
**IB495 Business Study Abroad
MBA691 Directed Study****TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE IN ITALY**

Spring Semester 2024 (with travel over Spring Break)

Dr. Michele (Mickey) Bunn

Collat School of Business, UAB



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the cyclic relationship of technology and culture. The focus is the role of technological innovation in shaping both culture and the business world throughout history, in today's global environment, and in the future. Students are exposed to Italian history, culture and the business environment - including perspectives on entrepreneurship and the importance of family businesses in Italy. Company cases are an important part of this course and allow students to relate theory to practice. Before visiting Italy, students learn about Italian business life and the proper etiquette to conduct business. In this way, the course integrates the learning activities of the classroom with those of the business and cultural tour to Italy over Spring Break.

3 credit hours, no prerequisites; Open to undergraduate and graduate students

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe important technologies that have shaped today's world and how technology development influences culture and culture influences technology development.
- Describe the different features of Italian business culture, etiquette and management styles
- Compare and contrast Italian culture with that of the U.S. and other countries
- Analyze the current economic issues and trends in Italy and evaluate the current conditions and trends with regard to the key indicators of doing business in Italy
- Successfully navigate databases to collect and analyze relevant materials on Italian businesses
- Analyze Italian companies to recognize the unique challenges of culture and business customs

COURSE FORMAT

This is a 3-credit UAB course that includes two main components:

- 1) Class Sessions and Course Assignments: Both before and after the study tour
- 2) Study Tour of Northern Italy: 9-day cultural and business study tour to Milan and Florence, March 8-16, 2024; With excursions to San Gimignano, and Sant'Agata Bolognese.

The combination of class sessions and time spent on the study tour fulfills the UAB requirement for a 3-credit hour course. And while there will be much enjoyment and deeply personal experiences on the study tour, this is a for-credit learning experience. It is therefore very important for students to recognize that the course is more than a trip and tour.

Students will read assigned material, complete online assignments, take an exam, conduct research, make presentations to the class, post to the travel blog and complete a reflection workbook. Graduate students complete a research project and presentation to the class.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Leonardo to the Internet: Technology and Culture from the Renaissance to the Present, by Thomas J. Misa, Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Technology, 3rd Edition, 2022.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Pro Assessment, One-time access to complete the CQ assessment, Personalized CQ Feedback Report, Digital copy of the book *Expand Your Borders: Discover Ten Cultural Clusters* by David A. Livermore.

Customized Harvard Business School Case Packet (digital)

Other required course materials will be posted in Canvas, available through the UAB library or accessed from internet websites. Students may purchase other materials, such as language learning tools.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assignments vary depending on student status (undergraduate or graduate).

Assessment of Undergraduate Students	Percent	Assessment of Graduate Students	Percent
Attendance, Preparation and Participation, and Professionalism	20	Attendance, Preparation and Participation, and Professionalism	20
Assignments, including Travel Blog and Reflection Journal	40	Assignments, including Travel Blog and Reflection Journal	30
Quizzes (5)	30	Quizzes (5)	30
Post-Travel Presentation	10	Research Project and Presentation	20
Total Possible Points	100	Total Possible Points	100

The following scale is used to determine the final grades in the course.

- A = 900 to 1000 points
- B = 800 to 899 points
- C = 700 to 799 points
- D = 600 to 699 points
- F = 0 to 599 points

Attendance, Preparation and Participation, and Professionalism

Attendance at all class meetings and study-tour activities are required. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and be prepared to participate in class discussions.

Students on the study tour are representing UAB and the Collat School of Business. To provide a favorable impression and to get the most benefit from the study tour, students are assessed on professionalism and participation. The criteria include time management (attendance, promptness), respect (social behaviors and etiquette based on both US and Italian norms), preparedness (motivation, contribution) and appearance (well-rested, dressed appropriately in business casual as required). Students are expected to abide by all rules spelled out by the local tour coordinator and must be back at the hotel by 12 midnight on each study tour day.

Assignments

Assignments will involve reading and exercises to build the student’s knowledge of technology and culture, a “traveler’s” level of Italian language skills, and an understanding of the history and entrepreneurial culture of Italy.

Students are required to post to the class travel blog while on the study tour. Guidelines and practice posts will be made prior to travel. Students will be responsible for the technology tools (device and internet access) needed to post on the assigned days. The grading rubric includes criteria such as timeliness, content, reflection, voice, text layout, use of graphics/multimedia and quality of writing.

Students are required to write a reflection journal that includes reflection exercises before, during and after the business and cultural tour. Questions focus on specific activities on the study tour and more general questions about the impact of the study tour on the student's perceptions and beliefs. The reflection journal is due at the last class session after the study tour.

Quizzes

There are 5 quizzes related to the materials in the modules. The quizzes contain multiple choice questions to assess your understanding of the lectures and reading materials.

Post-Travel Presentation (undergraduate)

Students will be assigned in teams to conduct research and provide an informative presentation on a topic related to the relationship of technology and culture at the final class session after returning.

Research Project and Presentation (graduate students)

Graduate students are required to complete a significant research project and to present the results to the class. This may include specialized research in a particular discipline and may involve another faculty member as advisor. The project and presentations are due at the last class session after the study tour.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule includes 9 sessions (8 before and 1 after spring break) and a 9-day study tour to Milan and Florence Italy over Spring Break. The class meets on selected Mondays (dates, TBD) from 5 to 7:30 pm in the CSB building.

UAB IN ITALY 2024 TRAVEL ITINERARY (TENTATIVE):

Day 1 Friday, March 8

- Depart for Milan, Italy (airfare not included)

Day 2 Saturday, March 9 Milan

- Arrive at Milan Malpensa Airport (MXP)
- Transportation by private bus from the airport in Milan to hotel
- 3 nights in twin rooms with private bathrooms incl. breakfast at the 3-star hotel Eurohotel Milano in Milan (or similar near Porta Venezia area)
- Orientation session by your on-site coordinator at the hotel
- Welcome dinner at a restaurant in Milan to kick off the program

Day 3 Sunday, March 10 Milan

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Public transportation pass for the duration of your entire stay in Milan
- Morning Guided walking tour of Milan
- Lunch on your own
- Free afterwards to explore museums and important sites

Day 4 Monday, March 11 Milan

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Visit FabLab, Massimo Temporelli
- Lunch on your own
- Tour of Fondazione Prada in the afternoon
- Free evening to discover Milan further on your own

Day 5 Tuesday, March 12 Milan - Sant'Agata Bolognese - Florence

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Transportation by private bus during the day
- Visit to a car producer, Lamborghini, Ducati or Pagani
- Lunch stop along the way to Florence
- Arrive afternoon in Florence
- 4 nights in twin rooms with private bathrooms incl. breakfast at the 3-star Hotel Boccaccio in Florence
- Check in (or store luggage)
- Orientation and Walking Tour
- Free Evening

Day 6 Wednesday, March 13 Florence

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Business visit arranged by UAB (Fastenal collaboration)
- Lunch on your own
- Admission to the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore: "Brunelleschi Pass" with access to all monuments of Piazza del Duomo
- Free afternoon and evening

Day 7 Thursday, March 14 Florence - SOMEPLACE

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Guided Tour of the Opera del Duomo Museum – with focus on selected innovations
- Lunch on your own
- Transportation by private bus during the afternoon
- Visit Fattoria Poggio Alloro, family-run farm and "agriturismo" in San Gimignano for a Bruschetta and Pasta Class; Includes dinner.

Day 8 Friday, March 15 Florence

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Visit the Scuola del Cuoio, Leather workshop and school
- Lunch on your own
- Use your last afternoon in Florence for final discussions and reflection
- Farewell dinner at a restaurant in Florence to wrap up the program

Day 9 Saturday, March 16 Florence

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Transportation by private bus from the hotel to Florence Peretola Airport (FLR) to the airport
- Departure from Florence Peretola Airport (FLR) to the USA (airfare not included)

COURSE POLICIES

Students must apply, be accepted and pay program fees for the Education Abroad Faculty-Led Program AND register and pay tuition for the course (either IB495 or MBA691). No other students or student companions are permitted on the study tour unless he or she is a student at UAB and has met both of these requirements.

The same policies that are in effect for “regular” courses are apply to this course including all Collat School of Business and UAB Policies. While on campus for class sessions or while traveling, students are under the ethical and professional standards and policies of the The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The UAB Education Abroad office provides additional policies for the conduct of students while traveling abroad. These are provided when students apply for and register for the course.