Montpellier Internship: Learning through Experience

COURSE DESIGNATOR: MONT 3303  LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: French
NUMBER OF CREDITS: 3  CONTACT HOURS: 45

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an opportunity for students to reflect on the intercultural context of the host country’s work environment. Through practical internship experiences as well as readings, discussions, and written assignments, students will deepen their understanding of the host country cultural context and critically examine their own worldviews.

This course is designed to guide students in the internship experience and create a foundation for a successful professional career. In addition to gaining a cross-cultural comparative view on work, the topics and assignments will deepen students’ insights about themselves, the world of work, and being successful in the workplace.

COURSE CONTENT

- Work ethic and social responsibility
- Leadership
- Communication
- French social system
- Multiculturalism in the French society
- Place of secularism (laïcité) in the French society
- Gender and the Workplace
- Media and Politics

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course students will be able to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated University Student Learning and Development Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of difference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can locate and critically evaluate information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can communicate effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can identify, define and solve problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerance of ambiguity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can communicate effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can communicate effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appreciation of difference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility and accountability</td>
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METHODOLOGY

In-class contact hours include discussion, readings, student personal experiences, and guest lectures.

REQUIRED READINGS/ MATERIALS

Current materials (including journal articles, newspaper articles, television reports) reflecting topics related to the work environment will be selected each semester to foster discussion of contemporary topics and issues.

GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.</td>
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SUMMARY OF HOW GRADES ARE WEIGHTED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resume with new work experience</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Paper/Intercultural &amp; Goal Setting Paper/Journal/Final Capstone 3-page paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Site supervisor feedback</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
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ASSESSMENT DETAILS
ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION
Although ultimately rewarding, working in another country can be confusing or frustrating. There will be time in most classes to discuss and debrief your workplace interactions and tasks. You should be ready to share your experiences and thoughtfully comment on other’s experiences. We will also work on diverse aspects of French society and will have weekly discussions based on articles, books’ extracts, movies, etc.

INTERCULTURAL & GOAL SETTING PAPER
First page: Intercultural awareness is associated with a gain in interpersonal skills that are important to successfully engage at your current internship and in professional situations post-study abroad. In order to gain a better understanding of cultural differences that may exist between your host and home country, visit this website. First put in your host country and then add the U.S, as your comparison country. What are your general impressions? In what dimensions do you see differences? Similarities? How do you foresee that you may have to adjust your behavior or mindset in order to be successful in this cultural context? Describe two expectations you have about your host country’s work culture. Are these expectations similar or different than the U.S. work culture and why?

Second page: What are three personal goals you have for your internship? List three skills you would like to improve or gain during your internship and how you plan to achieve this skill development.

Suggested skills for goal paper
1. Function as a team member
2. Effective interpersonal communication
3. Learn new ideas quickly
4. Identify, define, and solve problems
5. Appreciate and interact with individuals different than yourself
6. Critical and analytical thinking
7. Creative/innovative thinking
8. Locate/evaluate information
9. Competency in a field of study
10. Writing skills

INTERVIEW
Interview someone in a career that you are interested in exploring. Describe how you found this person, their responses, how you believe this job compares to a similar job in the US, and does this interview make you more or less interested in this field, why or why not?

Sample questions:
What was this person’s career path? What type of education do they have? What is their employment history? What types of tasks does this job include? What is the organizational culture and how is it to work within this culture? What is their advice for getting into this field?

FINAL CAPSTONE PAPER
A capstone assignment is meant to “pull it all together.” In writing this short paper, draw upon your journals, interview, required readings, class discussions, discussions from colleagues at internship, and general observations. This should be a 3 to 4 page paper. This paper has two sections: personal and workplace.

Reflect on everything you experienced and learned during your internship then look back at your goal paper and journal entries.

Personal
Did you achieve your personal goals? Why or why not? What was challenging? What was easy? What did you learn and why does it matter? What will you do differently next time you start a new internship or job?
What makes you a good candidate for this job? Write down a job that you would like and respond to that interview question highlighting the three skills you have developed during the internship. How have you developed these skills over the
course of your internship? Why are these skills important in your chosen career? If these skills are different from what you listed in your goals paper, describe why and how this is the case at the end of this paper section.

**Workplace**  
Revisit what you wrote about the intercultural differences and similarities from your host to home cultures. Now that you have spent time in your host country, what do you agree with and what do you disagree with and why? Now that you had a working experience in France, compare it with your country’s work norms. What are differences? What are similarities? Explain and give examples.

**FINAL PAPER**  
Write an 8 page reflection paper on a social/economic/political aspect (it can be linked to the problem of immigration, women struggle, secularism, unemployment in France…) of contemporary France with a comparison with the US. Use some articles we discussed in class as a starting point or any articles you will find interesting about the topic and write a full well-organized essay.

**COURSE CONTENT**

<table>
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<th>WEEK 1:</th>
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| Quick presentation of the class: format, assessment and exam.  
Presentation of the Internship: rules, goals….  
Discussion on working values and the positive and negative aspects of the words “remuneration” and “travail” from the Antiquity until today.  
Extracts from *Le patron, le footballeur et le smicard*.  
Vocabulary review.  
Writing a CV in French. |

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| Description of the active population in France (primary, secondary and tertiary sectors).  
Working conditions in France: different types of contracts, weekly hours, minimum wage, vacation. Students will see how it differs with the US and will discuss how it affects the two models of societies they are facing.  
Mock interviews for students.  
Preparation of the “Rallye”: survey about some aspects of the world of work. Students will go to different places to interview the community of Montpellier.  
The CV is due that week. |

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<th>WEEK 3:</th>
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<td>Rallye: meet with students at the fountain Les Trois Grâces on Place de la Comédie and then each group will start the</td>
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Intercultural and Goal Setting Paper is due that week. Students will start their Internship that week or next week.

**WEEK 4:**

- Oral report on the survey.
- Social charges and Taxes in France: presentation of the French social system.
- Movie: *Ressources humaines*.
- Discussion about their first week on their Internship sites: observations? Questions? Challenges? Students start to work on their journal.

**WEEK 5:**

- End of the movie: *Ressources humaines*. Discussion.
- Unemployment in France: Pôle Emploi and Assedic in France. The impact of the 35 weekly hours on the French society.
- Students will prepare their Interview to explore someone’s career.

**WEEK 6:**

- Education in France: presentation of the 1881/1882 Jules Ferry’s Laws to introduce our education system. Comparison between French and American school systems.
- Movie “La journée de la jupe.”

**WEEK 7:**

- End of the movie followed by a discussion/debate.
- “Laïcité” in the school system and the French society in general. Discussion on the conflict/tensions between the French “laïque” republic and the Islamic religion. Students will read and discuss diverse articles to understand the major differences between France and the United States regarding secularism.
- The interview is due that week.
### WEEK 8:

La France contestataire: Unions in France and the history of strikes in France.

### WEEK 9:

MIDTERM

### WEEK 10:

Immigration in France and its impact on the world of work.
Cultural identity of the inhabitants of Montpellier and the Region (Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, Espagnols…)
Discussion about “Positive” discrimination.

The final capstone 3 -to 4-page paper is due that week.

### WEEK 11:

Immigration in France and Europe (suite).
Movie about clandestine immigration, “Welcome,” followed by a discussion and debate in class.

### WEEK 12:

Gender and the work place: the place of women in the active population (history, struggle for parity).

### WEEK 13:

Final projects are due that week. Students will present them in class.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the onsite syllabus for specific class requirements.
Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

**SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:**
Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

**STUDENT CONDUCT:**
The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.