

## INTERNSHIP AND METHODOLOGY SEMINAR

IFSA Rome

**US semester credit hours:** 3

**Contact Hours: Seminar:** 15 hours

**Internship:** 120 hours (approx. 8 per week)

**Course Code:** ID386-11

**Course Length:** Semester

**Delivery Method:** Face to Face

**Language of Instruction:** English

The title of the student's internship placement/project will appear on the transcript.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The Internship Methodology Seminar underpins the Internship in IFSA Rome. Students will be placed in individual internships but will collectively take part in the seminar to be prepared for the experience, understand expectations, set personal objectives, identify and strengthen specific skills, critically reflect on their progress, share experiences, and learn from one other throughout. A carefully selected series of progress-focused assignments complements these learning activities, including a Personal Skills Survey, Internship Journals and Summaries, Response Papers, and a Final Presentation and Paper. Knowledge of the Italian work environment and the systems that support it are threaded throughout the seminar. Consideration of the transferability of skills acquired is another important component of this learning experience. Students will gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their goals, their professional areas, as well as Italian work culture. In this seminar, which is focused on understanding the application of theory to practice, students gain real world work experience while developing intercultural agility—skills and experiences which are critically important to personal, academic and professional success.

Details of the Internship are described at the end of the syllabus, in the “Internship Information” section.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course includes the following goals for students, guided by the value of applied learning:

- Understand connections between classroom learning and practical learning
- Know strategies for successful navigation within cross-cultural workplaces
- Realize cultural nuances of the Italian work environment
- Increase understanding of professional areas of interest
- Develop awareness of personal skills, goals, strengths and weaknesses as related to personal, academic and professional objectives
- Gain experience in collaborative work and peer review

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- Develop oral presentation skills; specifically, be able to articulate the internship abroad experience to future employers or graduation admissions
- Make cognitive connections between learning in this course and other learning experiences in IFSA Rome

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

The following schedule indicates the weekly discussion topics, related readings, and assignments for this course. With the exception of Week 1 (when resources will be reviewed as a group during class), students are expected to read or watch resources in advance and be prepared to actively discuss them in class. In each meeting, the instructor will overview the topic and then facilitate a group discussion, drawing out relevant themes, following up on specific lines of inquiry, and prompting students' thoughtful engagement with the topic. Students are encouraged to bring their prior learning experiences into class discussions and to make connections between this course and others whenever possible. Theories of experiential learning and integrative learning therefore undergird the dynamic learning environment of this course.

While engaging with the course, students will complete approximately eight hours per week in internship placements.

#### **Week 1 – Introductions and Articulating Career Paths**

- Overview of the Internship Methodology Seminar
- Syllabus review; Student and instructor expectations
- Instructor and student Introductions; Building a community of learning
- Integrative Learning Exercise: Connecting the internship and methodology seminar to IFSA Rome, individual academic majors, and undergraduate careers
- In-class exercise: Describe your intended career path to classmates
- Initial Individual Instructor meeting with students
- Interviews and confirmation of internship placements
- Discuss the role of the Site Supervisor (see "Internship Information" section below)

#### **Week 2 – Personal Skills Survey and Setting Objectives**

- Part A. The instructor will provide a tool for the identification of skills you already possess and those you wish to acquire through the internship abroad experience.
- Part B. What are your personal objectives for the internship?

Assignment: Personal Skills Survey and Setting Objectives - Submit a single page description of your expectations and objectives for the internship and the specific skills that you wish to develop through the internship experience, as they relate to your intended career path. Relate these objectives to your IFSA Learning Plan wherever possible.

#### **Week 3 – Exploring the Context for the Internship Experience in Italy**

- What do you know about working in Italy? What do you hope to learn? What do you know about your professional field in Italy?

Review "Doing Business in Italy." <https://www.worldbusinessculture.com/country-profiles/italy/>

#### **Week 4 – Cultural Differences and Expectations**

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### Sample discussion topics:

- Orientation to time (Is it culturally acceptable to arrive late? Is an early arrival expected? Do supervisors expect to be kept informed of minute-by-minute changes to work schedules? Will the student be expected to stay late to finish a project or do locals typically leave immediately at the end of their assigned work periods?)
- What are the cultural expectations with regard to interactions with supervisors and coworkers?
- What sort of authority systems are in place in the host culture? Is it appropriate for a student to express ideas for improvement of operations during an internship? How can the student express ideas and still be respectful?
- What kinds of conversations might be considered culturally inappropriate in the workplace?
- What are the cultural expectations for problem-solving and conflict resolution?
- What are the social media considerations for participation in an internship abroad? Is it appropriate for students to post photos or comments about the experience or the workplace?
- What if the student perceives that the internship is not challenging enough or not focused on the student's area of interest? How and to whom should these concerns be addressed?

### **Week 5 – Social Relationships in the Italian Workplace**

- Guest Lecture from the IFSA Rome Business Communications and Leadership course instructor  
Topic: Navigating Social Relationships in the Italian workplace, including manager-employee, coworkers, and customers/affiliates

Assignment: Prepare 3 questions in advance for the guest speaker.

Assignment: Submit a single page response paper following the class (see instructions below).

### **Week 6 – The Italian Work Ethic**

Readings to be assigned by the instructor.

Assignment Due: Submit Journal and Summary for instructor review (first of three submissions)  
Review your learning objectives for the internship and evaluate how well these objectives are being met. Note which objectives have been accomplished, which have not been accomplished and which need more work. Describe any new goals you may have for the remainder of your internship.

**Week 7 –** *Week 7 is reserved for methodology seminar instructor visits to students' internship sites and/or individual instructor meetings with students. Details TBD.*

### **Week 8 – Professional Networking in Italy**

- How is professional networking carried out in the host culture? Are business cards exchanged? Are informational interviews possible? How are "connections" made formally and informally?
- How does professional networking in Italy differ from your impressions of or experiences with professional networking in the United States?
- How can you learn more about your professional area of focus? Are there professional organizations or events that allow student participation?

### **Week 9 – Student Progress Reports**

- Present brief, informal, ungraded, verbal progress reports on your internship experiences thus far. This is an opportunity to share experiences with one another, challenge thinking, celebrate

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successes, and consider new ideas to inform the remainder of the internship experience. Consider how your experiences align with or differ from those of your classmates and why.

**Week 10** – *Week 10 is reserved for methodology seminar instructor visits to students' internship sites and/or individual meetings with students. Details TBD.*

### **Week 11 – Career Pathways in Italy**

Readings to be assigned by the instructor.

### **Week 12 – Case Study: The IFSA Rome Office as a Multicultural Workplace**

- Guest speaker: IFSA Rome staff member
  - What is a multicultural workplace?
  - How is the IFSA Rome Office an example of a multicultural workplace?
  - What sorts of cross-cultural issues and opportunities have occurred in the IFSA Rome Office?
  - What sorts of personal and professional skills are necessary to function effectively as a staff member in a multicultural workplace like the IFSA Rome Office?

Assignment: Prepare 3 questions for the guest speaker in advance.

Assignment: Submit a single page response paper following the class (see instructions below).

### **Week 13 – Interview: Articulating the Internship Abroad Experience**

- Interviewing techniques
- Optimizing the internship abroad experience for future employers
- In-class exercise: Mock Interviews with Peers
  - Purpose: Prepare to market the skills you have developed to future employers (or graduate school admissions panels). Select a posted job (or graduate program) that complements your career path, prepare a CV and letter of interest, and prepare to verbally interview for that position. Students will be placed in pairs or groups of three to “interview” one another. In advance, interviewers will review the job posting, CV and letter of interest, and will provide 2-3 questions for the “candidate.” One of the questions should require candidates to demonstrate how the internship abroad experience uniquely qualifies them for the identified position. Following the interview, interviewers will verbally share constructive feedback. Interviews will be approximately 10 minutes in length.

### **Week 14 – In-class Workshop: Preparation for the Final Paper and Presentation**

- Collectively debrief the Mock Interviews
- In-class workshop and optional on-site peer review in preparation for the Final Paper and Presentation

Assignment Due: Submit Journal and Summary for instructor review (final of three submissions)

Evaluates objectives that were accomplished through the internship. Describe any objectives that were not met and why. Reflect on how the internship experience may have changed your objectives. Finally, provide recommendations for future students internship with the same organization.

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### **Week 15 – Final Papers and Presentations**

- Content Review
- Concluding Questions and Comments
- Course evaluations

### **EVALUATION METHODS**

The course instructor will provide specific requirements and grading rubrics for individual assignments for the course. Your final grade in the course will be comprised of the following course requirements:

Class Participation (includes attendance, engagement in discussion, civility, and respect) – 10%

Personal Skills Survey and Setting Objectives Assignment – 10%

Response Papers (2 total, 10% each) – 20%

Internship Journal and Summary – 20%

Final Presentation and Paper – 20%

Site Supervisor Evaluation – 20%

### **Timely Submissions**

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the course instructor and generally only in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Response Papers (3)**

Response papers can be constructed in a way that makes the most sense for you as the learner. Consider the class resources provided for the topic and/or the guest speaker presentation. Select one of more for the focus of your response. In a single page, describe your responses to what you encountered. Was your thinking challenged or were your prior ideas confirmed? Perhaps you found a particular reading compelling and it prompted you to consider new ideas or possible solutions; perhaps you made personal connections between a class discussion and your own learning; or maybe you located an additional resource that gave you more information on the topic. Feel free to describe your learning using any of these approaches or others, but do not use the response paper assignment to merely summarize a reading, discussion or experience. The response paper should demonstrate that you have given additional, reflective thought to an issue. Your voice should be heard in this concise paper.

#### **Internship Journal and Summary (3 submissions)**

You will maintain a personal journal throughout your experience in the internship. Through journal entries, you will systematically reflect on your daily experiences in the Italian workplace. Consider the following questions when composing your entries: What am I experiencing? What am I learning about my working environment and the professional industry wherein my internship is situated? How are my assumptions about the Italian work culture being challenged or affirmed? In what ways is the internship experience advancing me toward achievement of my personal, professional and academic goals? What questions do I have? Bear in mind that self-examination of personal and professional

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growth should be the underpinning theme of for your journal.

Journals will be submitted to the Internship Methodology Seminar instructor at three points during the semester, as noted in the course outline. When submitting your journal, include a single page summary of your journal entries and note any specific items that you wish to discuss with the IMS instructor. Individual follow-up meetings will be scheduled at the discretion of the IMS instructor. Think of the single page summaries as progress reports of sorts for your internship experience.

Journal entries should be dated and kept electronically (or converted to electronic format if written by hand).

### **Final Paper and Presentation: Personal and Professional Growth**

The Final Paper should demonstrate your increased awareness of your personal and professional growth through the internship abroad experience. Think of this assignment as the culmination of all that you have learned through the methodology seminar and the internship itself. Make specific connections between prior and new knowledge, theoretical understanding and practical knowledge, and engage in a thoughtful reflection on the development personal and professional skills throughout the semester. Restate your learning objectives and provide a status report on those (or additional ones) for the integration of learning following the study abroad experience. Discuss how the skills you have acquired through the internship are transferable to future professional and educational experiences. Finally, consider and describe the difference between the internship experience and a traditional classroom experience for you as a learner. Did this experience tell you anything new about yourself as a learner?

The Final Paper is required to be 8-10 pages in length, Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, APA style. Include five peer-reviewed journals in a reference list in support of your discussion.

Additionally, prepare a ten-minute oral presentation that summarizes your Final Paper, for delivery to the class during the last week of the course. Visual aids are not required but are allowed.

50% of your grade for the Final Paper will be comprised of the written portion, and 50% will be comprised of the oral summary.

### **Site Supervisor Evaluation**

Your work performance in your internship will be evaluated by your supervisor. A description of the grading methods and criteria for the evaluation will be provided at the start of the seminar.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

IFSA 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 instructor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms

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of academic dishonesty, you may receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may result. The incident will be reported to the IFSA resident director as well as your home institution.

### **INTERNSHIP INFORMATION**

#### **Time Commitment**

You will spend approximately eight hours per week at your internship placement. You should be aware that the time required to complete this course will be greater than the time required for the other courses that offer the same number of academic credits. In addition to the required weekly work hours, you need time to commute to and from your internship placement. In Rome, travel times can be up to an hour or an hour each way. You should be prepared to invest more time in the internship experience than with traditional academic coursework.

#### **Compensation**

All internships are unpaid. Some organizations may proactively offer a modest stipend to cover your lunch and daily transportation costs. Please discuss any such offers with your course instructor and resident director.

#### **Internship Placements**

We have placed previous IFSA students in internships across a variety of fields. Placements depend on organizational availability and students' background experience, professional skills, and personal interest. Internship placements may be quite competitive. Final internship decisions are made in Rome, based on placement availability and candidate interviews. It is important to understand that internships are not as common in Italy as they are in the United States. You might be the first intern to have been placed with your particular organization, and the placement could have taken many weeks to arrange. We do our best to find the most suitable placement for you, based on the Internship Intent Form that you submitted as part of your application to the IFSA Rome, but first choice placements cannot be guaranteed.

#### **Interviews**

After reviewing your Internship Intent Form, we identify a potentially suitable placement for you, individually matched to your expressed interests and learning goals. In most cases, you can expect to have an interview with your proposed placement organization during your first or second week in Rome. Prior to your interview, you will be given detailed information about the host organization and any further background information that may assist with your interview process. However, you are also encouraged to research the organization on your own. If there have been any relevant changes to your background, qualifications, or academic interests since you submitted your application, you must tell your resident director immediately upon arrival. Internship interviews vary considerably in style. The purpose of the interview will be to establish your suitability for that particular placement. You should therefore treat it as the equivalent of a job interview and present yourself as well as possible. The placement organization is not under any obligation to offer a placement if you do not fulfill its requirements.

#### **Confirmation of Placement**

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You are likely to be informed within a week after the interview whether or not you have been accepted for the internship placement. In some cases, you will be told at the interview; in others, the organization will want to consider your application in more detail, interview other candidates, or discuss specific arrangements first. When the placement is confirmed, you will sign an Internship Learning Agreement with your Site Supervisor. The Learning Agreement form will be provided to you in Rome. As soon as the placement is confirmed, you will start working approximately eight hours per week at your placement. It is important to ensure that you make every effort to fit in to your place of work as quickly and unobtrusively as possible. You cannot expect to be given responsibility unless you demonstrate early in your placement a willingness to be adaptable and, above all, reliable. Internship students who have demonstrated their commitment to their work may be rewarded with increasing levels of responsibility, more opportunities to take part in interesting activities, and outstanding letters of recommendation.

### **Changes in Placement**

You may find after some time on the job that your internship placement does not seem to be a good fit for your learning goals. If this is the case, please raise your concerns with your course instructor and resident director immediately; they will help you troubleshoot the situation, liaise with your internship placement, and or attempt to identify an alternative placement if that is appropriate and/or possible. Please be aware that alternative placements may take some time to arrange, however, and the need for a second interview will mean additional delay and uncertainty. Given these factors and the competitive nature of internships in Italy, it may be advisable to find a way to make your current placement work—flexibility and adaptability are, after all, important skills to acquire.

### **Supervision of Internships**

You will receive support and supervision from IFSA, as well as from your Site Supervisor. Here is a brief summary of the roles of the people you will be working with over the course of your internship:

The Internship Methodology Seminar Instructor is primarily responsible for leading the academic component of the internship course. The IMS Instructor meets with students individually and as a group over the course of the term, offers support for the internship and guidance and assessment on the required academic components.

The Resident Director and staff coordinate the internships. The Resident Director and staff work with the IMS Instructor to identify possible internship placements.

The Site Supervisor works day-to-day with you at your internship placement and is not employed by IFSA. The Site Supervisor introduces you to the workplace, guides you in your daily work activities, and oversee your performance onsite. In addition, your Site Supervisor evaluates your work performance (see “Assignments” and “Evaluation Methods” above).

### **Framework for the Internship**

The internship is designed to meet the standards set forth by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in the United States, which defines a legitimate educational internship as follows:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.



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2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

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