



Internship in Sicily

COURSE DETAILS

Course Designator and Number: SCLY 3896

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45 (to include 25–30 instructor contact hours plus 90–180 hours at the internship site)

Instructor: On-Site Faculty

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Sicily internship course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the intercultural context of the host country's work environment. Through practical work 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 worldview.

The course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to become more knowledgeable regarding the local culture, organizational cultures, and the Italian business environment in the urban context. It also offers them the unique opportunity to master teamwork and communicate in Italian and/or English.

The course is designed to guide students in the workplace/internship experience and create a foundation for a successful professional career. The topics and assignments will help students gain a

cross-cultural comparative view on work and deepen their insights about themselves, their area of study, and professional practice.

This course focuses on themes students are expected to develop and enhance over the course of the program through class seminars and the internship experience, particularly work ethic; leadership; communication; multiculturalism; media and politics; and gender and the workplace.

Course Objectives

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

- Analyze and understand cultural workplace dynamics with comparative focus on the US
- Identify individual, as well as team, skills and experiences necessary to reach future career goals
- Address challenges that arise in the workplace using a proactive and professional approach, and learn to communicate concerns to colleagues in a tactful manner
- Articulate personal skills, strengths, and values within the context of the work environment
- Understand different values and communication styles that impact workplace dynamics; develop strategies for adapting to these differences
- Conduct their work during the internship utilizing best practices around professional behavior within a team-based work environment

Methodology

In-class contact hours include discussions, readings, sharing individual experiences, and guest lectures. Each student is expected to work for 10 to 15 hours per week at their internship site and also regularly attend a weekly class either at Accent or in the offices of local professionals or contractors.

Class sessions are designed as seminars and forums for discussion. The seminars provide an opportunity for students to share experiences, information, and knowledge; exchange ideas; and discuss problems they're facing and concerns they might have in a mutually supportive place.

Each weekly session has at least two of the following elements:

- Discussion of what worked and didn't work at worksites during the past week
- Review of current events and their impact on organizations
- Discussion of assigned reading
- Analysis of each team's contribution to the whole.

Students will have regular individual meetings with the instructor to analyze their progress and discuss possible issues.

Required Readings/Materials

- E. Bird, "Internships in Italy: Why They Are Important, How to Land Them," http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0503/internships_in_italy.shtml.
- "Introducing Communication," in Morreale, S.P., Spitzberg, B.H., and Barge, J.K., *Human Communication: Motivations, Knowledge and Skills*, pp. 2-25, Wadsworth Publishing, 2007.
- "A Model of Communication Competence," in Morreale, S.P., Spitzberg, B.H., and Barge, J.K., *Human Communication: Motivations, Knowledge and Skills*, pp. 27-49, Wadsworth Publishing, 2007.
- Bennett, M. J., "Becoming interculturally competent," in J.S. Wurzel (ed.) *Toward Multiculturalism: A Reader in Multicultural Education*. Newton, MA: Intercultural Resource Corporation, 2004.

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%
Interview paper	20%
Internship reports	20%
Internship presentation	15%
Site supervisor feedback	10%
Final portfolio	25%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Attendance & class participation

Although ultimately rewarding, working in another country can be confusing or frustrating. Teamwork can also be challenging. There will be time in most classes to discuss and debrief students' workplace interactions and tasks. Students should be ready to share their experiences and thoughtfully comment on others' experiences. This course requires that students participate in class discussions. This means that they should contribute by relating their experiences to the project as a whole, asking questions, and making comments appropriate to the topics being discussed.

Interview paper

Each student will interview someone in a career that they are interested in exploring. Students should describe how they found this person, this person's responses, how they believe this job

compares to a similar job in the US, and if this interview makes them more or less interested in this field. Students should send a thank you note after the interview.

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 what is it like to work within this culture? What is their advice for getting into this field?

Internship reports

Three reports are required as part of students' internship learning experience. The reports should be in the range of two pages, explaining the role they held in the overall project and what they learned and observed from local professionals as well as the other teams over the past weeks. These reports should not simply be a listing of duties performed; students should use the report as a reflection tool. They should write down their thoughts and feelings as well as any interesting personal observations.

Report guidelines:

- The reports must be sent as an email attachment
- The email subject heading should include journal number and student's full name
- Each journal should be around two pages, double spaced, font size 10
- At the top of the report, students should include their name, the dates they worked, the number of hours worked each week, and the total number of hours worked from the start of the internship placement

Students' internship report should include, but not be limited to:

- A discussion of their major responsibilities, accomplishments, and progress
- A discussion of the value of the other team's contribution to the overall project
- Their response to the reflection questions (the instructor will provide the reflection questions before each report is due)

Internship presentation

At the end of the internship program, students will have an opportunity to share their individual experience with their instructor and local professionals.

Each student should prepare their PowerPoint presentation so that a general audience from outside the field can understand it well. The presentation should be 20 minutes long and include the content of the work they completed as well as learning outcomes. The instructor will provide further information regarding the presentation.

Site supervisor evaluation

There will be a midterm and final assessment of students' performance by a site supervisor. The assessment is based on the site supervisor's interaction with students as well as feedback received from other staff who have had contact with them. The midterm evaluation will not affect their grade, but will help to strengthen and support students throughout the rest of their internship. However, the final site supervisor assessment will count toward 10% of students' final grade.

Portfolio

The portfolio collects a variety of documents from students' experience, including their updated CV, email exchanges, and other networking evidence with colleagues and site supervisors, samples of work produced (e.g., pictures, screenshots, social media activity), and a sample cover letter. It is meant to "pull it all together." The portfolio is accompanied by a final paper, around seven pages long. In writing this paper, students should draw upon their journals, interview, required readings, class discussions, discussions from colleagues at their placement, cross-disciplinary teamwork, and general observations. This paper has four sections: personal, workplace, and intercultural awareness. Students should reflect on everything they experienced and learned during their internship, then look back at their learning objectives and journal entries.

Personal

1. 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?
2. *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 learning objectives, at the end of this section, describe why and how this is the case.

Workplace

Students should analyze the structure of the organization of professions, the role and duties performed in their internship, and the project's significance in local culture. Students should include a selection of work samples or other artifacts, choosing artifacts that reflect what they did as well as what they learned during their internship.

Intercultural awareness

Students should critically assess intercultural differences and similarities between Italian culture and home culture. They should describe two expectations they had about Italy's work culture. Are these expectations similar or different from US work culture, and why? Students should also compare their career in Italy to the same career in the US. What are the differences? What are the 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 students.

COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1

Course Overview & Introduction

- Internships in Sicily as work and as cultural experience; preparing for an interview.
- Learning objectives: In order to get a better sense of where students are going to complete their internship, they may need to spend some time thinking and writing about who they are, what motivates them, what their goals are, and where they see themselves in the near future.
- Learning objectives are simple statements of what students intend to accomplish during their placement. They should be specific and measurable.
- All placements are intended to enhance students' university education through real-life experience.
- Students should write at least five learning objectives they intend to accomplish during this placement.
- Students should take into consideration the nature of their placement, new skills that can be gained, work habits that can be established, the time and resources available, and their personal career goals.
- Students should keep in mind that their objectives should be clear, concise, specific, and measurable.
- **Reading:** E. Bird, "Internships in Italy: Why They Are Important, How to Land Them," http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0503/internships_in_italy.shtml

Unit 2

The Importance of Communication: Analysis of a Model of Communication Competence

- **Reading:** "Introducing Communication," in Morreale, S.P., Spitzberg, B.H., and Barge, J.K., *Human Communication: Motivations, Knowledge and Skills*, pp. 2–25, Wadsworth Publishing, 2007.
- **Reading:** "A Model of Communication Competence," in Morreale, S.P., Spitzberg, B.H., and Barge, J.K., *Human Communication: Motivations, Knowledge and Skills*, pp. 27–49, Wadsworth Publishing, 2007.

Unit 3

Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

- **Reading:** Bennett, M. J., "Becoming interculturally competent," in J.S. Wurzel (ed.) *Toward Multiculturalism: A Reader in Multicultural Education*. Newton, MA: Intercultural Resource Corporation, 2004.
- Internship report #1 is **due**.

Unit 4

Politics, Gender Issues, Teamwork, & the Overview of the Italian Job Market

- A comparative analysis between Italy and the US.

Unit 5

A Cultural Insight: Geert Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture

- The importance of developing an "intercultural sensitivity."
- <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country/italy>.
- **Reading:** L. Mang, *Cultural Patterns and Communication: Taxonomies*.
- Internship report #2 is **due**.

Unit 6

An Overview of the Italian Job Market

- Meet an Italian student to discuss and analyze strengths and opportunities of interning in Italy.
- Interview paper is **due**.

Unit 7

Re-Entry in Class Workshop

- Final evaluation of the experience.
- Coming back to the US can be a challenging time; students will reflect on and process their experience abroad, as well as learn about possible ways to integrate the experience into their lives and in their future careers.

- Internship report #3 is **due**.

Unit 8

Internship Presentation

Review Final Evaluations

- Individual meetings with students to review site supervisor final evaluations.
- Portfolio is **due**.

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.