

**PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY –
in partnership with The Gap Year Association study abroad**

SOC 199: Self and Community – Culture, Cohort, and Self

COURSE SYLLABUS

CREDITS: 4 quarter-credits – Continuous Enrollment Course

Students who plan to use this course to fulfill specific curriculum areas should discuss transfer options and obtain written approval from a counselor or study abroad advisor at their own college/ university PRIOR to enrollment in this course.

PREREQUISITES: There are NO prerequisites for this course.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

This course is field-based. The course instructor will be available via e-mail.

INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD:

PSU has approved the following Instructors of Record, one of whom will be assigned to you typically two+ weeks prior to the beginning of your program:

- Britt Basel, MS - brittbasel@ecothropic.com
 - Dianna Hahn, MA – dianna.hahn@gmail.com
 - Alexander Papouchis, MS - alexpapouchis@gmail.com
 - Cam Sylvester, MA – camsylvester@gmail.com
- Office: 503-206-7336
Web: <https://gapyearassociation.org>
Address: PO Box 17427, Portland, OR 97217

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to provide hands-on learning opportunities for undergraduate students who undertake study away opportunities. It offers the student an opportunity to reflect on the complex relationships within the host culture surrounding a particular event, the cohort of peer-students in which students form a relevant identity, and their own history. Students will have an option to write an ethnology based on living within an unfamiliar culture for a few months and use their cohort experience for a detailed study of social systems and self-growth.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

- **Environment of Respect:** Disagreement and diversity of opinions are encouraged. You will be challenged to think critically about the impact of cultural differences, which may include gender, race, the roles environment has in business and market development, socioeconomic status, physical and cognitive ability, sexuality and other forms of diversity. You are encouraged to ask difficult questions and engage in discussion and critical reflection. Please be respectful of others, listen, and try to understand differences.
- **Experiential Learning:** In this course, learning is an experiential process in which you have the opportunity to engage in and reflect on a variety of different experiences throughout the term. The richness of this class will depend on the questions, insights, and active participation that you bring.
- **Personal Responsibility:** You are expected to engage fully in this class and take action if you need help. Please communicate any concerns about assignments, deadlines, or classroom activities.
- **Academic Integrity:** Please adhere to university policies. Please take special note of policies regarding plagiarism and course withdrawal. It is expected that each student will prepare his or her own assignments and that any assignments submitted will be the sole work of the student. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information, will not be tolerated. The University's Code of Student Conduct may be found at <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>.

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Examine differences and similarities between the community of their experience and that of their home environment.
- Expand knowledge and understanding of customs of different cultures.
- Analyze and summarize insights gained from the cohort experience.
- Evaluate particular social issues as seen through a particular event (ie, Semana Santa, Day of the Dead, Holi, Carnival, etc.)
- Understand core issues in cross-cultural communication and interpersonal skills.

CONTACT HOURS, EXCURSIONS, AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

A total of 40 contact hours will be facilitated. These hours will come in the forms of:

- Introduction to Social Systems in the host location
- Homestays
- Weekly cohort meetings and intense social-living for an extended period of time
- Social-service based volunteer projects
- Observations of cultural affairs / ceremonies / festivals
- Cross-cultural correspondence and education
- History lectures and historical excursions

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

REQUIRED HOURS – must complete 40 contact hours as described above. The Gap Year Association will provide verification of hours.

A DAILY JOURNAL in English will be a descriptive study/journal of your semester. Use it to keep brief narratives of your daily experiences. It should contain notes on places visited, interviews, daily purchases, oral language activities, student observations of different and unique cultural traits, etc.

Self-reflection is a significant part of your journal grade. Self-reflection will involve answering questions that force you to think critically about your experiences. When writing journals consider questions like:

- How is this experience different from my expectations?
- What challenges have I faced throughout this experience? How am I overcoming them?
- Explore differences, similarities to your home culture.
- What have been the most poignant learning experiences? How has that impacted my world-view?

REQUIRED READING – must read at least 1 book from the Recommended Reading list and demonstrate knowledge learned and/or perspectives expressed (with citations) in your FINAL REPORT.

FINAL REPORT of insights gained from this international service experience. Our expectation is that the papers you submit will reflect college-level writing. Your report will be 8-10 pages in length. Reports must be typed (double spaced) with a cover page that includes your name, the quarter (eg. fall 2021), the name of the international program attended, and course number.

Choose from one of two options:

Option 1: Submit a report reflecting on your small cohort experience.

Read one or more books off the recommended reading list. Submit a comprehensive analytical paper detailing your experience living and traveling in a small cohort. What did the cohort experience teach you about yourself? How would you like to use this self-learning moving forward?

As you brainstorm, consider the following: what were the ups and downs of the cohort. Who did you learn the most from? Did the cohort go through stages of cohort development? What did you learn about communication skills. Did you learn about non-violent communication, love languages, active listening, Plato's Circle of Truth etc.? What was the impact of traveling in a cohort rather than being

a solo traveler?

Final Report for Option 1 will be graded as follows:

- Description cohort experience - 20%
- Analysis of how the cohort impacted your self-awareness and learning - 40%
- Clarity and Organization of Ideas - 20%
- Grammar and Punctuation - 10%
- Ability to Demonstrate Knowledge from the Required Readings - 10%

Option 2: Submit a comprehensive analytical ethnography paper.

Ethnographers study human culture by researching artwork, architecture, tools and other material products of a culture. They also devote much research to a culture's non-material creations including its music, symbols and values. They can also study social relationships in human groups such as marriage, family life, authority and conflict. This project should give you a chance to observe, with intention, the area, people, culture, historic sites, political system, art, music, society, history, education, foreign relations, geography, scientific research, leisure-time activities etc. of the region and culture.

Ethnology Project Assignment Instructions:

- Find an event/issue related to your semester that you know little or nothing about.
- During your semester: Interview, in-depth, at least 3 people about this event or issue.
- Write an 8-10 page research paper documenting your experience:
 - Describe what you think will happen for that event/issue. What do you think the environment will be like? What will the people be like? What will you experience? What biases/ideas/projections do you bring to the experience?
 - As you participate in the event, describe what you see, feel, hear, focusing on the surrounding environment, the people in it, and the activities taking place.
 - After describing the experience begin to ask questions that bring you into relationship with it. What are the people doing? How do they do it? Why do they do it that way? What cultural assumptions of yours, if any, are exposed?
- Summarize your thoughts and feelings: Was this a challenging experience? Good? Bad? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about the local culture/ people? Would you do anything differently?

*** For this option, you must choose your own book related to the topic and get pre- approval from the course instructor. The books listed in this syllabus do not support option 2.

Final Report for Option 2 will be graded as follows:

- Description of the event/issue - 20%
- Summary and analysis of interviews - 20%
- Analysis of your own preconceptions and biases as an ethnographer - 20%
- Clarity and Organization of Ideas - 20%
- Grammar and Punctuation - 10%
- Ability to Demonstrate Knowledge from an approved book - 10%

DUE DATES, SUBMITTING JOURNAL AND FINAL REPORT:

Calendar/Schedule:

All course requirements must be submitted by:

- Fall Semester: January 20th
- Spring Semester: June 20th

Submitting Journals & Final Reports:

Please email your final report to the instructor, and post any necessary journals or supportive documents to:

The Gap Year Association
PSU Grading Instructor
PO Box 17427
Portland, OR 97217

*** Purchase tracking for anything you post as some materials have gotten lost in the past.

COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Daily Journal (30% of total criteria): Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, clearly presented ideas and observations, creative thought and appropriateness.

Final Paper (70% of total criteria): Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, complexity of grammar and verb use, format, content appropriateness, organization, analysis, originality and summarization skills.

Required Readings: This is a requirement for successful completion of this class and 10% of your paper grade depends on your referencing key lessons learned or examples. (Citations are required)

Required Hours: The Gap Year Association will provide verification of these hours.

Grading: This course is graded with letter grades; A - F. See more details about PSU's grading system [here](#).

READING LIST:

Students must read and cite at minimum ONE book in the final assignment. The following books have been approved for this course. Any other books not a part of this list must first be approved by the Field Instructors.

All Regions:

Conscious Living, Finding Joy in the Real World: Gay & Katie Hendricks

Five simple lessons of "conscious living", rooted in the ancient traditions of Stoicism and Taoism, help us overcome obstacles and fears and awaken our own creativity.

Non-Violent Communication: A Language of Life: Marshall Rosenberg

Nonviolent Communication partners practical skills with a powerful consciousness and vocabulary to help you get what you want peacefully.

Getting to Yes: Bruce Patton, Roger Fisher, William Ury

Getting to Yes offers a proven, step-by-step strategy for coming to mutually acceptable agreements in every sort of conflict.

7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Stephen Covey

The integrated, principle-centered 7 Habits philosophy has helped readers find solutions to their personal and professional problems and achieve a life characterized by fairness, integrity, honesty, and dignity.

How to Win Friends and Influence People: Dale Carnegie

Learn the Three fundamental techniques in handling people, the six ways to make people like you, the twelve ways to win people to you way of thinking and the nine ways to change people without arousing resentment.

The Five Love Languages: Gary Chapman

Dr. Gary Chapman's proven approach to showing and receiving love will help you experience deeper and richer relationships in your life.