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Taking Psychology Abroad:

Resources for Designing Your Study Abroad Course

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## Overview

Faculty and administrators in higher education are increasingly aware of the need to internationalize curricula in an effort to connect with the global community. Study abroad is an important mechanism to challenge students' ethnocentrism and enhance their appreciation for diversity (Geelhoed, Abe, & Talbot, 2003). More students are seeking learning opportunities abroad; the number of Americans studying abroad recently increased by 8% to over 200,000 (Institute of International Education, 2006). Yet, faculty considering teaching abroad have few pedagogical resources. This resource packet was designed to provide valuable information about teaching psychology in a study abroad program. The packet includes sample materials to assist faculty as they develop their own courses; specifically, it provides information about best practices, example assignments, and course-related materials for the preparation phase, participation phase, and reflection phase of study abroad.

### Introduction

As members of a global community, we cannot overemphasize the importance of international education and understanding. Members of the United States Congress introduced the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Act (S. 3744 sponsored by Senators Dick Durbin and Norm Coleman) declaring 2006 as the “Year of Study Abroad” in hopes of increasing opportunities for international learning experiences. Although many students travel abroad for a semester to study at international institutions, another type of study abroad experience is enrollment in short-term courses taught abroad by faculty from the home campus. In fact, the majority of students participating in study abroad do so by taking a course in summer or January term (Institute of International Education, 2006). Existing empirical research on study abroad has focused on language development through immersion experiences and on issues relating to college student adjustment during and after experiences abroad. Research has demonstrated that international learning experiences are an important way to foster cultural awareness and appreciation for diversity (Geelhoed et al., 2003). Psychology faculty interested in increasing discussion of diversity issues in their classrooms or enhancing the cross-cultural relevancy of their courses will find many resources available. At this time, however, psychology faculty interested in designing study abroad courses will find few pedagogical research studies or resources.

This instructional resource packet provides information for psychology faculty as they develop courses offered through study abroad. It provides faculty with sample materials, description of resources, and best practices in developing study abroad courses. The resources provided are not course specific and will therefore be helpful to a broad range of study abroad courses in psychology. Theoretical concepts and perspectives from cultural psychology, social psychology, developmental psychology, self psychology, health psychology, and psychology of gender are particularly relevant in study abroad experiences. However, specific course topic areas are dependent on faculty expertise and the location of the course itself.

### Resources for Course Development

Based on past faculty experiences and extensive literature review, we have summarized best practices for developing psychology courses taught abroad. We organized course design and student assignments around three phases of study abroad experience: preparation, participation, and reflection.

#### Study Abroad Preparation Phase

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Study Abroad Preparation Phase:

## I. Becoming Aware of Study Abroad Options

## A. Identify on-campus opportunities and challenges

Faculty who are interested in teaching abroad should begin by identifying the process and the resources for developing study abroad courses within their own institution. This process can vary widely from campus to campus, from individual faculty developing and leading courses to a separate office for international education that coordinates programs. Many colleges and universities have an infrastructure for study abroad programs, especially for helping with issues outside of faculty expertise (e.g., medical insurance coverage, liability and waivers, trip insurance).

One of the first issues for consideration is whether the course will be interdisciplinary or disciplinary-specific. If a course is interdisciplinary then it is advantageous to team-teach the course with faculty from different departments providing expertise in their areas of specialty. Another issue of consideration includes saturation of the geographic area (e.g., how many courses can and should be taught in a particular geographical area), expertise of the faculty member relative to the proposed topic and culture, development of a syllabus and appropriate assignments, and so on. Working with an experienced faculty mentor can illuminate the process at a new instructor's own institution. In some cases, faculty may be joining or taking over an existing course. When joining an existing course, faculty should consider how to bring their own expertise to bear on the course material and what experiences they can provide that will extend students' knowledge of psychology in the country.

In order to assist faculty in conceptualizing how a study abroad course might look, we have included an example syllabus for a short term study abroad course and a semester length study abroad course in Appendix A. We also offer a number of suggestions for specific activities and assignments in the next section. Identity and gender studies are two areas of great interest for study abroad. In general, psychology is very versatile and is easily incorporated into multidisciplinary courses or programs. Researching attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in the cultural group under study before proposing the course is crucial. Mainstream materials in psychology often assume universalism of theories and empirical findings, but studies in cultural psychology (e.g., Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 1992; Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 1990) have long demonstrated the importance of cultural context in understanding human behavior.

Another consideration is the faculty member's experience traveling with students. Inexperienced faculty should consider a domestic travel experience first, or travel with someone who has experience leading a study abroad program. Even if the faculty member has traveled widely, traveling with students is a completely different venture and new challenges and situations arise. Flexibility, patience, and a good sense of humor are excellent qualities for leaders of study abroad!

## B. Consult professional organizations for international education

One professional association that may be of interest is NAFSA, the Association of International Educators, an organization that coordinates and promotes international education (<http://www.nafsa.org/>). Although largely comprised of administrators of study abroad programs, this organization is beneficial for networking and discovering existing programs at other institutions and agencies. The website also provides links to other professional groups and regional divisions of NAFSA that can provide more detailed and specific information to interested faculty.

Another collection of study abroad resources for faculty and students can be found at [http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/study/resources/study\\_abroad\\_resources.shtml](http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/study/resources/study_abroad_resources.shtml). These resource materials include potentially helpful manuals and books available for purchase from various organizations around the world.

The Council on International Education Exchange <<http://www.ciee.org/>> also provides resources for faculty considering developing study abroad courses. Specifically the council provides international faculty development seminars, advising resources, and research summaries on international education. In addition to the resources just described, governmental opportunities for faculty development such as the Fulbright-Hays faculty seminars abroad and research abroad fellowship programs can be found at the U.S. Office of Education site, <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/iegps/index.html>

## II. Making Connections in Other Cultures

### A. Networking and personal connections

Finding experiences that offer in-depth exploration of a culture is the cornerstone of successful study abroad programs. Although travel agents can help arrange flights, hotels, and typical tourist activities, educators often want to connect more deeply to the culture. This can be difficult without extensive knowledge, preparation, and personal connections. An advance trip to the country to establish connections and investigate options is ideal, though many institutions do not have the resources to send faculty members abroad for preparation. Working with faculty mentors who have direct experience is a next best option. One model for pairing experienced and novice faculty involves sending a pairs (experienced with novice) or a small group (two experienced, two novice) of faculty members to teach in the same location for alternating years. Thus, there are always experienced and novice faculty, in addition to a director who coordinates weekly meetings and facilitates exchange of ideas and materials. With this model in place, new faculty can consult with their more experienced colleagues to discover what did and did not work well in prior years, in addition to amassing a wealth of information about academic and cultural opportunities in the city environs. Finding a regular meeting time with experienced colleagues is an excellent way to facilitate collaboration and connections.

Most of the actual contact and set-up with the individuals and organizations in many other cultures is done on the internet now, though that depends on the country and

the program in question. Allowing ample time to correspond by different means and within different working hours is important, so begin preparation as early as possible.

#### B. Professional organizations

One good option for faculty members who do not have extensive personal knowledge or contacts is to make use of professional organizations for quick networking. For example, other members of the American Psychological Association, Association for Psychological Science, or a regional psychology group may have related international expertise and connections. Cross-cultural organizations (e.g., International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology [IACCP] [www.iaccp.org](http://www.iaccp.org) or The Society for Cross-Cultural Research [SCCR] [www.sccr.org](http://www.sccr.org)) are excellent resources, as the membership is international (IACCP) and interdisciplinary (SCCR). Teaching resources are also available on the IACCP website.

### III. Exploring Cultural, Community-Based Opportunities Abroad

Developing appropriate cultural activities and community-based opportunities while abroad will depend primarily on the expertise of the faculty leading the course. In addition to the personal and professional contacts of the faculty leading the course, agencies and institutions in the culture of interest can be of great assistance. For example members of psychology departments in the country may be interested in making cross-cultural connections, particularly if the faculty member shares scholarship areas. Museum curators, administrators at historical sites or organizations, those employed at nonprofit organizations, as well as travel agencies that specialize in educational services will also be of assistance in establishing opportunities for students in the program.

### IV. Addressing Student Expectations and Goals and Preparing Students Prior to the Experience

#### A. Orientation meetings

For adequate preparation of students, we recommend at least two orientation meetings before departure of at least two hours each. More meetings and assignments will encourage greater preparedness, though this can be difficult to accomplish depending on the timing of the course. For winter-term programs, for example, most study abroad courses have several mandatory meetings in the fall semester before the January term begins. Students in those courses usually meet faculty members at the departure airport rather than on campus. A few courses meet on campus before departure, for orientation purposes. This allows faculty to cover logistical and other pragmatic information about travel, as well as course content. Courses meeting on campus prior to departure have the additional benefit of allowing students to get to know each other before traveling together. We suggest that all course readings be completed prior to departure and that the faculty member require journals or other assignments that demonstrate students have read and reflected on course materials. The goal-setting exercise described in the next section is also a good first assignment.

Orientations should be tailored to the specific program and will probably include the following information: introductions; overview of the program; goals and objectives of the course(s); course syllabi; specific course itineraries; cultural etiquette and awareness; flight and hotel information; passports, visas, and other documents; packing; financial considerations and concerns; and safety of students traveling abroad.

Orientations should also include discussions of the school's social and academic honor codes, and especially alcohol awareness and use while studying abroad. University administrators occasionally attend orientations to deliver messages about school policies and procedures. Orientations are largely for information-sharing, but can also be used to create a sense of community among students and encourage students to look out for each other while traveling abroad. Developing a sense of community prior to going abroad is particularly important in preparation for short-term programs.

B. Goal-setting exercise

Preparation for an international experience should include goal-setting opportunities for students in which they have the chance to reflect on their reasons for studying abroad. We have provided an adapted handout (first developed by Dr. Paul Fromson and colleagues at Elon University) in Appendix B for use with students studying abroad.

C. Handouts and assignments: Vocabulary, maps, and more

Additional handouts and assignments used during orientation sessions include vocabulary that will be important for students to know before visiting the country (even in an English-speaking country) and map assignments that require students to discover and provide geographic information. The assignments can be tailored to the specific locations visited in the course. In addition, faculty can provide information about each particular site to be explored with reflection questions relevant for the course content. As an alternative, faculty can assign students to develop these assignments.

D. Distinguishing study abroad from other international experiences

Although many students may not have studied abroad previously, many will have travelled abroad with family and friends. It is important to discuss ways in which an academic experience abroad differs from other forms of travel. Ask students to reflect on different travel experiences: What was the purpose of the travel? Who did they travel with? What goals did they have for the experience? What did they do while traveling? Who did they spend time with? Review differences between casual or leisure tourism, serious or cultural tourism, and academic experiences abroad. Research by Hottela (2004), Nash (1991), and Stebbins (1996) may be of assistance when preparing for this discussion or could be assigned to students. Though all travel experiences share some commonalities (visiting new locations, meeting new people, etc.), faculty will want to clarify ways in which the course is an academic experience rather than a trip.

Study Abroad Participation Phase:

I. Emphasizing Cultural Context and Content

The incorporation of culture-specific content will be unique to each study abroad course, but several common pedagogical issues arise in course development.

A. Striking the balance: Class-based instruction and experiential activities

Students studying abroad should clearly be experiencing the culture of interest, but sometimes faculty need to review academic content in a more traditional manner. In courses with limited classroom availability, faculty will need to be creative in using any

appropriate time or space to pause and review material with students. For example, museums may have a space faculty can use for a short time. Faculty can also review content during meal times with students and during long bus trips.

#### B. Front-loading the course

In a traditional classroom setting, students learn and process course concepts and theories over a long period of time. By contrast, in study abroad courses it is necessary to be knowledgeable about many concepts prior to the experience in order for students to get the most out of study abroad. Once faculty members arrive to the study abroad location with a group of students the class will most likely need to hit the ground running. Faculty members should carefully consider the degree to which they will front-load the course by requiring students to read materials and complete assignments prior to travel abroad or early in the term. Although faculty will want students to actively complete assignments during their time abroad, it may be advisable to make some assignments due prior to departure and some due after return to the U.S.

#### C. Individual and group excursions

Deciding how students will participate in field activities or excursions depends on the course length and structure. In assigning excursions consider size of the class, characteristics of the area (ease of transportation, safety, etc.), and the experience students should have. Many times, the overall course schedule will dictate whether faculty can take all students to a particular destination at one time or should arrange several smaller group visits.

### II. Emphasizing Identity Development and Processing the Experience While Abroad

#### A. Who am I? Self-identity analysis

This assignment requires students to apply concepts relating to self-identity to develop a detailed analysis of their own identity. Begin by having students complete 25 “I am...” sentences, emphasizing that the responses should be those that first come to mind. After students complete their statements, have them look over their responses and identify which ones reflect spiritual, material, and empirical aspects of identity (see Brown, 1998 for descriptions of each). Students should discuss whether their statements reflected each of these dimensions equally or one more than the others. After students analyze their own structure of their self-identity, ask them to reflect on how each aspect of identity will be affected by their experience abroad. That is, how will the experience of travelling and living abroad affect their spiritual, material, and empirical selves?

#### B. Culture and identity: The cultural collage

This assignment is based on the cultural collage activity designed by Blacko (2002). Students’ task in this project is to creatively explore their own cultural background and influences on their identity by creating a cultural collage. The goals of the project are to explore the meaning of culture and how it relates to students personally, to explore self-identity and how it relates more broadly to U.S. culture, and to make visible the ethnocentric lens through which people view the world.

In order to encourage students to explore their own cultural background, the faculty member discusses definitions of culture as defined in several texts or generated

through interviews with members of students' families. Students then are asked to represent the aspects of U.S. culture that are closest and farthest from their own self-identity. If students find this task difficult, it may be because those in the majority or dominant group of a particular geographic region are so normative in their views that they are unaware of their own cultural heritage. Students may also need to do more research on their cultural background. Students can answer where their family came from and how that may influence the values their family takes for granted. As students complete the assignment, ask them to think about the definition of culture as it relates to race, ethnicity, religion, privilege, politics, psychological characteristics, and gender.

Once students have completed the reflection, ask them to create a visual representation of their culture. Students should begin by placing their name and picture on the collage. Then they should think about the many cultural groups and subgroups to which they may belong, and use the spatial organization of the collage to reflect this hierarchy. Faculty should instruct students to use color, photos, and tactile or text representations of the facets of cultural identity. Students should place themselves in the context of the things most important to their sense of self including their family, friends, religion, food, and dress. Faculty should tell students to include a representation of the psychological aspects of culture, including values, beliefs, relationships and emotions.

#### C. Media representations of group identity

An important aspect of self-identity is each person's membership in social groups. Identification of particular groups with whom people affiliate both validates their self-identity and distances them from other groups (an unfortunate aspect of identity that can lead to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination). In order to assist students in recognizing aspects of group identity, have them analyze media representations of groups within their culture of origin. For example, one student may analyze representations of working women or mothers in prime-time television. Comedy shows are particularly useful in presenting stereotypical representations of social groups. Faculty can ask students to answer the following questions: What does this representation say about the social group as a whole? In what ways is the representation inaccurate? If people from another culture were to see this representation, what conclusions would they make about the social group? After students have studied abroad, they can conduct an analysis of the culture under study (see reflection assignments on page 12 of this resource).

#### D. Ethnic identity project

In this project, students complete a measure of ethnic identity and discuss how they view their own ethnicity and group membership. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992) can be distributed to students during a class session to facilitate discussion of students' own ethnic heritage and their perceptions of the importance of ethnicity for identity development. The 15 questions relate to students' reflections on their ethnic group membership, their sense of belonging, pride, participation in group activities, and so forth. Students from majority ethnic groups often have more difficulty completing the measure and also in discussing the importance of ethnic group membership than minority students. This instrument can be useful as preparation for learning about other ethnic and cultural groups, as a tool for understanding the

importance of ethnicity during study abroad, and as a means of reflecting on the ethnic groups observed while abroad.

E. Docent for a day – museum project

To introduce students to aspects of cultural identity, one possible assignment is to have students visit a museum and select an item or exhibit that interests them. Students then complete a written assignment requiring that they draw or print a picture of the item(s) and summarize the pertinent information concerning its relevance, acquisition, and historical time period. Although some of this information will be available on the museum displays, students may need to do more research at the museum's resource room or website. In addition, advance readings and research may be important to establish students' knowledge base for the museum displays.

After summarizing the pertinent information relating to the item itself, students describe the significance of the item as a reflection of cultural identity, emphasizing ethnic, gender, and/or religious significance of the piece. Finally, students reflect critically on the museum portrayal of the item and on the importance of the item in the modern culture under study. Given the structure of the class, this assignment could be completed in small teams or individually. Faculty may encourage students to be a docent for a day by presenting their museum project to the class as a whole.

### III. Experiential and Collaborative Teaching and Learning Strategies

A. Tour guide assignment

This assignment encourages students to take ownership of the course material and their experience by leading the class on an excursion during one day abroad. Faculty may assign pairs of students to select sites of interest to them from a prepared list or allow students to identify the sites themselves. Each student pair should prepare a brief description of the site using travel guides and online resources. Student pairs further prepare the class for the excursion by providing relevant background on what the class will see and experience and how the excursion relates to class topics. Each pair then leads the excursion to the site of interest and leads discussion (with help from the instructor) on the relevance of the site to course concepts and themes.

B. Worship project

One mechanism by which students can learn about the culture under study is to examine culturally specific places of worship and religious practices. Assign pairs of students to attend worship services and complete a participant observation assignment based on the experience. (Faculty members may want to discuss possible restrictions students' own religious beliefs may place on their ability to participate in religious services and modify the requirements of the assignment accordingly.). Depending on the religious denomination or group, students may need to contact the place of worship and ask for permission to attend a service and check on particular rules of etiquette to be observed, such as women or men wearing head coverings, removal of shoes, or appropriate prayer positions. The course instructor can ask students to describe the religious service, as well as to reflect on the space in which worship took place, paying particular attention to the visual representations of spirituality. Students can develop their responses by answering questions such as the following: What role did music and

standardized prayer play in the service? How active were those attending the service? Did both men and women lead the services? Students can also be asked to describe who was in attendance at the service and whether the attendees are separated by gender, age, or some other indicators of status. Students will likely find many things in common with their own religious experiences, but they will note important cultural variations in worship that will enrich their experience abroad.

C. Participant observation assignment

The objective of this assignment is to draw on students' interest in human nature in order to investigate the culture under study. The basic procedure is to assign pairs of students to complete a series of observations by watching public behaviors of those in the local community and then writing a description of the behaviors. Ideally, students should select a topic they are particularly interested in learning more about – such as behaviors at sporting events, parent-child interactions, or public dating. Each pair should develop a coding sheet identifying behaviors that are likely to take place during their observations. Students and faculty should discuss cultural restrictions or mores relating to observing particular behaviors or at particular sites prior to students completing the assignments. When making the observations, students should remain focused while being discreet in their observations. Students can make note of who is performing the behaviors and check off the behaviors taking place on their individual coding sheets and then combine their information to make sure it is accurate and complete. The faculty member may want students to present their findings and reflections on cultural variations and similarities of behaviors in question.

D. Intercultural interactions

Another suggested activity examines cultural differences in the desirability of certain behaviors in social situations. Brislin, Cushner, Cherrie, and Yong (1986) identified 100 critical incidents based on recommendations by experts from each culture, ranging from eating out at restaurants in Brazil to privacy in living arrangements in Samoa. Each incident is a description of a cultural conflict or misunderstanding relating to the particular behavior in question.

Faculty can use this list to create an assignment examining social behaviors or incidents in the culture under study. Specifically, faculty should choose several incidents for students to analyze and discuss from their own cultural perspective and from the cultural perspective under study. After students gain experience in the particular culture of interest, class members could also create their own critical incident list.

E. “You be the expert” group project

The purpose of this assignment is to get students actively engaged in working together to process information about the culture of interest. The exact nature or focus of the assignment will differ according to course specifics, but the overall structure can be applied to a number of different courses. The assignment is designed to be completed over the period of the course. Specifically, assign students to small groups and give each group a particular area of the culture they would like to focus on. For example, each student team might focus on a particular region of the country, neighborhood of the city,

group in the culture (youth culture, ethnic groups, religious groups, etc.), historical time period, or media format (newspaper, online, television media, etc.).

The main task for student teams is to develop a detailed expertise on their particular topic as it relates to course material. For example, if the faculty member is teaching about the economic factors that affect the culture of interest – student teams would apply that material to their particular topic (the economic factors affecting different regions, different social groups, etc.). Likewise, if the faculty member is teaching about discrimination, student teams would apply that general concept to their particular topic area (how historical context affects discrimination, media coverage of acts of discrimination, etc.). Course material will not easily apply to all the particular topics under study, but faculty can require student teams to apply a certain number of concepts in their projects. During the last section of the course, student teams can then share their expertise with the class as a whole.

### Study Abroad Reflection Phase:

#### I. Encouraging Student Reflection and Learning on the Experience After Returning to the U.S.

##### A. Virtual field trip assignment

The virtual field trip assignment allows students to reflect on their experience abroad by sharing an aspect of their experience with classmates. Students take their classmates and professor on a virtual field trip using computer software to present 10-15 slides displaying factual information regarding the sites visited as well as the relevance of the particular sites to the students' overall experiences. Encourage students to include visual information such as maps and photographs to make the presentation more engaging for classmates. Students should also include possible resources for those wanting to learn more about the sites, as well as a "highlights" page that summarizes key aspects of the trip. The general description of the virtual field trip can be modified easily to meet the needs of particular courses. For example, the faculty member may want students to select the most meaningful experience they had while abroad or summarize internship sites and experiences. Likewise, the faculty member may ask students to report on activities they experienced during independent exploration.

##### B. Who am I now? Changes in identity assignment

This assignment encourages students to reflect on the specific ways their own identity has been altered by studying abroad. First, ask students to turn in several pictures of themselves taken early, middle, and late in the term abroad. Have students report on the changes they see in the pictures. Encourage them to consider attitudinal and emotional changes, as well as any physical changes visible. After students have described their photographs, ask them to consider their learning experiences abroad. In particular ask students to reflect on how their learning took place in and out of the classroom, as well as changes in academic practices and goals. Finally, ask students to consider how changes in cultural awareness affect their own personal identity.

##### C. Media analysis of cultural groups

In the section above describing ways to emphasize identity development while abroad, we described how media analysis of particular groups can be used to examine self-identity. After studying abroad, many students return with greater awareness of how

their own country of origin is viewed abroad, as well as how other cultural groups are depicted in the media. In order to encourage students to reflect on this awareness, have students investigate media representations of the cultural groups under study, as well as the international coverage of their own country's political and economic issues. Faculty may need to limit discussion to international television coverage or national newspapers in each country. Questions that students can examine include the following: How do the representations depict the culture under study? In what ways is the representation inaccurate? If people from another culture were to see this representation, what conclusions would they make about the cultural or national group?

## II. Assessment of the Experience and the Course

Assessment of the course and experience abroad will allow faculty to evaluate whether the study abroad course is meeting goals and objectives, as well as indicating how the experience of studying abroad has advanced student development. In Appendix C we have provided example items that can be used for assessment of the academic growth of students and expectations relating to the course, as well as for areas of student development such as personal growth and development of cultural awareness. We have used assessments to gather data on student expectations prior to going abroad as well as their reflections at the end of the course, in order to examine change in students' attitudes and behaviors. We have also asked a number of qualitative questions relating to our course objectives and interests, some of which are also provided in the Appendix C.

Chen and Starosta (2000) developed a 24-item measure that can be used to assess change in students' openness to interacting with those from different cultures. Example items include the following: "I enjoy interacting with people from other cultures, I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures, I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally distinct counterparts, and I avoid situations where I will have to deal with culturally distinct persons" (p. 14). This measure can be used to assess students' development in comfort with intercultural interactions.

Several measures adapted from Thomlison (1991) are also useful as assessments of student development during study abroad. Specifically, Vandermaas-Peeler, Beaudry, and Dew (2003) adapted several measures to assess personal and cultural awareness of students during a semester abroad. Each scale consisted of 15 items. Items used to assess personal awareness included the following: "I rarely describe myself as a self-confident person in general," "I am not very good at handling stress in my personal life," and "I am not a risk taker when it comes to sacrificing the personal comforts of home." Items used to assess cultural awareness, included "I do not know much about other cultures," "I am interested in learning about life in other cultures and countries," and "I am not very knowledgeable about world issues."

### **Concluding Remarks**

In this manuscript, we have summarized best practices for developing psychology courses to be taught abroad. Each of the assignments and suggestions included in this packet were designed to assist faculty in preparing for the three phases of study abroad experience: preparation, participation, and reflection. Moreover we have emphasized three broad areas of development that should be considered for students studying abroad: academic growth, personal growth, and development of cultural awareness. Participation in study abroad programs will

enhance not only individual growth, but also students' ability to participate fully as members of a global community. We hope that the materials and insights shared in this packet will assist faculty members as they engage in the rewarding work of teaching abroad.

## Appendix A Example Syllabi



### In Search of Hawaiian Identity

*Please note: This syllabus is based on syllabi developed and utilized by Dr. Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler in Psychology; Dr. Jeffrey Pugh in Religious Studies; and Dr. Paul Miller in Exercise Science at Elon University, with some of the course goals developed in the context of other study abroad programs at Elon (e.g., London winter term).*

Course Rationale: Hawaii is a state that differs dramatically from the other 49 in its blend of cultures, with influence from Polynesian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Portuguese and other cultures. This results in a unique mixture of traditions and beliefs with occasional tensions among the various communities living in the islands. The design of this course is to explore the heritage of the indigenous peoples of the Hawaiian islands, and to consider the issues of identity formation and political reality in the Hawaiian islands. We will examine such issues as the conflict between the opposing forces of development of the islands and preservation of the environment; the impact of a native Hawaiian movement to secede from the United States on the political climate; and the historical roots of religious and cultural beliefs and the impact of Christian missionaries on those beliefs. Our major focus will be on how identity is formed in persons and how this plays itself out in the reality of contemporary Hawaii. The course will offer students a new perspective on a land that they usually understand only through tourist propaganda.

#### Course Description:

The course begins with class meetings during fall semester. During this time we will give you some readings, view films on Hawaiian history and culture, and prepare for our Hawaiian experiences and studies. On January 6 we will meet in Dallas to fly to Hawaii.

In Hawaii, we begin our exploration in the capital city of Honolulu, on the island of Oahu. Honolulu has many attractions and historical monuments (e.g., Pearl Harbor and the Bishop Museum). In addition, we have guest speakers from the Hawaiian Studies program at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Next we will travel to the Big Island of Hawaii, where we will spend a majority of our time. The Big Island is one of the most diverse in the island chain. It contains the islands' only active volcano (at this time), beautiful rainforests and waterfalls, private

snorkeling beaches, and deserts of Waimea. In Hilo (the largest and wettest city on the island), local guest speakers will introduce students to the “native” culture (e.g., hula and chant, the impact of tsunamis) and some existing tensions on the island. We will be spending some time at the University of Hawaii, Hilo with people who are dedicated to recovery of the Hawaiian language. Language is crucial to the formation of who we understand ourselves to be. A tour of the active volcano, Kilauea, will include a discussion of how the lava flows destroyed several local communities and the impact on local inhabitants of living with this threat in their backyard.

On the other side of the island, we will visit the sunny Kona coast, the home of many development conflicts. Nearby are many ancient temples and historical sites, including the Captain Cook monument, Honaunau National Historic Park, and petroglyphs on the lava flows. We will have opportunity to speak to other persons such as Mikahala Roy, who is diligently struggling so that her people’s heritage and life are not lost to the onslaught of globalization and modernity. After our time in Kona we will fly to Maui to spend a couple of days in Lahaina talking with activists who are concerned about recovery of Hawaiian culture and are working to recapture sacred sites. From there we will fly back to Dallas where you will connect with your flight home. It’s a short course, packed with cultural information and scenic vistas.

### Course Goals:

#### **Academic**

1. explore the heritage of the indigenous peoples of the Hawaiian islands
2. explore the heritage of the various immigrant groups in the Hawaiian islands
3. examine the historical roots of religious and cultural beliefs and the impact of Christian missionaries on those beliefs
4. examine the conflict between the opposing forces of development of the islands and preservation of the environment
5. examine the impact of a native Hawaiian movement to secede from the United States on the political climate
6. develop an understanding of the major theories related to identity development from developmental and cultural psychology
7. explore how personal and cultural identity develop in contemporary Hawaii

#### **Personal Development**

1. develop personal responsibility
2. develop self confidence
3. practice structured reflection to increase self awareness regarding your own identity and how it influences thoughts, feelings and behavior
4. cultivate your own intellectual curiosity (a desire to learn and know)
5. develop a sense of healthy risk taking and decision making in unfamiliar settings

6. develop interpersonal skills through interaction with the study abroad group and with others encountered abroad
7. develop tolerance for ambiguity regarding “what we know”
8. develop an appreciation for differences and the complexity of human behavior

### **Cultural Awareness**

1. interact with diverse peoples
2. understand the significance of culture (e.g., beliefs, values, traditions, and rituals) as it shapes identity and behavior
3. develop an appreciation and respect for other cultural traditions
4. develop an ability to adjust successfully to different living conditions (e.g., transportation, food, shopping)
5. gain insight into one's own culture and identity through comparison and contrast

Course Requirements: One of the basic requirements of the course is that you participate fully in the daily activities. We will make many day trips to various sites in the islands, as described in the itinerary. Your participation in these trips is mandatory, and your conduct should reflect the fact that you are “in class.” Unexcused absences will result in deductions from your grade in the course.

The primary course requirements include the following:

1) *Participation* - Evaluation of your participation will be based on your attentiveness and responsible behavior, written work, and your contributions to the class. This includes demonstrating your knowledge of the course material and an ability to integrate the readings and your experiences. We may assess this knowledge by **quizzes, short written papers, group activities and oral presentations.**

**You are expected to read the texts and readings over the break.** Even though you will write reader’s responses to these texts, there may be a quiz on this material during the preliminary classes at Elon. Your participation in class and in all organized sessions in Hawaii is **mandatory**. Appropriate and respectful behavior is expected at all these sessions (e.g., no alcohol use during a daily excursion). Just as you cannot use cell phones in class at Elon, when we are “in class” (transportation to our sites and time there) you should not use your cell phones. Please be considerate of your classmates.

2) *Reader’s response to the class texts* -You are expected to read the course texts for this course over the break. In your reading you should think about writing an analytical paper. What this means is that in your reading you should be taking notes, making notes of the arguments that the author makes, reflecting about how the author tells the history. When you go to write your paper you should think in terms of being critically reflective. Don’t just repeat what you read, but respond to it. What do you think about

the author's argument? What did you learn that was new? Where do you disagree with the author and why? More information will be presented in classes.

3) *A daily journal* - You are expected to keep a daily journal of your impressions, reactions, and reflections concerning your experiences in Hawaii. This journal should be your attempt to integrate what you *experience* with what you have *read* in the texts and article(s) concerning the cultural heritage of the Hawaiian islands and MUST be written after each class assignment (e.g., the various excursions we will make). Occasionally, specific questions will be provided for you to address in your journal entries. Journals will be collected mid-way through the term, and a grade will be assigned at that time.

4) *Final essay* - The final essay incorporates your reflections on the text and articles, as related to your individual discoveries and group experiences in Hawaii. The final essay must incorporate BOTH your reading and impressions gained during the course. You will be asked to write the essay on the following:

**Describe the idea of Hawaiian identity and how this has been understood from the time of discovery to the present age. Is there such a thing as Hawaiian identity? How has it been formed over this time? What has been the role of religion and other cultures in shaping this identity? What are some of the problems that Hawaiians face in the present day?**

Your comments should include some aspect of each of the following:

- The history of the Hawaiian people, including religious and cultural traditions of the native Hawaiians, before and after Western influence.
- The immigration of the many ethnic groups into the islands (including Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, etc.)
- The role of the United States government in the takeover of the Hawaiian monarchy and the impact of statehood.
- The role of economic interests in the islands.
- The impact of the sovereignty movements currently.

Course Readings:

**REQUIRED (in various iterations of this syllabus)**

Silva, N. K. (2004). *Aloha betrayed: Native Hawaiian resistance to American colonialism*. Durham, NC.: Duke University Press.

Moore, S. (2003). *I myself have seen it. The myth of Hawaii*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.

Buck, E. (1993). *Paradise remade. The politics of culture and history in Hawaii*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

**RECOMMENDED**

Doughty, A. & Friedman, H. (2002). *Hawaii, the big island revealed*. Lihu'e, HI: Wizard Publications.




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## Social, Group, and Personal Identity Across Cultures: Great Britain

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### Course description and objectives:

This course will be unlike any other course you have taken in the past. As an advanced semester length course to be taught while abroad, we will have the unique opportunity to apply the concepts and theories to London itself and to your experiences while living in London. In this course, we will focus on cultural influences affecting personal and group identity development. Drawing on the long and well-documented multiculturalism of London, we will reflect critically about ways in which culture affects our own personal identity development and management of group identity. We will consider psychological, sociological, anthropological, and historical materials relating to culture and identity and apply them to topics of interest and importance in British society. Thus this course will explore theories and topics of interest in the study of identity and culture with a particular focus on the multicultural context of Great Britain.

Course objectives include:

- ➔ Become knowledgeable about the theoretical approaches to studying identity development, group identity, and multiculturalism
- ➔ Shift from an individual perspective on identity to consider broader social issues relating to group identity
- ➔ Experience multiculturalism of another country
- ➔ Develop expertise relating to one cultural group within London
- ➔ Move from the role of tourist to that of informed and interest observer of cultural variation
- ➔ Work individually and collaboratively
- ➔ Actively engage with members of British culture

### Class Format and Participation:

Class format is a seminar and will be a combination of discussions, group projects, and planned activities. Most of the time we will meet in the classroom; however, you will be expected to complete out of class assignments “in the field” at locations pertinent to our topic of study and to bring your findings back to class.

Participation is required and involves more than simply showing up. You are required to complete the assigned readings in advance and any writing assignments that are due. Seminars are only as successful as the students make them, with faculty guidance and support, and your success in the course depends on your active participation. Thus, I will accept ONLY a doctor’s excuse as a valid reason for missing class. Ten points (10% of the total participation grade) will be deducted for each unexcused absence. Please also note that homework will be counted in class only on the day it is due, so missing class may cause an additional loss of points in homework grades.

**Course Requirements:**Brick Lane Paper (50 points)

The paper on Brick Lane will be organized as a series of answers to questions relating to central themes around immigration, acculturation, and gender roles. You will be asked to summarize passages, as well as identify specific events and quotes that support your responses. The paper should be typed (double-spaced, please).

Writing prompts/Discussion prompts/ Experiential Assignments (150 points)

Weekly writing/discussion prompts will be assigned throughout the semester. You will keep a notebook, relating your experiences in London to the readings and topics presented in the course. In your assignments, you will establish connections between your experiential learning and the academic content of the course. For example, we may visit exhibits on immigration and areas of London, which will relate to “Brick Lane.” Your prompts will many times serve as the basis for class discussion. I will collect individual prompts each week and the full notebook twice throughout the semester. You may handwrite the entries, as long as your work is neat and legible. I reserve the right to ask you to type them otherwise. For your final notebook grade, you will choose five entries from the semester, revise them based on reflective prompts, type them, and turn them in near the end of the semester.

Participation/Experiential Assignments (50 points)

Your in-class participation is vital in this course, as class time allows us to process the readings and examine how they apply to London. Yet, the most important learning during study abroad takes place outside the classroom. In order to encourage you to experience life in London, you will be assigned a variety of experiential activities to complete as part of your course requirements. Sometimes these experiences will link directly to a writing prompt/discussion prompt, but many times they will stand on their own as participation assignments.

Final Exam (100 points)

A cumulative final exam will be used to assess your comprehension of and ability to apply the theories and concepts reviewed in the course.

Group Identity Project (150 points)

The project will allow each of you to become an expert on one cultural group from within London’s multicultural environment (culture is defined very broadly here – not just ethnicity; it can be religious, age-related, even activity-related subcultures). Through completion of this project you will develop a semester long research project with several different components and assignments relating to various course topics. Working with a small team of your classmates, you will be assigned a cultural group to study in depth. Each team of classmates will complete a group identity project folder on their cultural group. The group identity project will consist of a number of separate components relating specific course topics areas to the group under study (e.g., identity markers, immigration, prejudice, stereotyping, acculturation). The projects will incorporate research in the library as well as observational or interview research “in the field” involving data collection and analyses.

At the end of term your group will lead a class presentation on your cultural group. You should provide supporting materials for the class in advance of your presentation. This might include fiction, nonfiction, research-based, or other print material. Each team will prepare a small assignment for the class that relates to its cultural group – such as visiting a museum or play for historical perspective, or a park for observing familial interactions). Each group will turn in its assignments from the semester in a project folder at the end of the class.

**Reading List:**

**READ before we go to London (over semester break):**

Monica, A. (2004). *Brick lane: A novel*. New York: Scribner.

**To be read in London:**

**Texts:** Chryssochoou, X. (2004). Cultural diversity: Its social psychology. Oxford: Blackwell.

Fox, K. (2005). *Watching the English*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

**Reading in the online course packet:**

Readings in the course packet are drawn from the following texts. They are identified by the 1<sup>st</sup> author’s name in your course calendar. **Print these prior to leaving school in the Fall semester and place them in a folder.**

Adamopoulos, J., & Kashima, Y. (1999) *Social psychology and cultural context*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brown, J. D. (1997). *The self*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Smith, P. B., Bond, M. H., & Kagitcibasi, C. (2006). *Understanding social psychology across cultures*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thomas, R. M. (2001). *Folk psychologies across cultures*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Additional Readings:**

You will need to read additional selections relating to your group research project.

**Grading:**

Brick Lane Paper (due prior to departure)	50 points
Writing/Discussion Prompt Notebooks:	
Mid-semester collection	100 points
Final 5 revised entries	50 points
Participation (includes experiential assignments)	50 points
Final Exam	100 points
<u>Group Identity research project:</u>	<u>150 points</u>
<b>Total Points:</b>	<b>500 points</b>

## Appendix B Setting Goals: A Self-reflection Assignment

What are your goals for your Study Abroad experience?

Read the stated goals of our Study Abroad programs in the next section. You will notice that there are three major areas of goals: academic, personal growth, and cultural awareness.

For this writing assignment, you are asked to think through how you will translate these general goals into ones that are specific for you. For each one of the three areas, consider your goals for our upcoming Study Abroad. Strive to be thorough and specific.

After identifying your goals, respond to the following prompts:

- It is important to reflect upon how our study abroad setting and our campus and surroundings are different. How will these differences influence your experience? What opportunities for exploration and personal growth might you seek out? What potential risks or problems (such as personal safety, stress) might you confront in that different environment? What might you do to address these opportunities and challenges, both before we depart and while you are there?
- What behaviors and attitudes on your part do you expect will contribute to your achieving your goals?
- What behaviors and attitudes on your part might interfere or stand in the way of achieving your goals?
- What behaviors and attitudes on the part of other student participants might contribute to your achieving your goals?
- What behaviors and attitudes on the part of other student participants might interfere with or stand in the way of achieving your goals?

This first writing assignment will become part of your course journal. Ask your professor what particular format you should use.

### **Study Abroad Program Goals**

International and intercultural experiences are integral to a liberal arts education. Academic and experiential opportunities can foster international understanding in order to promote competent and humane participation in the global community.

In particular, study abroad diversifies and enriches a liberal arts education in ways not possible on campus. The study abroad program provides courses of study that foster the integration of cultural awareness, academic content, and personal growth through firsthand experience with different cultures.

Study abroad programs carry out this mission by providing students with an opportunity to meet the following types of goals:

#### **Academic goals:**

1. demonstrate increased knowledge of specific course-related content;

2. enhance linguistic awareness and ability;
3. know something of the history, politics, geography, and the arts of the country visited;
4. experience and develop writing, speaking, reading, critical thinking and reflection skills.

**Personal growth goals:**

1. develop personal responsibility;
2. develop self-confidence;
3. increase self-awareness through reflection;
4. display a sense of intellectual curiosity and a desire to learn and know;
5. develop a sense of healthy risk taking and decision making in unfamiliar settings;
6. develop interpersonal skills through interaction with the group abroad;
7. develop tolerance for discomfort;
8. become more open-minded and tolerant of differences.

**Cultural awareness goals:**

1. interact with diverse peoples;
2. understand the significance of culture (such items as beliefs, mores, values, customs traditions, rituals, behavior) and develop an awareness of cultural context;
3. develop an ability to adjust successfully to living conditions (transportation, food, entertainment, currency, shopping, communication systems, etc.) in another country;
4. gain an insight into your own culture through comparison and contrast.

Appendix C  
Assessment Materials

The following 10 items are assessed using the following scale.

1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*

- 1) The course I took was personally challenging.
- 2) The course I took was a rigorous academic experience.
- 3) I spent as much time on academics during this course/program as I would during a regular course on my home campus.
- 4) I increased my awareness of other cultures as part of my experience abroad.
- 5) My sense of personal responsibility increased because of my participation in this program.
- 6) I became more tolerant of attitudes and beliefs that differ from my own as a result of this course.
- 7) I developed personal friendships with other students in my program or class.
- 8) I participated in the course/program with friends I already knew.
- 9) My course or program encouraged close social relationships among my peers from my home campus.
- 10) My course or program encouraged close social relationships among peers from outside my home campus community.

How would you evaluate your academic growth for the semester abroad?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a little growth			a lot of growth			

Please summarize your evaluation of your academic growth:

How would you evaluate your development of cultural awareness during the semester abroad?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a little growth			a lot of growth			

Please summarize your evaluation of your cultural awareness:

How would you evaluate your personal growth for the semester abroad?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a little growth			a lot of growth			

Please summarize your evaluation of your personal growth:

Please rank the following areas with a 1, 2, or 3, with 1 being the MOST growth, and 3 the LEAST growth during your semester abroad. Please use each number only once.

\_\_\_\_\_ academics      \_\_\_\_\_ cultural awareness      \_\_\_\_\_ personal growth

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