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GSGS 3510: WORKING WITH/ACROSS CULTURES IN VALENCIA INTERNSHIPS

(1 CREDIT)

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Introduction to the UVA in Valencia Internships program

The UVA in Valencia Internships program is designed for students who are keen to jump-start their personal, professional, cultural, linguistic, social, and academic development through an individualized applied learning experience. You may be interested in launching a career or profession in another language, culture, or country, or you may recognize how important it will be to bring global experience and perspectives to bettering life at home. The opportunity to embed as an intern at a local Spanish organization may open these doors and build bridges that lead to these futures. Through the program, you will be encouraged to develop this broadened vision by reflecting on and critically engaging with your abroad context, the relationships you cultivate, and your identity as a life-long learner. We aim for you to emerge from the experience with greater insight into and curiosity about how your role(s), skills, and decisions connect with the ever-intensifying globalized world.

This academic internship program consists of two parts: an academic course and an internship. These two components complement and reinforce each other; they are both integral to the learning experience. The course, GSGS 3510, "Working with/across cultures in Valencia internships" will provide you with an academic framework to guide your development in the course of your cross-cultural work.

Welcome to the course

The purpose of this course is to support you in having a meaningful, multi-dimensional learning experience while engaging in an intercultural internship in globalized Valencia. We have organized the course around three main themes and sets of questions which will be fundamental to your internship experience. Each is a prism to make meaning of this unique learning opportunity.

Learning through experience: How exactly do we learn through experience? Why is it helpful to have an attitude which is focused upon learning and growth? How might experiential learning theory guide us in making the most of periods of intensive cross-cultural interaction and professional exploration?

Intercultural work: What are we actually talking about when we consider "culture" in the intercultural workplace? What are some models for what intercultural competence looks like? What are some key aspects of culture which may play a role in the intercultural workplace?

Global interconnections: What global flows, processes, and consequences should we be attuned to when analyzing our work, no matter where we are in the world? What are some

conditions which define Spanish “work cultures” and practices in the contemporary age of hyperglobalization?

By participating in this course, we aim for students to:

- Develop awareness about the foundational role of culture in human experiences, formations, and activities, especially in work settings
- Acquire basic familiarity with aspects of the experiential learning cycle and demonstrate increased capacity to actively engage in these processes while learning abroad
- Articulate deepened understanding of the connections between global flows and local conditions and experiences in Valencia.
- Insightfully discuss the evolving outcomes (intercultural, professional, academic, and otherwise) of their learning abroad.

Ultimately, we aim to provide you with a framework that can be re-utilized to make the most of any future intercultural professional setting in which you find yourself. Of course, it is worth emphasizing that all professional settings (whether in the US or abroad) are intercultural, so these themes and questions will inevitably be relevant to you going forward.

The content of the course will be founded upon theories, concepts, and research drawn from multiple academic and professional fields, including anthropology, psychology, international business management, educational philosophy, and literature. Readings will also include book chapters, academic journal articles, professional training materials, videos, podcasts, popular written media, and other “texts” that you will choose for yourself.

A note about academic credit for internships: “Work” can mean something different for each profession/industry, in each cultural setting, and with each singular organization. As a rule, UVA does not grant academic credit for the actual labor a student does in an internship. Thus, the academic credit you will be receiving for participating in your internship will come from the work you do for the GSGS 3510 course. Your hours doing work for the course are in addition to the time you spend at your internship

We appreciate that it is hard work indeed to get things done and find your place in a new organization, new position, and new cultural environment! Thus, we have tried to design the course in such a way that you will use your everyday experiences and the relationships you make at work as the building blocks upon which you will complete your assignments.

Course Details

Class structure: There will be **four (4) mandatory in-person class sessions** at the University Studies Center (c/ Bélgica 12) at 7:30 p.m. on the following dates.

- **Session 1:** Tuesday **September 29th** (7:30 p.m.)
 - o **An introduction to experiential learning, mindset, and learning through travel.**
- **Session 2:** Monday **October 19th** (7:30 p.m.)
 - o **The concept of culture and intercultural work.**
- **Session 3:** Tuesday **November 17th** (7:30 p.m.)
- **Session 4:** Wednesday **December 2nd** (7:30 p.m.)
 - o “Cultures” of work in an age of post-global pandemic.

Some of your work will also be completed on your own time and submitted via the virtual Plataforma. We expect you to use this unique course structure to your benefit, completing your assignments with thoroughness, diligence, and timeliness.

Pedagogical approach: As noted above, we hope that you will emerge from the program with deepened appreciation of your identity as a continual learner (through experience). We aim to guide your learning so that it can be as personally and academically stimulating as possible, making the most of the fact that you will be learning outside a traditional classroom. As your instructor, we will not be lecturing to you; rather, we will serve as a compassionate and interested guide.

We care to cultivate a learning environment in which everyone is encouraged to be honest (about challenges/triumphs, worries/delights, etc.), while also being analytical and engaging in a substantive way with course materials. Intercultural, professional, social, academic, and personal learning is never “over.” And no one can be perfectly “competent” in every setting. We are not striving for “expertise;” we are leaning towards ever deeper understanding of ourselves, others, and our world. Crucially, we want you, the students, to recognize your critical role in making this course useful for your learning. It will very largely be up to you to do the work of connecting your academically-based questioning/reflecting in our online course to your international work in Valencia.

Class and internship participation: We expect you to participate fully in all four course sessions (this means engaging in class discussions, not using computers or phones, and staying alert). Your participation grade will reflect your demonstration of having read assigned materials. If you have an unexcused absence for a course session, your participation grade will be marked down by five points. If you have an excused absence (documented illness or other emergency), you will be asked to complete a written assignment in lieu of the missed session. *Importantly, if you do not participate in your internship, you will not be able to complete your course assignments. Your attendance at work will be regularly reported back to UVA in Valencia staff.*

Course materials: Course materials will be available on our course site (Plataforma). As a student, you are required to check your UVA email every day and this is the official means of communication between you and your instructor. Please respond in a timely fashion to all messages sent to you.

Course Assignments

Students are expected to complete readings on a regular basis, as outlined in the course schedule. All readings will be available on the course site. Beyond assigned readings, there are three categories of assignments: 1) *Reading Responses*, 2) *a Field Exercise*, and 3) *a Final Internship Portfolio*.

1) Reading Responses (RRs)

- *Quantity and length:* Three (3) RRs, 250 words (minimum)
- *Purpose:* As an experiential learner, you will need to use your powers of abstract conceptualization and analysis to make meaning of your internship in Valencia. The purpose of the readings is to present ideas and concepts you can use to make sense of and “test against” your personal experiences. The RRs are the place for you to show you have done the readings and can connect them to your personal experiences in an “academic” way.
- *Format:* You will be asked to provide your RRs to questions posed about the readings.
- *Evaluation:* Your response will be evaluated on the following: thoughtfulness and critical thinking in addressing prompts; insightful reference to the week’s readings and concepts; mechanics and written style. Your work will be exemplary if you find a way to connect readings to each other, exploring connections, contradictions, and questions between them. You are always encouraged to engage with assigned readings with a critical lens (i.e. you don’t need to agree with what the authors say!).

2) Field Exercise

- *Purpose:* The FE has been designed to prompt you to have a “concrete experience” and then proceed to engage in reflection, analysis, and further experimentation related to that learning experience.
- *Format:* This will take the form of a short “field”-based activity; a short interview coupled with a written response, which will be based on prompts related to the course readings.

3) Final Portfolio*

- *Purpose:* The Final Portfolio is meant to be a means for you to holistically document, reflect upon, analyze, and imagine your future with respect to your learning experience in Valencia.

Additionally, it is a step towards communicating the value of your experience in Spain to prospective employers, graduate programs, family, and others.

- **Format: Personal Journal.** You will compile a digital compendium of products that evidence your growth over your internship. You are encouraged to reflect and address the big questions and goals of our course, clearly stated in our course [syllabus](#).

**You may want to show competence by reflecting on ideas like: ¿What has your global internship revealed to you about employment future and professional practices? What particular skills, attitudes, and other qualities have you determined are useful in working interculturally? How will you continue to practice them “at home?” How can you translate your learning through experience abroad into the culturally specific language of American (or your own culture) professionalism?*

**You should explore development of transferable skills by reflecting on questions like: Did you have a moment (large or small) when you felt especially efficacious or engaged in learning? Did you ever have a situation when you felt useless, confused, and/or stuck? What did you do to constructively address the situation? Was there a time when you facilitated a successful group experience or interaction with someone from your internship organization? How did you do this? Reflecting upon those situations, do you think you demonstrated any of the following transferable skills or qualities? If you did not, do you see now how you could have?*

Evaluation and Grading

This course is graded and will count towards your GPA at UVA.

Weight of Assignments:

- Participation- 20%
- Reading Responses- 25%
- Field Exercise- 20%
- Final Portfolio- 35%

Course Policies

Submission of assignments: Assignments are to be uploaded to the appropriate assignment folder in the course site, on dates specified by course instructor. You are responsible for managing and planning your time and submitting your assignments on the date due, or before time if there is a possibility you may have a conflict. The Final Portfolio **will not be accepted late**, and it is to be turned in the Plataforma at the end of your service-learning internship, and no later than the last day of classes.

Regarding Reading responses grading, only students who submit their work correctly and before the deadline will be eligible for maximum grade. Late submissions will be accepted; however, they will not be eligible for a top grade and will incur a penalty.

Privacy and confidentiality: To cultivate a community of learning that is truly open, it is critical to respect the privacy and confidentiality of your peers. All information/thoughts shared by your peers in their assignments are not to be shared without their consent. This includes all details regarding employers, personal conditions, and so forth. Additionally, when completing assignments, please keep in mind all the terms of any internship agreement you have made with your internship host organization.

Accommodations: Please discuss any course adaptations or accommodations you may need because of a documented disability with your instructor *as soon as possible*.

Academic integrity: As a UVA student, you are expected to abide by the Honor Code throughout the course and program.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1) Use of Spanish at the Center

The use of Spanish at the Center is strongly encouraged. Remember that you have come to Spain to learn Spanish and immerse yourself in its culture, and there is no better way to do so than by using Spanish on as many occasions as possible.

2) Class Attendance and Tardiness

2.1) Attendance and punctuality are essential for the successful completion of the course. Consequently, unexcused absences and lateness will negatively affect the final grade.

2.2) Only one unexcused absence is permitted. Please bear this in mind when planning trips or outings.

2.3) Arriving more than 5 minutes late to class will count as half an absence (1/2). It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of an absence before the class begins.

2.4) Arriving more than 30 minutes late to class will be considered an absence.

2.5) Four (4) unexcused absences will result in the student not receiving credit for the course.

2.6) Only documented absences will be considered excused: a religious holiday, a family emergency, or a medical appointment. Medical absences must be supported by a doctor's note and submitted at reception on the day the student returns to class after the incident has ended.

3) Academic Integrity

3.1) The exchange of information is not only permitted but is also a way of enriching the knowledge acquired during the course. However, all work submitted for each course must be individual and original in every respect. Any sources and direct quotations used must be properly cited.

3.2) Remember that the use of artificial intelligence to complete assignments or examinations is strictly prohibited unless an instructor expressly states otherwise. Such use constitutes a lack of authenticity, and may amount to direct plagiarism, in addition to undermining the development of critical thinking and writing skills, which are among the primary goals of this program. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

3.3) Any work that has received credit for one course will NOT be accepted for credit in another course. There will be NO exceptions to this rule. Reusing such work will result in immediate failure of the second course. If assignments for two different courses are related in any way and the student has questions about whether the second project is

permissible, the matter must be discussed with all instructors involved. This will prevent any possible unintentional violation of this rule.

3.4) As with punctuality, assignments must be submitted on time. Any late submission will result in a reduction of the grade for that assignment.

3.5) Failure to comply with the provisions set out above will result in the loss of the corresponding course credits for the course in which these rules have been violated.

3.6) If you have a documented special need that requires academic accommodations (SDAC), it must be certified by your home institution. Please contact the Head of Studies in Valencia, María Andrés (maria.andres@uvavalencia.org).

4) Activities, Workshops, and Lectures

Throughout the course, various activities, workshops, and lectures are organized. Participation may be voluntary or mandatory if the instructor considers the activity relevant to the course.

5) Classroom Conduct

5.1) It is very important that all students arrive to class on time, prepared, and with the materials needed for the day. During class, students must treat one another and the instructor with respect, demonstrate a positive attitude, and help create a participatory and collaborative environment that supports effective learning. Any violation of these expectations will have direct consequences.

5.2) Electronic devices (laptop, mobile phone, smartwatch) may be used in class only for course-related purposes. If a student uses such technology for personal reasons during class, the student may be penalized with an unexcused absence.

5.3) The use of computer or electronic technology during examinations is prohibited unless the instructor determines otherwise in accordance with the examination format.

6) Course Content

On occasion, and always within the context of the course, certain “sensitive” topics may be addressed both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, if a student feels offended by such content in a particular class, the student may leave the class, and doing so will not have any negative effect whatsoever on the final grade. Faculty members will always be open to communication and dialogue in order to promote better intercultural understanding.

7) Final Clarification

The instructor may modify or add activities and/or change the dates indicated according to the learning needs of the group. Effective learning requires not only careful planning, but also a certain degree of flexibility.