Graduate Study Abroad INTB 8005: France MBA/MS 16SS
Bordeaux-Toulouse

Program Leaders
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Academic Director for International Programs
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Our role is to provide instruction and guidance prior to our time in France, to act as liaisons and information source for you during the time in France, and to evaluate your work. All of the instruction in France will be done by people from our partner institutions, the University of Bordeaux IAE and the Toulouse Business School, and from industry. You should feel free to interact with us when you have questions or need clarification.

Spring Semester class meetings Fridays 4:40 – 5:50 in 223 Lindner (except Feb 26*)

January 15; February 5, February 19 (tentative), February 26* (early guest lecture session on EU accounting and finance from 4:10 – 5:30 and mandatory UC International Pre-departure session from 5:45 – 7:00 in 112), and March 4

Requirements & Assignments

Please keep in mind that the International Seminar you have signed up for is a class with many of the same types of requirements as any other MBA/MS class. There are required meetings/class sessions (Fridays 4:40-5:50), readings and written assignments that will be evaluated. One area where the International Seminar is somewhat different from a typical UC MBA/MS class is that you are also acting as a representative of our college and university in a foreign (in all senses of the word) environment. Thus, while some of the rules listed here may seem strange or obvious, they still need to be stated and observed.

Enrollment: You must enroll in INTB 8005, section 001 (France) in Spring Semester. If you need both an international course and the capstone, you should sign up for INTB 8081 Independent Study. There will be additional work for that course to fulfill the joint requirements.
**Attendance:** You are required to attend all schedule sessions prior to departure (unless you make specific arrangements to view those session on Blackboard). I understand that some of you have a time conflict with a blast class. Make arrangements to view the missed sessions and complete any work. For the in-country program, it is essential that you be **on time** and attend all seminar sessions on site. The only valid excuse for missing a session is illness (please don’t get sick overseas and a hangover doesn’t count!).

**Conduct:** Please observe local customs about classroom conduct. For example, in many places it is rude to eat or drink in class. Ask before doing. Some instructors will conduct an informal American style class. Others will be more rigid and formal. Be respectful of these differences. That’s part of the cultural lesson. Pay attention to the culture readings. They offer good guidance. We expect business casual dress for class and for company visits. If there are no company visits or other meetings off campus, you can dress casual. However, please do not wear hats in class or on visits. Note that French students (particularly the women) tend to dress up a bit more than Americans. One important note is that you must have closed-toe shoes for all company visits. You will also be doing a bit more walking than you typically do at home. Make sure that you have comfortable shoes. Finally, we are representing our school and don’t want to be perceived as “Ugly Americans.”

Although we often hear stories of the foreign nationals treating Americans poorly, in 15 years of doing programs in Europe, South America and Asia, we have rarely encountered any significant problems. If you at least make an effort to speak the local language – even just greetings and pleasantries - you can avoid problems. Don’t expect that waiters, bartenders, and shopkeepers will treat you the same as in the US. The standards and expectations are different. And do not expect that all service providers will speak English. Part of our objective is to learn how these things are different in other countries.

We will not have enough time to do any significant language training. We recommend that if you have never taken French language courses, that you do not try to learn too much in such a short time. You will only become frustrated. However, it is worth learning a few basic phrases. We will provide you with a short list of phrases. If you want to brush up or learn a bit more, try the Pimsleur language guides, available online and more reasonably priced than most others.

**Dress:** Keep in mind that March weather in France can be much like in Cincinnati - unpredictable. The average temperatures in March range from the 40s to the 60s. Rain is common. **Business casual is appropriate for the company visits.** Please make sure to have at least one pair of sturdy closed shoes.

**Assignments:** In addition to reading the material and attending the sessions, you have three graded assignments, described below. The first assignment is
prior to departure and involves research and reporting on the companies and locations. This is 20% of your grade. Assignments will be made in the first class session. The second assignment is a cultural journal exercise (see the description below) and is 20% of your grade. The third assignment is the post-seminar term project and is 60% of your grade. **(Note that the final assignment will be significantly more involved if you are doing the capstone option.)**

We reserve the right to reduce your grade for failure to abide by the rules – but that rarely happens with graduate students.

**Readings**

If you have not taken 22 MGMT 717 or MGMT 7017, purchase and read *Cultural Intelligence: People Living and Working Globally Business* (2009), David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson, Berrett-Koehler Publishing (for the best price, check online sources).

We also recommend that you find a copy a good guidebook for France. In the past we recommended *Lonely Planet France*. The Lonely Planet guidebooks are not the best ones for things like hotels and restaurants, but they are the best for providing insights into the history and culture. They also provide good information about tourist sites and language. There are other good guidebooks including Rough and Insight.

You are also **required to read one** of the following books on French culture:


Other readings, schedules and information specific to France and the European Union will be posted on Blackboard. You can also communicate with other program participants through the email function.
Pre-departure Assignments (20%)
In two-person teams, you will assigned to do research on one of the following topics and provide the group with a 2-3 page summary of your findings:

Commercial aircraft manufacturing (other than Airbus)
- Boeing
- Bombardier and Embraer
- The Japanese, Russian and Chinese efforts to develop commercial aircraft
- Supplier networks (information about specific suppliers that we will visit will be provided)

Bordeaux and Toulouse
- Brief overview of each of the cities with particular attention to history, economic development, industry, and other pertinent information
- Tourist information including key sites of interest, museums, and other relevant information.

Journal/Log (20%)
This is, in part, an experiential course. The course includes more than the time you spend in the classroom or on company visits. We find that participants learn a tremendous amount by just being in the place and interacting with people. The journal format focuses on being “mindful,” 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.

Final Products:
Option 1: You will work in teams of two or three and create a video journal that highlights various cultural experiences. This can include interviews, narratives, transactions or other impressions. It is not a travelogue. The segments must deal with the cultural issues listed in Option 2. The length of each vignette is open, but should be in the range of 5 minutes. You are to complete four (4) vignettes. We have some video cameras for your use or you can use your own digital camera or smart phone. See the Option 2 description below for some guidance. You will edit these upon return. The idea is to provide material that can be posted on our website and/or used to recruit and orient students. Final videos are due April 8. (20% of grade)

Option 2: You will complete a series of written journal entries (4 total). The topic areas for these follow. In each case, you should comment on the following
issues: **Relate what you’ve observed to what you know about French culture. How does culture explain or help you understand what you’ve observed? What are the implications for expats and global businesses?**

1. **Business transaction** – Examine in detail a representative business transaction that you make. This can be merchandise that you purchase, restaurant meals, or other purchases. What is the demeanor of the people with whom you interact? What about how people greet you in stores and other settings? Is it any different from at home? If so, how? Why is this important?

2. **Retail environment** – Pick a particular type of retail business that you frequent at home (grocery, clothing, sporting equipment, etc.). How is it similar/different from at home? Look at store displays, variety of merchandise, pricing, etc. Compare to typical US firms. (You may not use global chains such as Nike stores, Starbuck’s or other global brands. The idea is to pick typical French or European stores.)

3. **Food** – France is arguably the culinary capital of the world. Yet food can be one of the most sensitive areas for expat managers (or travelers). Select some aspect of the food culture (restaurant meals, food selections, specific food/meal types that you find odd, interesting, different, or other aspects of the food culture.

4. **Free choice** – Select some aspect of your experience, describe it and comment on it cultural bases and importance. Some suggestions are public transportation; private transportation (cars in particular); public space (parks, monuments); “patrimonie” (that’s the French term for cultural history and would include things like museums, historic sites, etc.

Each entry should be about 2-3 pages long (take notes on-site and transcribe observations and interpretation when you return to Cincinnati) and include the four general components described below. You will be graded based on the quality of your entries (i.e., thoughtful and well-written) and the extent to which you have followed the assignment guidelines. **Due April 8, should be submitted as a Word document by email. (20% of grade)**

**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?

Non-Capstone Term Assignment Options (Due April 20)

The term assignment accounts for 60% of your grade for the International Seminar Course.

Options 1-5 may be done in teams of two-to-three (2 - 3) people or individually. The objective is to apply the knowledge you have gained from your seminar, readings, research that you do when you return, and the links to local companies and your prior MBA/MS course work, to a practical problem. These assignments will require that you go beyond the material covered in your seminar. You have several options for fulfilling this assignment. The objective is for this assignment to match your particular international business interests and experience. Some of the websites and information generated for the pre-seminar sessions may be useful for these assignments, but you will likely need to do additional research. (Warning: don’t just cut and paste from web sites. This must be your own work.) The length of the project should be in the range of 20 to 25 pages, single spaced, including tables and exhibits, but not including references. These assignments are due by April 20. Please submit this electronically as a Word document. The options that follow are fairly generic. You can customize them or propose your own assignment (Option #5).
Option 1: Develop a business plan for your organization (one where you currently work or one that you select) that focuses on building or expanding operations in the country and/or region associate with your program. What kind of political, cultural, economic, financial, marketing, human resources and logistics/distribution issues must the company address to be successful? Be careful. If, for example, you determine that your firm should form a joint venture or acquire a local firm, you must be able to identify likely candidates. You should identify whether your operation will be a sales, distribution, and customer service center, or if you will also engage in production overseas. You also need to provide financial/accounting information that shows the potential costs and benefits of this venture.

Option 2: If your company is already running an operation in the country or region associated with your program (more than just selling a product), you can evaluate the company’s current operation along the same dimensions listed in option 1.

Option 3: Design a training program for developing personnel in your organization for placement in the country or region associated with your program and for preparing foreign nationals from the country or region associated with your program to work in your organization in the US. You need to identify key areas where employment practices and culture in the US differ from those in your country of choice. You should also be aware of typical patterns of expatriate adaptation and re-entry. The plan should cover (but is not limited to) such issues as evaluation and selection of potential candidates, compensation, employee relocation expenses, portability of benefits, and language and cultural preparation. Your plan should also deal with repatriation of expatriate managers after their overseas assignments have ended.

Option 4: Develop a marketing plan for a product or service to be marketed in France (or a French product or service marketed in the US). Be clear on the modifications that would be necessary for the product, service or the marketing; how you would need to change packaging, pricing, promotion, distribution, etc. The plan should discuss such issues as local production versus importation, local competition, and potential partnerships or alliances. What are likely barriers that you will encounter?

Option 5: Design your own adventure. Must be approved by March 27.

Term Assignment Capstone Option – for Part-time or on-line MBAs only* (*unless you started the full-time program prior to August 2015) (Due April 20)

These may be done in teams of up to four (4) people. More than one team can work on the same project. Expectation is for this to be a comprehensive
work – typically runs at least 20-25 pages single-spaced, plus tables, exhibits, and references (that’s about 8,000 words). Quality is more important than quantity! These assignments are project-based and will be related to the particular companies that we visit. You should think of this as a consulting project in that you will be evaluating some aspects of what the selected company is doing. These projects will involve multiple business disciplines (at a minimum, management, marketing, and finance/accounting, but may also include operations and supply chain issues). Your task will be to develop a **rigorous, carefully researched, professional document** that addresses the problem, project or situation. This deliverable is something that you could present to the people from our partner company. You will have only four weeks after you return to complete the project so it is important to do research prior to your time in France and to hit the ground running.

**Examples:**

**Kroger supply chain management project.** Teams evaluated supply chain strategies in the shipment of grapes and salmon from Chile to the US. They evaluated Kroger’s strategy and provided recommendations for improvements.

**Marketing French food products in the US.** A team worked with a French producer of private label cookies to explore expanding their presence in the US market. The team examined their strategy, viewed their production facilities in France, sampled their products, and studied the US market for cookies, including visits to local grocers. The final report provided a comprehensive assessment of the US market and an analysis of opportunities and threats.

**A group evaluated the CSR program of a US facility of a French manufacturer/distributor of industrial heat transfer printing tape that has a facility in Northern Kentucky.** They provided cost/benefit analysis as well as employee satisfaction assessment with the program.

**For either type of assignment:**
The quality of your research, analysis, and writing will be considered in our evaluation (we will provide a rubric prior to departure). It is absolutely essential that you provide comprehensive citations of all materials that you use in your assignment. You are to use the American Psychological Association style guide (Langsam Library has an electronic version of the APA style guide). You need to cite sources in the text and provide a reference list.

If you have questions or need clarification on this assignment, don’t hesitate to contact Professor Gales (Lawrence.gales@uc.edu) or Professor Ralph Katerberg (Ralph.katerberg@uc.edu).
Useful websites

- franceguide.com
- francetourism.com
- tourisme.fr
- nantes-tourisme.com
- European Union Website: http://www.europa.eu.int/index_en.htm
- US Department of State: http://www.state.gov (see several listing from home page: Business, Countries/Regions, Living/Travel Abroad, Travel Advisories, etc.)
- US Department of Commerce: http://www.commerce.gov
- International Trade Administration (US DOC) http://www.commerce.gov/opa/photo/ITA/events.html
- Lonely Planet: http://lonelyplanet.com
- http://www.info-france-usa.org/
- http://www.sncf.com/indexe.htm (French rail system site)

Logistics

You should plan to fly into Bordeaux (BOD), departing Cincinnati (CVG) on March 18, arriving BOD on March 19 by noon. Unless you plan to spend time in France at the conclusion of the program, plan to depart from Toulouse (TLS) on March 26 or 27 (Easter Sunday). Check various options. You may find that the best fares are CVG to Paris (CDG) and back to CVG. Then book separate one-way flights from CDG to BOD and TLS to CDG. The risk is that you need to be careful with Paris that you select the right airport (CDG) and that if you miss a connection do to a delay you may have to pay for rebooking. The fare through Delta for all flights ranges from about $1500 to $2000 depending on the routing.

Another option is to take the train from Paris to Bordeaux. However, that will involve some logistical juggling. If you are interested, we can help with planning.

When you select your flights, make sure that you arrive in Bordeaux as early as possible on Saturday, March 19. We will provide information on getting to the hotel from the airport.