

Destination Ghana 2010

IB 3580

Special Topics (3 credit hours)

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Introduction

In today's era of globalization, in which the world is rapidly shrinking as a result of advances in technology, transportation, and communications systems, students must be cognizant of the world "out there". Our life in the US is constantly impacted by developments in far away countries. Consider the products and services on which we depend on a daily basis- increasingly, chances are that they originated in a foreign country. Our standard of living here in the US is influenced by the globally sourced knowledge and technology put to use by domestic and foreign companies. Contrary to popular perception, Africa has an emerging economy of 900 million consumers and is seeking to reposition itself in the global economy.

This course is designed to give students an education in the business, political and cultural environment of Ghana - one of the most dynamic economies on the continent. Ghana is among the fastest growing economies in the region and is at the center for the bulk of the off-shoring and outsourcing by American companies. With the discovery of oil, Ghana is fast emerging as the manufacturing center for high technology and sophisticated products, produced at a fraction of the costs than in developed countries, as well as simultaneously becoming an attractive consumer market.

The objective of the 2010 Destination Ghana program is to allow students to go beyond IB theory to "experiencing" international African business and culture. The goal of the program is to have students develop an awareness of the interconnected nature of the global economy and to enhance students' perspectives, and sensitivity to other cultures and business practices.

This is accomplished by exposing students to diverse and relevant business environments which will encourage students to utilize their academic theory base as a framework for understanding real world experiences. The program facilitates this by providing students with a variety of experiences; including site visits, case studies, and country level, industry level, and firm level assessments. Pre-trip learning will be accomplished through a combination of lectures, cases and readings, and on-line discussions. Post-trip learning seeks to have students synthesize their experiences, and subsequent research, into a well balanced presentation of their learning outcomes.

Learning Objectives

- Provide opportunities for students to apply existing knowledge in a new, dramatically different environment.
- Increase participant knowledge of and interest in global affairs, international issues, trends and systems as they pertain to Africa, the United States, and to the larger global arena.
- Assist students in developing the skills necessary to interact and participate effectively in a multinational setting.
- Offer the opportunity for students to clarify and enhance both personal and universal understanding of their own culture and its relationship to the larger global arena.
- Encourage students to seek out further international or intercultural opportunities.

- Provide an opportunity for participants to enhance their status as a globally competent professional and citizen.

Course Structure

This course will involve:

- Series of pre-departure meetings and presentations
- Student self-preparation of course packet readings
- A brief immersion, of fourteen days, in Ghana; students are required to maintain a reflective journal of their experiences and learning
- Series Class meetings for discussions, and workshops upon return.
- paper/presentation preparation

While in Ghana, students will be exposed to a variety of learning environments including lectures and discussions by our hosts at the University of Ghana, corporate site visits and cultural activities.

Our travel journeys will begin in Accra, one of the most dynamic cities and the capital of Ghana. Students will be able to gain first hand knowledge and develop experiences interacting in a radically different environment.

We continue our journey inland to Akosombo, home of the Volta Aluminum Company, a village town with both obvious and hidden history. We will explore aspects and impacts of the city's rich environmental culture and try to balance these against the modern reality. Several site visits and cultural assignment will help us to better understand and appreciate the culture and human diversity of Akosombo.

The onsite visit learning goals are to provide diversity in the types of firms (stage of development, industry, ownership, financial disclosure, regulatory environment, competitive environment, and level of globalization, management style, and target market segment and procurement/distribution system) and ability to compare and contrast firms along the learning frameworks. Our goal in Ghana is to begin to experience the spectrum of businesses, from small businesses to large conglomerates in a rapidly-developing economy, examine issues of competitiveness in the Ghana economy, as well as growth and expansion opportunities.

Students are required to actively participate in scheduled events (trips and speakers) and to apply this learning by building a reflective journal of their experiences.

Academic Requirements

Pre-trip Readings and Pre-Departure meetings and Final Project Proposal

- Students will attend a series of pre-departure meetings;
 - 1st pre-departure -Presentation by Professor Paul Asabere, Department of Finance on business in Ghana - Logistics and Academic Requirements for the course and trip information, basic questions and answers. Date and time TBD in Alter Hall, Room A556.
 - 2nd pre-departure - Presentation by Professor Abu Abarry, Department of Africana Studies; Date and time TBD in Alter Hall, Room A556.
 - 3rd pre-departure - Presentation by and Anastasia Shown, Asst. Director, African Studies Department, University of Pennsylvania. Final questions and answers on trip logistics.

- Students will also review and consider material in the pre-departure packet [readings, background information on Ghana, suggested media] as part of their preparation for this trip including making a presentation on individual topics of interest. The more students are prepared, the more likely learning will occur during the trip.

- Students will need to consider how they plan to demonstrate their learning during this experience by proposing a topical area of research including a pre-departure presentation for their final project. The instructor will have final approval on all project topics.

Pre-Trip Assignments

- Students will prepare
 - A recap of learning outcomes from the faculty presentations. Papers will be approximately two pages in length, double spaced, 12 pt font with 1 inch margin. In addition, students should carefully consider the information presented and the information in the course packet and develop a listing of “10 things” learned and make a class presentation.
 - The class presentation should include a pre-departure reflective journal of expectations, concerns, hopes etc about the experience.
 - These assignments are due prior to departure and should be emailed to Professor Conran and posted to the digital drop box of the course BB.

Onsite Assignments

- Students will visit several cities in Ghana. Students are expected to be able to journal their experiences, observations and reactions to and in each environment and to discuss their key learning from each location.
- Students will participate in a series of lectures and site visits; students are expected to actively participate in each of these events and to provide feedback to our University of Ghana hosts about the value of these experiences. Students will be assessed on active participation and this will be reflected in the final grades awarded.
- Assignments on-site.

Final Report

- Students will be responsible for the preparation and presentation of both a written and oral presentation. The Oral Presentation will be evaluated (see specific rubric) and will constitute 10% of your FINAL Grade while the Written Presentation will contribute 50% of the FINAL Grade. Note: Final Projects (written and oral) will be due

the week following Spring break. Length for Final Projects is expected to be 20-30 pages, length of Oral presentations will be 15 minutes.

- Student's final projects, by definition, will seek to link the student's prior knowledge with the immersion experience, as well as *build upon research activities*.
- Possible topics, or lines of research to be developed include:
 - Porter's Diamond Model for the Competitive Advantage of Nations
 - The Strategy, Structure and Rivalry of Firms
 - Demand Conditions
 - Related Supporting Industries
 - Factor Conditions
 - Role of Government
 - History and Chance
 - Management Culture:
 - Individualism versus Collectivism paradigm
 - Joint venture versus wholly-owned subsidiary paradigm
 - Marketing Systems:
 - Product-oriented versus consumer-oriented orientations
 - Marketing Infrastructure and logistics
 - Marketing Communications and Media
 - Marketing Situations:
 - Specific market conditions for products
 - Consumer Goods (i.e. PCs, Cell Phones, movies, etc)
 - Industrial Goods
 - Affect of different channel structure on market dynamics

Process

- To assure that progress occurs on the projects throughout the process, students will submit four (4) memos during the Spring semester detailing their project progress and status and will agree to meet with course coordinator to discuss project development.
- Project Memos are FORMAL COMMUNICATIONS and are to be submitted when due in the proper format.
- Consider these as checks on student's progress; they will be useful in discussions and have been designed to assure students keep on track with the progress of the project.
- Schedule:

***MEMO 1- Due 26 January, 2010-** Confirm your finalized paper topic and a planned timeline for the project. Build a timeline - use a detailed outline of the final project to guide your development of the timeline. Report outline and project objective must be specifically stated. Preliminary Research Bibliography required.

***MEMO 2- Due 09 February, 2010** -Update (which means adding details or steps to timeline, indicate which items are COMPLETE, which are IN-PROCESS, which may be MOVED/RESCHEDULED, etc.) This is a way to keep track of what is done and what still needs to be done. Complete Research Bibliography required.

***MEMO 3- Due 23 February, 2010-** Update the timeline for the project, evaluate the progress of project, be sure to synopsise progress; you are expected to report on key findings of your research analysis. This memo should be lengthier, approximately 2 pages in length. Draft of final Project can be submitted.

***MEMO 4- Due 06 March, 2010** -Update the timeline and progress of project; be sure to formally update the progress of the project as related to the due date; updated Draft of Final Project Due. Final Draft expected.

Note, failure to submit memos complete and when due will impact final grade awards.

Assessment of learning

- I. 5% Preparation and active Participation in Pre-Departure lectures
- II. 10% Pre-departure Recap of Learning, List of "10 things" and reflective essay
Due: 12/11/2010.
- III. 15% Active Participation and contribution during southern Africa Activities, lectures and site visits. This includes maintaining a daily journal and submission of evaluations as requested.
- IV. 50% Final Research paper
Write a research paper on the Ghanaian economic and political system. For example, what are the significant differences between the African and American systems? This paper should be between 20 - 30 pages long, 12 pt. font, double spaced, and 1" margin all around. Alternate topics will be considered on an individual basis.
Research paper time-line
 - a. One page preliminary proposal
Due: 12/08/09
 - b. One page abstract, outline and bibliography
Due: 1/26/10 with Memo #1
Memo #2 due 2/09/10 to contain final, full bibliography
 - c. First draft
Due: 2/23/10 with Memo #3
 - d. Final draft
Due: 03/06/10 with Memo #4
- V. 20% Research Paper and Presentation
15 minute presentation on research paper
Due: March 16-20 2010