



Exploring Yucatan: Community & Culture (C&C)

IFSA Semester Programs in Merida

US semester credit hours: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Course Code: IS305-03

Course Length: Semester

Delivery Method: Face to face

Language of Instruction: English

Course Description

The course is designed to allow students to obtain the most out of their study abroad experience through thoughtful and meaningful directed intellectual analysis and discussion of contemporary Mexico. This will be done through an intercultural approach, using culture and community as key concepts for this exploration.

This course fosters opportunities and tools to facilitate intercultural learning and develop intercultural competencies while exploring the local/regional/national cultures and local community groups. Students are encouraged to engage with the communities in which they are living and question theirs and others' perspectives, while learning to appreciate similarities and differences between cultures and communities to achieve a meaningful integration.

General Objective

Understand the dynamics that exist in the conformation of different communities in Mexico from an intercultural perspective through the analysis of its political, economic and socio-cultural structures and expressions to facilitate and ensure the process of integration into the local communities.

Specific Objectives

At the end of the course, students will develop:

- Basic knowledge of contemporary issues facing the country/region/city in which they are studying, within a historical context
- Awareness of their cultural perspective and a critical understanding of how that perspective impacts their reaction to and interaction with others
- Understanding of how to navigate cultural complexities in order to more productively and appropriately interact and communicate across cultural differences
- Understanding that the cultural adaptation skills, including intercultural communication and cultural empathy, developed in their study abroad experience with FISA, can be constructively utilized when engaging with difference of any kind in the future

Intercultural competencies to develop:

- Self-awareness
- Awareness of the Other
- Handling emotions
- Bridging cultures (cultural dialogues)

Methodology

Students in this course are encouraged to continuously compare, contrast and analyze their condition in Mexico in comparison to that of the U.S. Students will be required to actively participate, providing opinions and intellectual analysis of their new reality (ies) and experiences. The discussions are based heavily on the assigned readings and their daily experiences in the new setting.

This course will meet according to the chart of hours included in this document. Students are also required to do outside of class independent work.

Academic Honesty:

IFSA-Butler takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your professor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a fail for the course and disciplinary action may occur. The incident will be reported to the resident director as well as your home university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic misconduct, as definitions vary by culture.

Contact Hours

15/2 hrs. sessions	Session by session (calendar below)
5 Guided Outings	12hrs. total (two are graded) 1. Merida bus tour / Merida en domingo / Museo of Mundo Maya 2. Ek-Balam and Chichén Itzá 3. Uxmal and Calcetoh 4. Cooking class / market visit (graded) 5. Independence of Mexico (graded)
3 Field Experiences	24 hrs. total 1. Cuba (4 days) 2. Chiapas (4 days) 3. Yaxunah community insertion (3 days)

Assessment:

10% Attendance

20% Active class participation

35% Journal entries (will be collected after each class session)

35% Final projects (individual presentations using selected media)

Attendance: this course requires that you are present at every class session.

Active participation: students must have an active role, addressing key issues related to topics covered.

Journal entries: these are written assignments with the purpose of incorporating key concepts from the readings into your daily experiences. Due dates are attached. You will receive electronic instructions on format. Each of you, at the end of the semester will have turned in: 14 written journal entries of which: one will be a live-streaming / video and one will be your final presentation. We will distribute the topic for the live streaming/video during the first class session.

Final Projects: the final project is a self-evaluation where you demonstrate how you have developed the cultural competencies described above.

Journal entries due discussion dates

Session 1

Journal entry #1: Objectives for the semester: Discussion of Learning Plans

Session 2

Journal entry #2: Analysis of The Danger of a Single Story

Session 3

Journal entry #3: Cultural Identity (Cultural Maps)

Session 4

Journal entry #4: Analysis of stereotypes in USA and Mexico

Session 5

Journal entry #5: Food and culture (Cooking class)

Session 6

Journal entry #6: Analysis of México's independence celebration in Merida

Session 7

Mid-semester individual meetings

Session 8

Journal entry #7: What are your prejudices (ITF)

Session 9

Journal entry #8: Research on Cuba (ITF)

Session 10

Journal entry #9: Analysis of Cuba (ITF)

Session 11

Journal entry #10: Research on Chiapas

Session 12

Entry #11: Analysis of Chiapas.

Session 13

Journal entry #12: Research on Yucatán communities

Session 14

Journal entry #13: Analysis of Yaxunah

Session 15

Journal entry #14: Final presentations.

Note: *these entries are your reflections based upon the required readings applied to your daily experiences. You will receive electronic instructions on format.*

Structure of course by session

Session 1. Introduction to course. Intercultural approaches to the study abroad experience

- ✓ What is intercultural perspective?
- ✓ Why is it important to develop intercultural awareness?
- ✓ What are the possible outcomes of developing intercultural awareness?
- ✓ How can intercultural awareness help me in the future?

Session 2. Cultural Expectations: Rethinking Study Abroad: S.A. as a rite of passage and why we go Abroad?

- ✓ What is an expectation? Have your expectations changed?
- ✓ Intersecting agendas?
- ✓ Do you have any goals for this experience? What are these?
- ✓ What are some of the strategies to reach your goals?
- ✓ Mention a few of your “real” and “socially accepted” reasons that made you come to Merida.
- ✓ Do you find differences between travel and study abroad?

“The Danger of a Single Story”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>

Reading:

Gordon, Robert (2010) *Going Abroad: Traveling like an Anthropologist*. Boulder & London: Paradigm Publishers. Ch. 2, 3 & 10.

Session 3. Cultural Awareness

- ✓ What is culture?
- ✓ Is culture an invention?
- ✓ Culture: meaning and interpretation

Language and Culture

- ✓ Cultural competence in relation to language
- ✓ Colloquialisms
- ✓ Cultural understandings and misunderstandings
- ✓ Conflicts: communication and miscommunication
- ✓ Communication Styles: Direct /Indirect
- ✓ Why values matter
- ✓ Personal and Societal Obligations

Introduction to field note taking: ethnographic writing (handout)

Introduction to digital ethnography: digital story telling project:
<http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqkHWmLhtBJkXekCssJTcNg>

Reading:

Wagner, Roy (1981 [1975]) *The Invention of Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Session 4. Identity and Cultural Representation

- ✓ **Stereotypes**
- ✓ How Others see you

- ✓ Cultural representation and auto representation
- ✓ Authenticity
- ✓ Heritage speakers

Reading:

Fernández Repetto, Francisco (2010) "Yucatán y lo yucateco en el mercado turístico: autorepresentaciones desde la fotografía". En Steffan Ayora and Gabriela Vargas, editores. *Representaciones culturales: imágenes e imaginación de lo yucateco*. Mérida, México: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán. Pp. 99 – 136.

Outing 4. Market Outing

Visit the Market Lucas de Galvez

Session 5. Cooking class (Market outing Sunday Sept. 10. Outing 1)

Cooking Class

Outing 5. Mexico's Independence celebration

Visit the celebration on Sep. 15th at the Plaza Grande and /or the military parade on Sep. 16th

Session 6. Community and Sociability

Debriefing Sept. 15 & 16

- ✓ How they interact with each other
- ✓ What allows you to relate to others
- ✓ How people create groups
- ✓ What is community?
- ✓ Types of communities
- ✓ Other types of social aggregations
- ✓ Concept of belonging (intro)
- ✓ Time and space from an intercultural perspective
- ✓ Belonging and physical space

Reading:

Ayora Diaz, Stefan I. (2010) *Re-creaciones de la comunidad: espacios translocales en la globalización*. En Ruben O. Villela editor. Cuadernos de Bioética. Buenos Aires, Argentina. Pp. 79-113.

Session 7

Mid-semester individual meetings

Session 8. Prejudices Racism and Discrimination

- ✓ Power and Privilege
- ✓ Social classes
- ✓ Racism and Discrimination

Reading:

Iturriaga, Eugenia (2015) "La Ciudad Blanca de Noche: las discotecas como espacios de segregación". *Altridades*. 25 (50): 105-115.

Session 9. Research on Cuba

Students' presentations on Cuba

Field Experience 1. Cuba

Session 10. Analysis of Cuba

Debriefing Cuba

Session 11. Research on Chiapas

Students' presentations on Chiapas

Field Experience 2. Chiapas

Session 12. Tourist, local and Community

Debriefing Chiapas.

- ✓ Is the study abroad student a tourist or a local?
- ✓ How to move from one side to the other?

Reading:

Fernández Repetto, Francisco (2007) "Turismo académico: promoción y consumo de study abroad programs en Mérida". En: Ayora, Steffan, editor. *Globalización y consumo de la cultura en Yucatán*. Mérida, México: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán. Pp. 109-135.

Session 13. Research on Yucatan communities

Students' presentations

Field Experience 3. Yaxunah

Session 14. Re-entry

Analysis of Yaxunah

- ✓ Coming home
- ✓ Preparing to return home
- ✓ Immigrant vs. ex-pat
- ✓ Being a traveler
- ✓ Cultural consumption

Session 15. Final session

Student final presentations