Penn State University  
Smeal College of Business  

BA 536, Global Immersion  
Spring 2015  

Course Outline  

Course Overview  

The Global Immersion program is an experiential learning opportunity for MBA students to explore an alternative business, government, and cultural paradigm in order to better appreciate the differences and similarities in business environments and, ultimately, make more informed business decisions. We expect that students will achieve this objective through the opportunity to step outside their comfort zone in visiting another country and reflect on their experiences. The Global Immersion trip takes place immediately following the conclusion of Global Perspectives (BA 535) and Global Business Environment (BA 532) which provide the foundation for a focused international study during the immersion trip.

The trips consist of (1) business-related activities such as company visits, factory tours, case studies, and panel discussions, (2) cultural activities including visiting museums, landmarks, and historical sites, (3) academic work including site-specific lectures on the local economy, business practices, and governmental frameworks, and (4) free time to allow for city exploration, shopping, etc.

Grading and expectations  

Grades for this two-credit course will be determined based on four activities. [1] We expect professional behavior during the Immersion and your active and relevant participation at meetings and events (45%). [2] Your assigned Immersion team will study and understand one of the firms being visited and will be asked to prepare a summary of results achieved and possible issues confronting the firm and the industry the firm is a part (20%). [3] There is one assigned reading for the Immersion: Every Nation for Itself: What Happens When No One Leads the World by Ian Bremmer for which we will ask you to write a reflection paper (25%). Note that this book will also be used in your Global Perspectives class in Mod III. [4] There will also be a team-based post-trip discussion (10%).

Your attendance is expected at the Global Immersion information sessions, any pre-trip meetings, all required activities during the Immersion trip, and the post-trip meeting. The required activities during the Immersion itself include scheduled visits, end-of-day debriefings, and organized dinners or mixers. We expect that you will participate actively in all meetings while on immersion and be prepared and willing to ask informed questions and engage in discussion.

Assignment 1 (20%) due Monday, February 23, at 8:00 a.m. (Angel drop box)  

You will be assigned an Immersion team. Your team will be asked to study one of the companies being visited on your Immersion and also the industry in which the company competes. The objective is to have your team understand the real issues confronting the company or industry and be able educate the other members of the group beforehand on recent results the company has achieved and the challenges they face going forward. You also need to have relevant questions prepared for the visit (see number 4 below).

You should investigate and summarize the information listed below. The summary can be in the form of a one-page written document, accompanied by any exhibits you need to include (such as #1 and #2 below). The document should be in any Microsoft Office document, 1-inch margins with 12 pt. font.

1. Data on the firm being visited, including revenues, profits, assets, employees, global operations, major lines of business, etc.
2. Similar data for the industry or 2-3 large competitors of the firm being visited.
3. Brief SWOT analysis of the firm and industry, especially as it relates to global strategy and the country being visited.
4. Questions that could be asked of the speaker; there should be 5-10 thoughtful questions that could be asked.

Assignment 2 (25%) due Tuesday, March 17, by 8:00 am (Angel drop box)

This deliverable asks you to reflect on your reading of Bremmer’s book given the country you have visited. Specifically, we want you to comment on the following question:

*Use evidence from the country you visited for Global Immersion to critique Ian Bremmer's argument about a G-Zero world.*

This deliverable should be a one-page reflection (single spaced, regular size font and margins). You may discuss this deliverable with any of your classmates; the document you turn in must be your own writing.

Assignment 3 (10%) takes place Wednesday, March 18, at 5:30 pm (MBA Classrooms)

On March 18, we will be conducting post-trip team presentations. Instead of meeting just with the group you traveled with, we will be mixing up destinations. You will participate in one of the large group meetings; these meetings will have teams from each destination. In that way, you will get to hear from classmates who went to the other destinations. The team should collectively decide on three key learning points from your visit. The team will present these learning points to the large group; you will have five minutes to do this and we will allow five minutes for Q & A. The team has wide latitude about what and how to present; there is no requirement for a PowerPoint slide deck. This is meant to be informal, with the idea being to share your learning with your classmates from other trips.

Faculty leaders

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Academic Integrity

*Academic Honor Code*

We, the Smeal College of Business Community, aspire to the highest ethical standards and will hold each other accountable to them. We will not engage in any action that is improper or that creates the appearance of impropriety in our academic lives, and we intend to hold to this standard in our future careers.

Written assignments must include the Smeal Academic Integrity Pledge: I, <Student Name>, affirm that I have neither given, utilized, received, nor witnessed unauthorized aid on this deliverable and have completed this work honestly and according to the professor's guidelines.