INTB 3092 Study Abroad  
European Systems and Operations – Germany

(3 credit hours; counts as INTB or Business elective)

NOTE: Manheim, Munich, and Heidelberg are known Industrial and Information Systems leaders. This course proposal is designed for our new partner university in Manheim, Germany. The current focus will be on the Manheim region, but future iterations of this course could make use of contacts and resources in Heidelberg and/or Munich.

Course Prerequisites: College of Business Student

Course Description:
Informational and Operational Systems have proven to be the key to companies succeeding in today’s global and local marketplaces. Companies that can utilize the best systems to create and deliver their products to customers with the highest quality and best service are likely to continue their leadership positions. This course will bring students to the top European Union manufacturing facilities, software companies and the University of Mannheim. Students will learn from English based lectures taught by renowned European Professors and tour worldwide Fortune 500 companies. Students will also visit historical sites, centers of trade and learning, and areas of culture and advancement, while opening their minds to international options for work, business and school. The format of the course is an intensive, comparative exposition into the world of Information Systems and Operations as well as an immersion into the social and cultural fabric of the city of Mannheim, which will serve as the base for the course. During the residency, students meet with IS and OM executives, tour facilities, and perform on-site ethnographic research in order to understand the underlying dynamics and drivers of technological advancement and utilization in a globalized world. In addition, the program intends to provide students a comparative perspective of the economic, socio-cultural, technological, infrastructural, political and legal environments of the city where the course will be offered.

Learning Objectives:
After taking the course, students should be able to:
1. Identify and evaluate the ways that operations, systems and technology usage varies between the U.S. and the study abroad city.
2. Critically analyze the manufacturing process, the global environment in which it operates, and the functions that are performed.
3. Express a knowledge base of the Information Systems’ fast-paced and increasingly sophisticated industry.
4. Explain how technology serves as a crucial interface between manufacturers and consumers across the globe.
5. Describe how legal, social, and economic measures have affected the manufacture and distribution of goods and services in the U.S., globally, and in the study abroad city, and provide a conceptual framework for understanding future trends.
6. Compare and contrast the ways that industry and technological usage can vary by culture and provide examples of that within the retail context.
7. Write coherent explanations and insightful reflections of the impact of culture on successful technological practices.

Course Materials:
Possible textbooks include:

*No Such Thing as Small Talk: 7 Keys to Understanding German Business Culture* by Melissa Lamson

Other readings available through Blackboard

Assignments:
The program is unique, interesting and enlightening, but it is also rigorous. Students must come to this Program well prepared. The course will begin with Phase I before you leave the U.S. There are three different phases in the course:

**Phase I. Pre-travel Preparation:** Before the onset of the country visit, you will attend class session, receive and give lectures/presentations covering the cities and companies to be visited on this Program, and engage in discussions covering travel, culture, and other relevant topics. In this phase, you are also required to form teams and prepare an audit of one of the host companies to be visited during the program. These audits will be shared through class presentations. Also during this phase you will meet with the professors to receive detailed information and training on the program protocol, personal conduct, and the final itinerary. In addition to being a part of the course requirement, these assignments serve to prepare students for the business and cultural context in which they will be immersed during the study abroad visit.

**Phase II. The International Program:** You will have an intense schedule where you will meet and receive briefings from representatives from the host companies and schools (including ones that they wrote reports on) and as well as those from non-profit organizations where relevant. Ethnographic research assignments will be completed. You will also engage in cultural activities (such as performance arts, visits to historic sites, events and other local happenings in the city) as well as having some free time for their shopping and other desired interests. You will complete an additional learning journal during this phase.

**Phase III. The Post-Travel Report:** Upon returning home, each team will be required to prepare an all-encompassing report that will integrate the information and experience garnered from your overseas experience, including the knowledge from course readings, presentations, lectures and discussions. The most critical quality determinant in this assignment is the ability to analyze and synthesize all the insights that have been accumulated into a strong thought paper. It is critical to keep notes during the company briefings and lectures in your learning journals. A specific outline for this project will be provided. The project will require students to examine the strategic advantage of the programs, facilities, technology and systems that were visited. You will need to properly cite no less than 3 outside resources that you researched to support your findings.

**Contribution/Ambassadorship:**
Your preparation for, and active contribution in, all class and on-site discussions is critical to your study abroad experience. Importantly, while abroad, you will be representing yourself, the Lindner College of Business, and the University of Cincinnati. This is no small responsibility when traveling
abroad, and being a true ambassador is vital. Keep the following items in mind in order to get the most out of your study abroad experience:
- Be respectful and culturally sensitive—be considerate, patient, polite, and open-minded
- Display leadership and give a quality effort—come fully prepared, be on time and willing to learn, and be an engaged participant
- Be conscious of your image/reputation and show a positive attitude—be appropriately dressed and a good communicator/listener

**Contribution/Ambassadorship Evaluation:**
Exceptional participants (20 points): exceptionally prepared and involved in discussions, heavily engaged in visits and asking questions, and continuously focused on making the most of the learning experience
Valued participants (18–19 points): well prepared and engaged in discussions, often engaged in visits, and a positive/professional contributor to the group
Passive participants (16–17 points): somewhat prepared and sometimes engaged in discussions, often passive and quiet but attentive, appreciated the group and the experience
Marginal participants (0–15 points): not prepared or involved in discussions, inattentive during visits, and behavior detracts from the group experience

**Learning Journal:**
You will write three journal entries while in Germany. The journals help you purposefully learn from your experience and give you the opportunity to reflect on concepts discussed in the pre-departure classes. Your journals should also capture your interactions and observations during the company and cultural visits, and ethnographic research. Journal entries should be no more than 2 typed, double-spaced pages. Creativity is highly encouraged. Use photos or other items to illustrate your observations and insights. These journals are not a travelogue, but rather your insights and learning from specific lectures and plant tours.

**Journal Guidelines**
This is, in part, an experiential course. The course includes more than the time you spend in the classroom or on company visits. The journal format focuses on helping you learn how to learn from experience, and become more proactive and purposeful learners. For example, consider use of the term “culture shock.” When managers visit or move to a different country, they often note feeling “very foreign” or “out-of-place,” unsure of what others expect, what is appropriate/inappropriate, what are common work practices, etc. To be successful, managers must learn very quickly, becoming sensitive to potential differences, coming to understand and respect the culture, and managing cultural differences effectively.

**Components:**

1. **Experience:** What cultural clues did you experience/observe? Describe what happened or what you saw. This component of your journal requires cultural sensitivity. Thoughtfully observe and describe the related cultural clue(s) (e.g., stories, language, symbols, rites/rituals, norms, attitudes, etc. experienced during plant tours, guest lectures, casual conversations, shopping trips, etc). (Please note that this is NOT a travelogue. Don’t merely recite that today I went to …) This should be a brief description. **Example:** The first time I went to a dinner in France, it took nearly three hours. By American standards, the service was very
slow. My host detected that I appeared impatient. However, that experience provided me with important insights into French culture.

2. **Reflection**: What cultural difference do these clues suggest? Why do you think this difference exists (e.g., what value does it have for the individual/group)? Look at the experience from the “local” perspective. Remember, cultures develop and persist because they serve a purpose. What insights from the study of culture can help explain what you observed. **Example**: The French take food, socializing (relationship culture) and leisure very seriously. A meal is to be savored and enjoyed with friends. Business should not intrude on this enjoyment…

3. **Theory**: Based on your experience and reflection, what do you think you “know” now? Develop your own or borrow (e.g., from studies, classes, etc.) a theory that explains the cultural difference. For example: Americans are motivated first and foremost by money. Explain why.

4. **Summary/Implications**: How might understanding this difference affect your social interactions with people from this culture? How would you use this learning to manage cultural differences more effectively?

**Learning Journal Evaluation (3 at 10 points each):**
Exceptional (10 points): exceptionally thoughtful, including insightful observations and rich personal reflection
Good (9 points): solid and thoughtful, adequate observations and personal thoughts
Marginal (0-8 points): general observations and reflection, and lacks depth of thoughtfulness and insight

**Rules and Expectations:**
1. You are expected to come to class and participate. This includes lectures, presentations, and site visits while in Germany.
2. The use of electronic devices (i.e., phones, laptops, iPods, etc.) is prohibited during class.
3. Late assignments will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.
4. You are expected to know and adhere to the Student Code of Conduct for the University of Cincinnati. As with all Lindner College of Business efforts, this course will uphold the highest ethical standards, critical to building character. Ensuring your integrity is vital and your responsibility. LCB instructors are required to report ANY incident of academic misconduct (e.g., cheating, plagiarism) to the college review process, which could result in severe consequences, including potential dismissal from the college. For further information on Academic Misconduct or related university policies and procedures, please see the UC Code of Conduct (http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Code_of_Conduct.html).

**Expected Schedule:**
**Phase I Pre-travel**: Lectures, Student Presentations, Pre-travel class meetings (up to 7)
**Phase II Travel:**
**Tentative Schedule:**

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<td>AM: Lecture: industry presentation</td>
<td>PM: Company Tour</td>
<td>Suggestions: SAP, Siemens, BASF</td>
<td>Evening: Activity with Mannheim/international students</td>
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**Phase III Post-Travel Report:** Two weeks later: Post-travel Integrative Assignments due
Performance Evaluation:
Pre-travel quiz 10%
Company audit and presentation 10%
Participation/Ambassadorship during visit 20%
Ethnographic Research assignments 20%
Post-travel Integrative assignment 20%
Learning Journal 20%

Your course grade will be based on the following scale:
94% - 100%=A
90% - 93% = A-
87% - 89% = B+
84% - 86% = B
80% - 83% = B-
77% - 79% = C+
74% - 76% = C
70% - 73% = C-
60% - 69% = D
below 60% = F