



Photo by Megan Huber, Malaysia

CGS 151

Fall 2025

Instructor: Sandra Lisle McMullen
The Center for Global Programs and
Studies: Reynolda Hall 116

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Office Hours: flexible, by
appointment; in person, via phone
or via Zoom

Classes will be held online & are asynchronous

SYLLABUS

Cross-Cultural Engagement while Abroad

CGS 151 is structured to help you to engage with the host culture while you are abroad; in so doing, you will hopefully learn more about yourself as well. Enjoy these assignments. They have been designed to facilitate your appreciation and experience of your host country and its culture.

Goals of CGS 151

- Understand stages of cultural adjustment
- Deepen your engagement in and exploration of your host culture
- Foster the development of intercultural curiosity
- Enhance self-awareness through reflection during your study away/abroad experience

Honor Code

All students are expected to abide by the honor code and other guiding principles of the Wake Forest community. This means not cheating, plagiarizing (using someone else's work as your own), or other academic misconduct. For this or any other class, if you have any questions about what cheating or plagiarism means, please ask me. I want you to know, so that you can avoid problems and have success with your own, honest work.

Read through the syllabus and let the instructor know if you have any questions.

Course Basics

This course is asynchronous which allows you to complete the readings and assignments for each module at a reasonable pace. Each module spans about two weeks; it is recommended that you follow the module schedule. There is no textbook. Readings and assignments are accessible via the course's Canvas site.

Course Co-Requisite

As part of enrolling in CGS 151 you must simultaneously be enrolled in a WFU or WFU-affiliate study abroad program during either fall or spring semester.

Course Requirements and Expectations

This course is graded on a P/F basis. To pass you must earn a 75/100 on both your midterm and final assignments, and complete the following:

- Log onto Canvas, do the readings, watch the videos and complete the assignments.
- Besides giving thoughtful responses to the assignments, I ask that you:
 - Copy/paste the questions you are answering into your response
 - Proofread your responses before submitting
 - Answer all questions assigned; if something is missing, you will need to resubmit to get credit
- You will receive credit for each assignment based on two standards: The *quality* of the content (the assignment is completed thoroughly and thoughtfully) and *proofreading* (standard English usage/punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc.). You will be asked to edit or redo assignments that are incomplete or insufficient.
- All assignments will be submitted through Canvas.
- Unless otherwise stated, **uploaded submissions should be double-spaced using 12pt font.**
- Some assignments in Canvas will be uploaded in a **Forum Post** where you will be able to view the submissions of your Wake Forest classmates participating in various study abroad programs. Although it is not required, I encourage you to read the various submissions and comment or ask questions if you feel compelled. This is designed to give you an opportunity to see how your experience compares with others and expand the perspective you have.

Modules

- You are allowed to miss only ONE general assignment; missing more than one will result in an automatic Fail for the course. The midterm and final projects are mandatory.
- Each module should be completed sequentially.
- Since students in this course may be studying on different programs and in different time zones, there is some flexibility to deadlines listed on the syllabus.
 - You should plan to submit a Module approximately every two (2) weeks.
 - The reason to aim for the deadlines listed on the syllabus is two-fold: to get the most out of your time away and to avoid assignments piling up, thus preventing you from enjoying your final days in country.
 - Look at your program's calendar and manage your time so you complete assignments as close as possible to the deadlines listed.
 - If your circumstances abroad make it difficult to meet a deadline, please inform me **in advance** to work through alternative deadlines.

Academic Integrity: the policies and procedures of the [Wake Forest University Honor Code](#) will be strictly followed.

Missing more than one assignment will result in an automatic Fail for the course.

The Center for Learning, Access, and Student Success (CLASS)

CLASS is located in 118 Reynolda Hall or at (336) 758-5929 (see lac.wfu.edu). CLASS staff can help with study skills, time management, and organizational strategies. They can also help with accommodations for a learning disability. On that topic, WFU provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities.

If you are in need of an accommodation, you are encouraged to talk with CLASS within the first week of this course. Retroactive accommodations cannot be provided.

Contacting your Instructor

Due to the various time zones of class participants, there are no set "office hours." You are welcome to email your instructor to discuss the course and assignments and/or set up a Zoom call to have a live conversation.

Make the most of your study away experience... see the list of suggested activities at the end of this syllabus!

Photo by Karen Brosko, fall 2018



Schedule and Topics at a Glance

Course Introduction Please review before the first module; submit VT your first week abroad and no later than <u>Monday, September 1</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Introductory VoiceThread • Watch: Where is Home? With Pico Iyer • Read: Strategies for Keeping a Journal, 5 pages • Assignment: Record Personal Introduction via VoiceThread • <i>Optional Resource: Mindful Moments Abroad minibook</i>
Module 1: Cross-Cultural Transition Stress and Host Country Observations Due Monday, September 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: VoiceThread • Read: Understanding & Coping with Cross-Cultural Adjustment Stress, 5 pages • Read: The DAE Model, 4 pages • Read: Intentional Observation, 2 pages • Optional: Making the Most of Homestays & Host Families, 5 pages • Assignment 1.1: Letter to yourself • Assignment 1.2 Forum Post: Ethnographic Study-Observing Public Spaces
Module 2: Self-Awareness & Interpersonal Engagement Abroad Due Monday, September 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: VoiceThread • Watch: Where Have You Been? • Watch: How Danish People View Americans? • Read: What Living Abroad does to your Self-Awareness, 4 pages • Read: Diversity and Identity Abroad, 3 pages • Read: Building Relationships in your Host Community, 3 pages • Assignment 2.1: Suggested Interactive Activities • Assignment 2.2 Forum Post: Conversation with someone from your host country
Module 3: Culture Shock & Homesickness Due Monday, September 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: VoiceThread • Watch: Why We Need to Embrace Culture Shock • Watch: How to Get Rid of Homesickness for Real, GoAbroad.com • Read: The Culture Shock is Real, 2.5 pages • Read: My Journey through Culture Shock & Homesickness, 2 pages • Assignment 3.1: Guided Writing Exercise • Assignment 3.2: Virtual Check-in with CGS Instructor
Monday, September 29, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Last day to drop course</i>
Module 4: Cultural Intelligence & Cultural Humility Due Monday, October 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: VoiceThread • Watch: Danger of a Single Story • Watch: Cultural Intelligence: The Competitive Edge for Leaders • Assignment 4.1: Social Activity with Locals and Forum Post reflection • Assignment 4.2: Scheduling an Informational Interview
Mandatory Midterm Assignment Due Monday, October 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive Reflection: Revisiting the public place you used for Assignment 1.2.
Monday, October 20, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All missing prior assignments and Midterm due
Module 5: Career Skills & Professional Cultural Development Abroad Due Monday, October 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Why the secret to success is setting the right goals • Read: How Study Abroad will help Your Career, 4 pages • Read: Making the Case for Intercultural Learning: Career Readiness, 2 pages • Review: List of Transferable Intercultural Skills Useful in the Workplace • Review: OPCD website for Study Abroad tips • Assignment 5.1: Complete and submit Unpack Study Abroad Goals • Assignment 5.2: Conduct informational Interview; submit reflection

Module 6: Continued Engagement with Local Cultures & Peoples Due Monday, November 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Cross Cultural Communication • Watch: Finding Friendship in a Grande Latte: A Story of Cross-Cultural Engagement • Read: Speaking to Communicate, 10 pages • Assignment 6.1: Global News with Local Impact • Assignment 6.2: Report on Assignment 2.1
Module 7: Cultural Adaptation & Preparing for Reentry Due Monday, November 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Preparing to Return Home, 3 pages • Read: Top Ten Tips for Reentry, 3 pages • Read: Your Remaining Time in School, 4 pages • Assignment 7.1 Forum Post: A Look Back at Assignment 1.1 • Assignment 7.2: Reflective letter writing
Friday, December 5, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All missing assignments from Modules 5-7 due
Mandatory Final Due Wed., December 10, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection: Select <u>one</u> of the quotes listed or the poem. Reflect on how it relates to you and your experience while studying away.

Portions of this course were borrowed from the CGS Course series developed by the WFU GPS team.

Interactive Activities While Abroad

Note: for any volunteer activities, be sure to check with your resident professor or program administrators to make sure your visa status permits volunteering.

1. Volunteer with children at an after-school daycare or study program.
2. Join a sports club or group that meets regularly; play pick-up games
3. Watch TV with a local and ask them to explain some aspects.
4. Get a map of the host country and/or city, take it out and ask a local to tell you about some of their favorite places and places they would like to visit. Large paper maps are better than phone apps. You might get lots of good travel tips from doing this!
5. Learn a fairy tale or nursery rhyme from a child.
6. Teach a local an American pop song or folk song
7. With a local, compare some US currency (paper and coin) with the local currency –what images are on the currency, and what is their cultural relevance?
8. Interview people of different ages and backgrounds
9. Find volunteer projects such as environmental clean-ups, soup kitchens, tutoring programs, etc.
10. Find local musicians to play with
11. Attend a local church service and inquire about other activities the church is involved in
12. Find a language partner and set up a language exchange
13. Help your host family with a house or apartment project
14. Frequent a neighborhood bar or restaurant and get to know the staff and/or owner
15. Get a newspaper and go over it with a local.
16. Have a local teach you the national anthem (music and lyrics)
17. Ask the baker/butcher/shopkeepers to explain more about the products they are selling
18. Go to a local barber shop/beauty salon.
19. Go on a weekend outing with students from your host country.
20. Watch a sporting event with students from your host country.

21. Prepare a meal for your host family and/or friends.
22. Ask for directions even if you don't need them – see if perhaps some other conversation results.
23. Attend a political debate, town/city meeting or court proceedings of some sort. Note: it is wise to avoid demonstrations!
24. Visit a farm or winery
25. Sing Karaoke with fellow students
26. Rent a bike, take the bike on the bus or train to a less touristy small town, bike around the town and stop in a bar or restaurant or shop and talk to locals about their town.
27. Find an animal shelter and see if you can volunteer
28. Engage in conversation with the concierge, security or maintenance workers in the building you live in, or at the university.
29. Take the same bus route for several days, and if there is usually the same driver, eventually introduce yourself and ask if one day you can interview them at the end of the driving shift.
30. Go to a museum and sign up for a guided tour.
31. Form a study group with students from your host country
32. Host an American Movie Night where you give a presentation about how the film relates to U.S. culture/history
33. Find an immigrant or immigrant family and ask about their life in their new country
34. Locate an expatriate American living in your host country and ask about their experience of the culture and if they can introduce you to activities with locals.
35. Go to a bike shop or a car dealership and compare prices with the U.S. (talk to the dealers and tell them you are doing some research –that way you get to interact with somebody)
36. Sign up for lessons for some hobby or activity you enjoy, such as dance, tennis, photography, etc.

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Ways to stay connected to the Center for Global Programs & Studies after your study abroad experience ends:

- Do a **presentation about your experience** in your student organizations, classes, local conferences like WISE, regional reentry conferences, with friends and family, in your local communities, etc.
- Apply to be a [global ambassador](#) with GPS
- Explore opportunities to be an **ambassador for your study abroad program** (if an affiliate)
- Create a **globally-themed event** in any of your affiliations, clubs, or organizations
- Plan or join in **global events on campus**, including [International Education Week](#) in early November
- **Share your experience online** (blog, social media, podcast, photo journal, etc.)
- **If a U.S. citizen, consider applying for an international academic experience sponsored by the [U.S. State Department](#)** such as a Fulbright, Boren or Gilman, or apply to graduate school outside the U.S.