Dr. Heather Maietta, Director of Career Services
Resume overview and critiquing (1 hour)
- Discussion: How did your study abroad experience influence your professional goals?

October 11: NO CLASS. Classes meet on a Monday schedule.

Class 6 (October 18): Immigration in the United States

- Final resumes must be emailed to Lauren prior to the start of class
- Share “headlines” and discuss immigration in the United States
- Film: “The Visitor”

Assignments for next class:

- Reflection Paper #3: “The Visitor”
Review “The Visitor” discussion guide and consider the questions written on page 7. Answer one question in Section A and one question in Section B.

Class 7 (October 25): Career Development 2: Social Networking, Understanding Generational Differences, and Interviews

- Discuss “The Visitor”
- Guest speaker: Dr. Heather Maietta, Director of Career Services

Assignments for next class:

- Create a “Linked In” profile and send an invitation to Lauren
- Complete your virtual interview exercise by November 1st. (Career Services can assist you with this.)

Class 8 (November 1): Film: Students’ Choice

Film discussion

Assignments for next class:

- Reflection paper #4: How have your academic and professional goals change as a result of your study abroad experience? How are you utilizing your study abroad experience in other Merrimack courses?
- 2 informational interviews due before the next class

November 6: Study Abroad Pre-departure Orientation
4:00-6:00 pm in the Murray Lounge

Class 9 (November 8): Career Development 3: Cross Cultural Workshop and the Graduate School Panel

- Cross-Cultural Communication workshop

- **2 Informational Interviews Due**
- Discuss informational interviews
- Graduate School Panel from 6:00-7:30 pm

Assignments for next class:

- Come up with 3 questions to ask the panelists at the International Career Symposium. You will be required to ask one question.
- Comparative Book Reviews due next class

Class 11 (November 15): Career Development 4- International Career Symposium

- **COMPARATIVE BOOK REVIEWS DUE**
- Share the comparative book reviews
- Exploring international job opportunities
- Identify skills and abilities you obtained from your international experience
- 6:00-7:00 pm: International Career Symposium (Location TBA)

Assignments for next class:

- Finish projects and prepare presentations

Class 12 (November 22): Class cancelled for Thanksgiving break

Class 13 (November 29): Film: Students' Choice

Assignments for next class:

- Reflection Paper #7: Course Evaluation: What did you get out of this course? What was the best part of the course? What suggestions do you have to improve the course?

Class 14 (December 6): Course wrap-up

- **FINAL PROJECTS AND PRESENTATIONS DUE**
- Class Dinner

Assignments and Assessment

The course will combine formative and summative assessment, with a primary focus on formative assessment. Students will receive ample written feedback on all assignments to challenge them to think more deeply.

Students will incorporate their assignments into a **learning e-portfolio**, which will be comprised of:

Reflection papers	20%
Proposal and Final Project	20%
Comparative Book Review	20%
Career Assignments (Resume, Informational Interviews, and Virtual Interview)	15%
Headlines	10%

All written assignments should be submitted using 12-point, Times New Roman font and should be double-spaced.

Reflection Papers

The reflections serve as an opportunity for students to reflect upon their study abroad experience. Students will be asked to answer a posed question(s) in 1 ½-2 pages and verbally share their experiences with their peers.

Headline Check-in

Students will be required to bring in a current headline for the country in which you studied. Bring news that is relevant to your major and/or has an effect on the international community. The discussion will focus on the role of culture, language, or national identity as it relates to news event(s). You will be graded on your participation.

Comparative Book Review

Students will read 2 international and/or intercultural memoirs or historical fiction books of their choice. They will be asked to write a comparative review to identify one or more recurring theme(s). Students should write with an analytical perspective and discuss the similarities and differences in the books they have read. Students should select books that take place in their regions of interest and identify themes they are interested in. Some suggestions include: *Half the Sky* (Nick Kristof); *A Long Way Gone* (Ishmael Beah); *Memoirs of a Geisha* (Arthur Golden); *The Kite Runner* (Khaled Hosseini); *1,000 Splendid Suns* (Khaled Hosseini); *Angela's Ashes* (Frank McCourt); *A Year in the World* (Frances Mayes); *Eat, Pray, Love* (Elizabeth Gilbert); and *Three Cups of Tea* (Greg Mortenson). The Comparative Book Review should be 5 pages.

Community Engagement Project

Students will be required to participate in a significant activity in the campus community or surrounding area. This may be an individual or group project, but a group project must be more complex. The project should focus on internationalizing the campus or a development of your international understanding. Students will submit a proposal for your project, in which you will highlight the goals you hope to achieve. Students will present their projects, identifying what they gained from their project.

Cultural Enrichment Activities

In the spirit of LEADS learning, students will be required to participate in 3 additional cultural activities. Students may find activities and events on their own (e.g. international films, dance performances, etc.). Some opportunities to consider:

- Participate in a "language exchange" table during lunchtime (ongoing)
- Become an International Assistant to International Students and Exchange students (ongoing)
- Meet with students who are planning to go abroad
- Attend a concert in the Rogers Center or in the community

- Watch an international film on your own
- Visit an ethnic restaurant and try a dish you have never tried before.