Critical Reflective Assignment
What I learned in my study abroad experience
2015-16 Academic Year

As the world becomes ever more complex and inter-connected, it becomes increasingly important to recognize, analyze, and evaluate those complexities and connections between systems, institutions, and issues in local and global contexts, and across cultures. Global Learning also explores the personal and social responsibility required for ethical global citizenship and develops the skills necessary to thrive in a pluralistic and globally interdependent world. UW-Eau Claire has defined three elements to Global Learning, described below. Study abroad experiences foster opportunities for global learning in significant and transformative ways.

Reflecting on your study abroad experience, please answer each of the following questions individually, using concrete examples to support any observations made. You are expected to critically reflect on and evaluate your study abroad experience and its contribution to your intellectual understanding, personal growth, and professional/career aspirations. You should include the contributions of your coursework – as well as out-of-class experiences – in your answers. Avoid broad generalizations regarding the culture as well as your experience such as “it was great” or “It changed my life”. Support your statements with specific examples for a reader who has never been to this country.

1. Provide a brief introduction and overview of your study abroad experience (1-2 paragraphs).

2. Global Learning Element A: Demonstrate knowledge of the world’s diverse cultures, environments, practices, or values. While abroad, you may have encountered and engaged with a range of differences between your host country and the U.S. The experience of difference may have prompted you to reflect upon the nature of difference and how and why these differences exist and what they mean. Your return to the U.S. may have prompted further reflection upon difference.

   Using one to two examples, explain how your study abroad experience advanced your knowledge and understanding of ONE of the following: the world’s diverse cultures, environments, practices or values (2-3 paragraphs).

3. Global Learning Element B: Learn to evaluate global systems, institutions and relationships of power in a historical or geographical context. You may have encountered and engaged with global, transnational forces and power (forces that shape societal and individual experiences in your host country, and/or in the U.S.). You might have begun to ask questions about global forces and global dynamics and the way that they shape societal and individual experiences. Or, you may have learned about education, the media, religions, marriage and the family, civil society, healthcare, or other formal or informal institutions.

   Using one to two examples, describe how your study abroad experience has impacted your knowledge and understanding of ONE of the following: global systems, institutions, or relationships of power (2-3 paragraphs).
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4. **Global Learning Element C: Develop an understanding of the global implications of individual and collective actions.** As you study abroad, you may begin to question where you and your experiences, values, and actions fit within an increasingly globalized world. You may recognize that the choices that individuals and groups make have wide-reaching, transnational, even global effects.

Using one to two examples, identify and describe how a decision (or lack of a decision) made by people in your home community or country has impacted your host community or country. Or, if you prefer, identify and describe how a decision/lack of a decision made by people in your host community/country has impacted your home community/country (2-3 paragraphs).

5. Describe a disorienting experience that challenged your assumptions, and why you found it disorienting. How did the experience challenge your previous knowledge of the world’s cultures, environments, practices, or values? How did the experience help you to understand how your decisions and the decisions of others have global implications? (2-3 paragraphs).

6. Explore and reflect on how you see your study abroad experience integrating into your life. How has your study abroad experience changed your goals, aspirations, or perceptions? Are you or do you plan to do anything differently after returning home from this study abroad experience? (2-3 paragraphs).

7. Finally, please attach two pictures, with captions, that illustrate what was important and meaningful about your experience.

Students who provide exceptional answers to the questions will be invited to participate in the Provost’s Honor Symposium in the spring following the study abroad experience. Student work will be publicly available to faculty and administrators as evidence of the impact of learning study abroad programs for our students, as well as to other students who are thinking about studying abroad, and to benefactors looking for ways of supporting high-impact programs for students. Submitted work will also be used as a component in assessing the merits of UW-Eau Claire’s study abroad programming.

Create a cover sheet that provides the following background information:
Name:
Major(s)/Minor(s):
Site(s) of Experience:
Dates of Experience:
(Expected) Graduation Date:
Support from UW-Eau Claire: Scholarship name: ____________________________ $______________

REV June 2015