BIOL 1904: Innovation and Imagination in Ireland

Freshman Seminar Abroad

Experiential Learning Journal

Dublin, Ireland

March 13th to March 22nd, 2015

Name:
Important Information

Where I am staying:

Roommates and phone numbers:

My instructor’s onsite contact information:

Assistant Program Leader’s onsite contact information:

My onsite buddy’s onsite contact information:
Accountability and Responsibility Contract

You will be representing yourself, the University of Minnesota, and a student from the United States. Accountability and responsibility are an important aspect of being a successful student and citizen. Fulfillment of the contract includes participation, accountability and responsibility to your roommate/s and the entire group, and responsible conduct at all times.

**Participation** means participating fully in all lectures, group discussions, activities, and excursions. Active participation means being awake and engaged during class sessions, visits with community members and guest speakers. Being absent from any aspect of the itinerary for any reason without prior consent from the instructor will result in the loss of at least 20 points of your final grade.

**Accountability/responsibility** for your roommate/s and the entire group means that you can always account for your roommate/s, and in turn, they can always account for you. You must always let members of the group know where you are at all times. Never leave anyone in the group alone in any setting, especially in pubs and at night, and do not let any group member leave on their own with locals. Like any big city, Dublin is a safe area in general, but there are certain establishments and areas of the city that are not. Our site host will identify these areas. It will be difficult for you to assess the level of safety so you should always venture out with a partner or in a group.

**Responsible conduct** means that you will be a positive representative of yourself, the University of Minnesota, and the U.S. at all times. Expectations include respect, appreciation, and hospitality for the local community, hotel staff, bus drivers, guest speakers, community organizations, and local establishments. This means:
- Being awake, alert and attentive during all class activities and for guest speakers. Falling asleep or dozing during any class session or guest speaker is disrespectful and will automatically result in loss of participation points
- Being on time to all class activities and being prepared – bring your journal to all activities!
- Presenting body language that demonstrates interest and attention to the individual speaking, including classmates
- Being quiet on the bus when people are speaking on the microphone
- Keeping noise levels to a minimum in the Dublin apartments so it does not disrupt other hotel/apartment guests or residents in the neighborhood
- Conducting yourself in a responsible manner in local pubs, restaurants, parks, and shops.

Expectations regarding alcohol include:
- Respect for anyone who chooses not to drink
- Responsible use
- No drinking games
- No large gatherings with alcohol in the Dublin apartment rooms
- Responsibility for every group member in pubs and any setting where alcohol is present
- Alcohol will not interfere with the priorities of the seminar

Failure to abide by the expectations outlined in the accountability/responsibility contract, or other related situations that arise could result in the loss at least 20 points of your final grade, and could result in your removal from the program.
While in Dublin…

1. You are responsible for yourself, your roommates and your assigned buddy. When we are ready to depart a location, please ensure that you are all present.

2. Always be on time! Our schedule is tight and, in many cases, we have standing times that we need to be certain places. Please do not hold up the entire group because you are not punctual. If you are perpetually late, in general, please plan ahead to comply with the daily schedule.

3. Remember that this is a class. You are expected to be prepared for class discussion, activities and assignments in the same manner you would for a class back on campus (actually, as I think about, I expect you to be better!).

How to use this journal…

The rest of this journal will guide you in the reflective and learning process of our daily activities during the course. Please use this journal as an educational tool that will inform your final project and remember that it will be turned in for a grade! The more that you detail your thoughts and reactions to your experiences in the moment, the more you will be able to draw on these comments later and you’ll receive a higher grade for this portion of the course. In the interest of helping you to be accountable for continually writing in the journal, it will be collected by Nikki at least once during the onsite experience.

Therefore, please bring your workbook and a pen with you to all class periods, excursions, and activities. You never know when something might strike you and you will want to jot down your thoughts… and there are assignments within the journal. Get in the habit of returning to the journal each day after we complete our activities! I can tell if your written responses were all completed on the plane after the onsite experience! 😊
Day 1: Friday, March 13th
Departure from Minneapolis

Traveling abroad can be an adventure that evokes many feelings – you may be feeling excited, anxious, prepared, scared, and all at the same time! Spend a few minutes describing your feelings and thoughts about this experience. What are you looking forward to? What are you nervous about? How have your past travels (or lack there of) had an impact on your comfort?

In thinking about your results from your Intercultural Developmental Inventory, what should you keep in mind during your time in Ireland to enhance your intercultural competency? What are experiences or information that would be helpful for your growth?
Day 2: Saturday, March 14th
  Arrival in Dublin
  Neighbourhood walkabout, Greening the city
  Welcome dinner

Part of experiencing a new culture and country is realizing what your first impressions are. Upon landing in Dublin and walking out of the airport, what did your senses notice that is different from home? (Sights, sounds, smells, etc.)

What questions do you have about Ireland, its culture and its people that you would like to understand or explore during the next 9 days?

Describe your impressions from your first day in Dublin. What are you looking forward to?
Day 3: Sunday, March 16th

Historical & cultural tour, Dr. McNamara
Ingenious Dublin tour, innovation in Dublin’s past and present
Meet the Makers: Behind the scenes at the St. Patrick’s Festival Parade
Gaelsprapi, pop up creative Irish language event

You finished your first full day in Ireland! What are some of your highlights from today?

Write some of your thoughts regarding the history and culture of Ireland from the tour:
The Ingenious Dublin tour gave you an understanding of Irish ideas and inventions that have changed the world. What stories or inventions left an impression upon you? What themes did you hear specific to innovation throughout Irish history?

What connections can you draw between the themes from Ingenious Dublin and those articulated in either of the books assigned for this course? What insights do you have about innovation in Ireland that move beyond those offered in the course readings?
What were your key takeaways from the community group behind the parade? What did you learn about the role of the festival and/or parade in Irish culture?

Day 4: Monday, March 16th
Innovation BC!
Newgrange, burial chambers, Trim Castle, and Hill of Tara with Dr. Keith Smith
Festival Ceili: St. Stephens Green, Irish dancing

Newgrange is often viewed as the most significant natural monument of Ireland. Built around 3200 BC, incredible precision, knoweldge and physical strength was necessary at a time before computers and cranes. As such, Newgrange is an incredible ancient example of innovation. Develop a paragraph or two that addresses your impressions of ancient innovation, as opposed to what innovation looks like in modern day.
Describe your learnings from the Newgrange, Hill of Tara, and Trim Castle excursion and how it connects to the course readings and other content.

Describe your impressions of Festival Ceili. How does it “fit” within your impressions of Irish culture (or not!!)?
Day 5: Tuesday, March 17th
St. Patrick’s Day
Parade, festival event, Guinness Storehouse
Irish movie screening

Culture can be defined by the norms, values, traditions, rituals, and behavior patterns that a group of people share in common. Today, in particular, provided many opportunities to explore and observe Irish culture. Based on your experiences so far, compare and contrast your current understanding of Irish culture with your own culture in a few paragraphs. How are they the same? How are they different? Have your impressions matched your initial expectations or understanding? Why is it important to assess the culture in which we are immersed?

What are some of your highlights/low points from today?
Day 6: Wednesday, March 18th
Creativity and Hi tech – The Dublin Story, Pamela Newenham
Cultural /social event: Informal evening music session

Key points/learnings from today’s seminar:

What are some of your highlights/low points from your explorations today?
What struck you about the people and the sites today?

Day 7: Thursday, March 20th
Science Gallery session – tour, lecture & visit “Lifelogging” exhibition
Glendalough, famed site of monastic settlement, walk around the lake
Dublin Literary Pub Crawl

What is the Science Gallery and what is its role in Ireland? What niche or need is it trying to fulfill? Is it successful? Why or why not? How is it supported and sustained?
The Lifelogging exhibit was designed to create a public conversation about whether we can record and analyse happiness, beauty, and aesthetics the same way we record footsteps and heartbeats. There are a variety of approaches to lifelogging within the exhibits… What struck you? What issues did the exhibit raise for you?

Glendalough has been described as a place that will “still your mind, inspire your heart and fill your soul” (http://www.glendalough.ie/). Many people find inspiration through activities such as connecting with nature, beauty, stillness, reflection, talking a walk, or through discovering the past. Describe your impressions of Glendalough and offer some rationale for why this particular activity was included in our itinerary.
The Literary Pub Crawl includes street theatre, insights about Dublin’s pub culture, and Irish literature and authors. What struck you about what you physically observed in relation to Irish culture and specifically, pub culture?

What are some of your personal highlights from today?
Day 8: Friday, March 20th
Morning vist to Brown Bag Films
Afternoon meeting with Airbnb in Grand Canal Dock/Silicon Docks area

Key points/learnings from today’s visits:

What connections did you make from today’s visits and the course material?

From our conversations today, what are some practices an Irish organization could employ to cultivate creativity and innovation in its employees? Is this different than in a US organization?
Day 9: Saturday, March 21st
Morning walk to markets, photographic archive
Matinee performance: A Midsummer Night’s Dream
Farewell dinner
Evening theatre performance: Stones on his Pockets

What are your impressions from the morning activities?

Describe your impressions of the theatre performance. What did you notice about the people attending, atmosphere, Irish culture, etc.?

Describe your highlights and impressions of Ireland. Has it changed since you arrived?
During your downtime throughout the trip… Where did you go? What did you do? What did you see or experience? Who did you meet?

What have you learned from your classmates during this experience?

Who has had the greatest impression/impact upon you and why?
Steven Johnson summarizes how the abstract patterns can be applied practically in everyday life to foster more creative, open environments. "Go for a walk," he writes, "cultivate hunches; write everything down, but keep your folders messy; embrace serendipity; make generative mistakes; take on multiple hobbies; frequent coffeehouses and other liquid networks; follow the links; let others build on your ideas; borrow, recycle, reinvent." What are some specific actions you can do in your life to achieve such conditions?

Day 10: Sunday, March 23rd
Depart Dubin and return to Minneapolis

Thinking back to all of that you have experienced during your time in Dublin, write some of the highlights for you during this experience:
What have you learned about yourself?

What have you learned about the people and culture of Ireland?

**Day 11 and beyond: Post Dublin Experience Activities**

Prepare a quick “elevator speech” for an interview about your experience in Ireland. How will you describe what you learned about Ireland, innovation and creativity in general, innovation and creativity within the Irish culture, and what you learned about yourself? Move beyond “it was great!” to be able to articulate what you gained that will help transfer to your future goals.
Think back to the first writing assignment you had for this class (Why Ireland?). In a page, summarize your current thinking on why Dublin and/or Ireland is an ideal location to explore creativity and innovation, and how your onsite experience has enhanced and/or changed your understanding. What are some examples from your observations onsite in Dublin and through the course readings?

Source: Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Assistant Dean in College of Biological Sciences