



Virtual International Internship

COURSE DETAILS

Course Designator and Number: FOST 3896

Number of Credits: 4

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: See “Instructional Time” below

Instructor: On-Site Faculty

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to learn about the virtual international work environment by critically examining a professional, remote experience abroad through an intercultural lens. A key element to this course is to deepen students' knowledge of their internship placement country's professional norms and cultural context in comparison to other students' internship placement countries, as well as the United States, and understand how COVID-19 has impacted these environments. Students' research and writing on COVID-19 globally will include ethical analysis on how the national approach has impacted society, if they agree with this approach or not, and why. We will interrogate how this knowledge will influence their behavior in their society and the world. Students will also enhance their understanding of their chosen field using a global mindset.

The course is designed to guide students in the internship experience and create a foundation for a successful professional career as well as working to understand and articulate career skill outcomes. In addition to gaining a cross-cultural comparative view on work, the topics and assignments will deepen students' insights about themselves, professional expectations, and being successful in the virtual workplace. Students are expected to make a valuable contribution to the virtual internship placement through the completion of projects and tasks guided by their internship supervisor in the placement country. This will require students to employ intercultural communication skills in a professional, virtual setting while critically examining their own worldview.

Course Objectives

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

- Use a comparative framework in essays and dialogue with fellow students, and the instructor, to examine cultural and professional aspects of work placement countries and how COVID-19 has impacted these environments
- Consider the ethical implications of the government's response to COVID-19 in their internship placement country and compare it to the government responses in the US and to other students' internship countries
- Research and analyze the placement country's workplace, particularly in terms of social media and online presence, including language, norms, values, economic assumptions and compare this to virtual environment to that of the US
- Communicate and navigate effectively in a global, virtual environment
- Understand their values, skills, and behaviors and how different values and communication styles may impact workplace dynamics; develop strategies for adapting to these differences
- Identify and articulate skills and experiences necessary to reach future career goals; develop learning objectives for the virtual internship site that will help them move toward these career aspirations
- Conduct their work during the internship utilizing best practices around professional behavior within a virtual work environment
- Understand and practice respect of different cultural assumptions

Methodology

This class is designed to be online during the course of students' virtual internship experience. Students will be asked to submit assignments and participate in class sessions/forums through the online platforms provided. The agenda for this course is multi-faceted. Focuses will be on: (1) using a comparative approach to examine cultural and professional norms and challenges due to COVID-19 in the students' own internship placement country, other students' internship placement country, as well as in the US (2) developing intercultural communication skills and understanding different cultural constructs and concepts that can be used in understanding culture on an international scale all the way down to a micro-cultural office environment and (3) enhancing and developing professional skills and competencies in a virtual workplace through a virtual international internship placement that can be used for a professional job search or a graduate/professional school application process and (4) learning to interact respectfully with their peers as they navigate and reflect together on intercultural experiences.

This class comprises blogs, small-group discussion, lectures, readings, posting to prompts, essays, a mock interview, and a presentation.

Instructional Time

In this four-credit internship course, students will spend approximately 450 minutes per week on class activities. In addition, they will spend time working virtually at their internship site (exact hours vary by location and can be found on the program webpages). This will include meetings with a supervisor and possibly other colleagues, working independently on projects, presenting work to a

supervisor, and responding to other professional requests. Students will also meet virtually with their internship coordinator in the placement country. This time will be spent learning about their internship placement country's cultural and professional norms to be successful in the remote work environment. Students' instructors will spend at least 150 minutes per week engaging them in synchronous lectures, creating discussion board prompts, responding to their essays and papers, overseeing their small-group discussions, guiding the mock interview process, and through weekly office hours (online as requested). In addition to these interactions with the instructor, students will also commit to approximately 300 minutes per week on the other independent, interactive, and collaborative activities that comprise the course, including completing the assigned readings, posting responses to discussion prompts, writing and researching papers, meeting with classmates in small groups, providing peer reviews, and completing course assignments.

Liberal Education Statement

Theme Courses: Describe how the course meets the specific bullet points for the proposed theme requirement. Give concrete and detailed examples for the course syllabus, detailed outline, laboratory material, student projects, or other instructional materials or methods.

Theme courses have the common goal of cultivating in students a number of habits of mind:

- Thinking ethically about important challenges facing our society and world
- Reflecting on the shared sense of responsibility required to build and maintain community
- Connecting knowledge and practice
- Fostering a stronger sense of our roles as historical agents

Common Liberal Education Theme Criteria

Thinking ethically about important challenges facing our society and world:

This course examines the ethical aspects of their internship placement country's response to COVID-19 by using a comparative framework to analyze the systems in place, or not, to their peers' internship placement country, and to the US. This is accomplished through small group discussion, research, essay writing, and lecture.

Reflecting on the shared sense of responsibility required to build and maintain community:

Students will reflect through essay writing, as well as in group and individual guided reflections and research projects about our shared responsibility to build and maintain community in the age of COVID-19. This shared responsibility is also reflected in changes the students will make in their own lives after working remotely abroad and experiencing firsthand the impact of COVID-19 on the work environment and society.

Connecting knowledge and practice:

Students research on the country's norms, culture, history, and skills necessary to work in a professional setting will be put into practice through their remote work over the semester. In addition, students will learn how COVID-19 has changed the workforce in their country and the impacts this has on society.

Fostering a stronger sense of our roles as historical agents:

In this course, we examine the varied approaches to containing COVID-19 on a national level and the impacts these policies have at a local society-level. They will understand that these policies translate to quality of life issues for individuals. Through this, students are better able to place themselves in

global context and see themselves as historical agents and understand how their actions may affect the future.

Global Perspectives Theme objectives and criteria:

“Undergraduates must develop the competence to function effectively and ethically in a complex, rapidly changing world that is increasingly interdependent yet fraught with conflicts and disparities. The Global Perspectives Theme assures that graduates from the University have had at least one significant academic exposure to the world beyond US borders, and the opportunity to consider the implications of this knowledge for the international community and their own lives.

“Courses in many disciplines and interdisciplinary areas may be suitable for the Global Perspectives Theme, and efforts should be made to assure that all world regions are represented among courses meeting this requirement. Topics addressed in a Global Perspectives Theme course might include (but are not limited to) contemporary popular culture; nationalism; globalization; human rights; comparative politics, economics, or cultures; historical studies; different modes of material and political life; regional, ethnic, or religious conflict; artistic and literary responses to colonialism or the colonial legacy, and the role of governments, corporations, or international organizations. Through concentrated study of a particular country, culture, or region, through in-depth focus on a particular global issue with reference to two or more parts of the world, or through the study of global affairs by a comparative method, students may cultivate a broader and more thoughtful perspective; increase their global awareness; and learn the importance of the particularities of place, time, and culture to understanding our world.” UMN CLA:

<http://asr.umn.edu/liberal-education-course-proposal-guidelines/global-perspectives-theme-proposals>

Meeting the Global Perspectives Theme

- The course, and most or all of the material covered in the course, focuses on the world beyond the United States: The course content is focused on the internship placement country where the student will be working remotely, in addition to peers' internship placement country during small group discussion and work. Students perform research and study the impact of COVID-19 on their internship placement country's culture and professional environment, taking into consideration the country's history, economic situation, and society. They are asked to reflect on what they learn and translate that into the context of their own lifestyle and culture, studying their country's lifestyle, and how that lifestyle has been impacted by COVID-19 and the national response to the virus.
- The course either (1) focuses in depth upon a particular country, culture, or region or some aspect thereof; (2) addresses a particular issue, problem, or phenomenon with respect to two or more countries, cultures, or regions; or (3) examines global affairs through a comparative framework: This course focuses in depth on the student's internship placement country, professional environment, and culture. It addresses specific issues around the country's response to COVID-19 and the implications this has economically in the workplace and more holistically on society itself. Students will compare and contrast their country's COVID-19 responses with each other and discuss how they fit into an increasingly globalized economy and resultant cultural changes.
- Students discuss and reflect on the ethical implications of issues raised by the course material for the international community, the US, and/or for their own lives: A core aspect of the learning in this course involves group discussions and individual reflections about the implications of the country's and workplace's responses to COVID-19. It also examines the

ethics of how this system impacts the national, international community, the US, and each of us personally. The class includes readings, lectures, and discussions about these topics and delves into the deeply personal nature and global importance of these issues.

Required Readings/Materials

- Along with these readings, the students will find articles to research their industry of choice and their placement destination.
 - B2U Administrator. (2017, June 17). *Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions*. Business-to-you. <https://www.business-to-you.com/hofstedes-cultural-dimensions>
 - British Council (2013). *Culture at Work: The value of intercultural skills in the workplace*. Booz, Allen, Hamilton, McLean, VA.
 - Farrugia, Christine; Sanger, Jodi. *Gaining an Employment Edge: The Impact of Study Abroad on 21st Century Skills & Career Prospects in the United States, 2013-2016*. 2017.
 - Harvard College Writing Center. How to Write a Comparative Analysis. Retrieved from <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-write-comparative-analysis>.
 - Hofstede Insights. (n.d.). *National Culture*. Hofstede Insights <https://hi.hofstede-insights.com/national-culture>.
 - Hofstede Insights. (n.d.). *Compare Countries*. Hofstede Insights <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries>.
 - International Labour Organization: COVID-19 and the World of Work: Country Policy Responses. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm>
 - Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (2006). Cultural patterns and communication: Taxonomies. In M. W. Lustig & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural competence: Interpersonal communication across cultures* (5th ed, pp. 109–135). Boston, MA: Pearson (Allyn & Bacon).
 - Simonsen, Hauge Sturle. *Turning Strain into Strength: Developing Intercultural Resilience in times of Cultural Adversity*. 2007.
 - Venkatapuram, S. (2020, April 03). COVID-19 and the Global Ethics Freefall. Retrieved August 11, 2020, from <https://www.thehastingscenter.org/covid-19-and-the-global-ethics-freefall>
 - Cover letters: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/cv-format-guide>
 - Writing your CV: <https://www.theguardian.com/careers/careers-blog/international-development-cv>
 - Personal branding: <https://brandyourself.com/definitive-guide-to-personal-branding>

Technology Requirements

- The course material will all be available on a Canvas site. Students should have access to a computer so they can use Canvas and Zoom. The first session will be September 21 and will include the full class. The small group meetings can occur in Zoom or Meet, depending on the small groups' preference. Students must also have access to a phone or computer to

record a five-minute video. They will post these videos to a Google Drive link provided by the professor.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter grade	Score or percentage	Description
A	93-100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90-92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87-89	
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77-79	
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
D+	67-69	
D	60-66	
F	0-59	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.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of grade
Attendance and class participation	10%
Essays (each 10%)	30%
COVID-19 comparative paper	10%
Group meeting summaries (each 5%)	15%
Mock interview video	10%
Site supervisor feedback	10%
Final paper	15%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Attendance & Class Participation

Although ultimately rewarding, working within another country's cultural and professional framework can be confusing or frustrating. Students should be ready to share their experiences and thoughtfully comment on others' experiences. In other words, they should contribute to class discussions by relating their experiences, posting videos, responding to classmates' experiences, asking questions, and making comments appropriate to the topics discussed.

Essays

There will be three essays throughout the duration of the course. The expectations for each essay will be listed under each unit. The students will be required to conduct research and cite the readings and their research in each essay. Each essay should be 500 words. In addition to required readings, students will find their own sources based on their internship placement country.

COVID-19 Comparative Paper

Students will choose an internship placement country from one of their small group members (it must be different from their own internship placement country). They will write a paper using a comparative framework analyzing their placement country's responses to COVID-19, its impact on

the workforce in contrast to their classmate's placement country, and the ethical implications. Students should read the Venkatapuram article and respond to this statement in their ethics section: "Public health ethics is not primarily or foremostly about the conflict between the interests of the few versus the greater good. It is about how we organize our society, how we relate to one another, to ensure that every individual is able to pursue a good life." To ensure your argument is grounded in a strong comparative framework, use the Harvard College Writing Center in the Required Reading section as a reference. Students will use the database from *COVID-19 and the World of Work: Country Policy Responses*, quoted responses from their classmate, and two other cited articles to support their comparative argument. The paper should be between 500-750 words. In addition to required readings, students will find their own sources based on their internship placement country.

Meeting Summaries

All students will meet virtually in their small groups three times during the course. To keep track of all meetings, the students must write and submit a summary of the group discussions. The summaries should be about 250 words.

Site Supervisor Evaluation

There will be a midterm and final assessment of students' performance by a site supervisor. The assessment will be based on the site supervisor's interaction with them, as well as an evaluation of the work completed by the student. The final site supervisor assessment will count toward students' final grade.

Mock Interview

After studying the STAR interview technique and creating some sample answers, the students will be asked to make a mock interview with five example questions, one focused on the impact of COVID-19, so they can practice speaking these story examples out loud. The videos will be about five minutes and will be uploaded to the Google Drive link provided by the professor.

Final Paper

The final paper is a conclusive assignment for the course. It is designed to allow students to reflect in depth on the evolution of employment and the changes that have occurred in the workplace. Phenomena like COVID-19 have, in fact, accelerated the transition toward work from home, making it mandatory for any new applicant to be proficient with many new technologies and software. Starting from the data students have collected for the last essay due, they will write a 2,000-word paper describing a roadmap for their future career. The essay should describe:

Skills

Developing new skills and tools to meet the challenges that they expect to face in their career.

Impact of COVID-19

Gaining knowledge of the impact of COVID-19 on a global scale and how this information and the ethical implications makes them a more global workforce-ready candidate. Students will describe how they will use this knowledge in their own society and beyond.

Workplace

Analyzing the structure of the organization, the role and duties performed in the internship, and the organization's position and its importance in the host culture. Students must include a selection of work samples or other artifacts. They should choose artifacts that reflect what they did as well as what they learned during the internship.

Intercultural Awareness

Critically assessing intercultural differences and similarities between the host and home cultures. Students should describe two expectations they had about their host country's work culture. Are these expectations similar or different than US work culture, and why? Students should also compare the career in their host culture to the same career in the US. What are some differences? What are some similarities? Do students have a preference for one country's work norms over the other?

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus with adequate notice to the students.

COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1

Setting Goals & Understanding Virtual Context of Country & Site Placement

- **SYNCHRONOUS CLASS:**
 - Introduction to the class structure, topics, and expectations. Introduction of class members.
- **Readings:**
 - Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (2006). Cultural patterns and communication: Taxonomies. In M. W. Lustig & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural competence: Interpersonal communication across cultures* (5th ed, pp. 109–135). Boston, MA: Pearson (Allyn & Bacon).
 - Self-researched articles on your host-country's virtual environment
- **Assignments:**
 - Part 1: Essay #1: 500-1000 words
 - Personal: What are your goals for your virtual internship? Describe your values and how those will translate to a professional setting. What skills do you wish to enhance during your virtual international experience? What challenges do you foresee that you will work on during this experience? List two strategies you plan to use to succeed working in a virtual environment.
 - Professional: (1) Find some articles on your internship placement country's response to working remotely. Describe, using quotes from your research, what you have found about the recent history of your placement's virtual work culture. How have they responded to COVID-19 in the workplace? (2) Look up your company's online presence. Outline their approach and explain if it is useful, or not, from your perspective.
 - Part 2: Complete Learning Contract outlining your goals and how you will achieve them.
 - Part 3: Small group discussion: Meet via Zoom with your small group to discuss and compare what you wrote about in your first essay. Turn in a summary of approximately 250 words on this discussion, including the main strategies your group has discussed for working online.

Unit 2

Culture & Communication

- **Readings:**
 - B2U Administrator. (2017, June 17). *Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions*. Business-to-you. <https://www.business-to-you.com/hofstedes-cultural-dimensions>

- Hofstede Insights. (n.d.). *National Culture*. Hofstede Insights <https://hi.hofstede-insights.com/national-culture>.
- Hofstede Insights. (n.d.). *Compare Countries*. Hofstede Insights <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries>.
- **Assignments:**
 - Part 1: Essay #2 - After reading about how cultures communicate, compare how your host culture and your home culture communicate based on their value systems. Look at your company and look for these values present in their communication/workplace. Does your company have a mission statement? Who do they serve? How do they reach and interact with those clients/customers/audiences? How has COVID-19 impacted them? (Have they always worked online? Is this all new to them? What adjustments had to be made?) 500-1000 words
 - Part 2: After reading Hofstede: **Post a video** to your small group discussing at least one cultural facet that is similar or different to the US. What values do you think this comes from? How does this serve their customers? Discuss one industry-specific element of your workplace and discuss how it is similar or different from the US and why you believe this may be.
 - Part 3: **Post a video** responding to one person in your small group, comparing their workplace culture and observations to yours. Are there differences? Similarities? Why do you believe this may be?

Unit 3

Developing Skills

- **Readings:**
 - Simonsen, Hauge Sturle. *Turning Strain into Strength: Developing Intercultural Resilience in times of Cultural Adversity*. 2007.
 - Farrugia, Christine; Sanger, Jodi. *Gaining an Employment Edge: The Impact of Study Abroad on 21st Century Skills & Career Prospects in the United States, 2013-2016*. 2017.
 - British Council (2013). *Culture at Work: The value of intercultural skills in the workplace*. Booz, Allen, Hamilton, McLean, VA.
- **Assignments:**
 - Part 1 – **Post in the forum** (250 words) What is your best soft skill, and what is a challenging skill to develop? Do you think this internship experience is helping you improve your soft skills? Which ones and why?
 - Part 2- **Post a response** to two people in your group addressing skills needed to work virtually.
 - Part 3 – **Individual meetings** with instructor to discuss the internship up to this point and discuss the final project (contact instructor to schedule individual meetings).

Unit 4

STAR

- **Readings:**

- Carlson School of Management, STAR Techniques Worksheet
- Undergraduate Business Career Center, Carlson School of Management. (n.d.). Interviews. *Career Guide*. (pp. 55-66). University of Minnesota.
- Articles on behavioral questions and common interview mistakes
- **Assignments:**
 - Part 1: Written Star Assignment. Think of two scenarios based on two different behavioral questions and write it down in STAR format. (Star worksheet available to help you formulate this.)
 - Part 2: Post a video describing your STAR responses.
 - Part 3: Post a helpful critique of another student's STAR video. What are the strengths? Do you have advice for improving their scenarios?
 - Part 4: **Synchronous Class** Discussion on marketing your skills for a virtual environment. Debrief on STAR videos and responses. Preparation for interviews. Discussion on the impact of COVID-19 in your placement country and how to best continue your research, in order to highlight your knowledge on this topic in a global professional world.

Unit 5

Marketing Yourself

- **Readings:**
 - <https://www.theguardian.com/careers/careers-blog/international-development-cv>
 - <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/cv-format-guide>
 - <https://brandyourself.com/definitive-guide-to-personal-branding>
- **Assignments:**
 - Part 1: Essay #3: Write an analysis on the industry you plan to work in. Find out what kinds of skills, education, and experience are necessary for people to work in those industries. How would you sell yourself to your dream job based on what they are looking for? (500-1,000 words)
 - Part 2: Look at your CV and your LinkedIn profiles. Do those skills you previously mentioned make an appearance? Update your profile to better sell yourself.
 - Part 3: Look over the LinkedIn profile of a person in your group. Post two suggestions for improvement and point out one strength in their profile.
 - Part 4: Meet with your small group via Zoom. Did you develop the skills you expected to develop based on your initial reflections? How did your experience compare to your expectations? Did you learn or experience things that surprised you? What have you gained from the experience? Would you study abroad in the future? If so, would you choose your placement country? Why or why not? Turn in a 250-word summary of this group discussion.

Unit 6

The Impacts of COVID-19 for Global Professionals

- **Readings:**

- Harvard College Writing Center. How to Write a Comparative Analysis. Retrieved from <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-write-comparative-analysis>.
- COVID-19 and the World of Work: Country Policy Responses. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm>
- Venkatapuram, S. (2020, April 03). COVID-19 and the Global Ethics Freefall. Retrieved August 11, 2020, from <https://www.thehastingscenter.org/covid-19-and-the-global-ethics-freefall>
- **Assignments:**
 - Find additional resources to support your COVID-19 comparative paper.
 - Part 1: Meet in your small group and discuss the impact of COVID-19 in your placement country. Share how it has impacted your country overall as well as in the workforce. How does this compare to others' countries? To the US? What are some of the successful national techniques implemented for slowing the virus and, therefore, aiding the economy? What has not worked? Submit a 250-word summary of this group discussion.
 - Part 2: COVID-19 Comparison Paper.

Unit 7

FINAL REVIEW

- **Assignments:**
 - Part 1: Post a video of yourself in a mock interview (either with someone in your house interviewing you or you just stating the questions). Choose five different questions to show off your soft skills and construct answers using STAR format. At least one should be a negative (What is your flaw? How did you deal with a mistake? How did you deal with conflict? Etc.) and one answer should be based on your international virtual experience. The video should be approximately 5 minutes.
 - Part 2: Final Paper: Starting from the data you have collected for Essay #3, write a 2,000-word paper describing a roadmap for your future career. In your essay, describe how this experience has helped you develop new skills and tools to meet the challenges that you expect to face in your career.
 - Part 3: **Synchronous Class** Discuss videos and what you have learned from the process. Analyze differences in your placement country's culture and how you adapted to this in a virtual environment. Explain your view on how COVID-19 impacted your host country in comparison to other students' placement countries and the US.

POLICIES

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 on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

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.