

**Writing Assignment title:** Study Abroad Writing Assignment

**Writing Assignment's author:** Jeanne Hey (with Lisa Suter)

**Summary:** In part one of this two-part assignment, students write an essay assessing their study-abroad goals and needs; afterwards, they meet with their study-abroad advisor. In part two, students research study-abroad programs that could fulfill these chosen goals, weigh the possibilities, and choose the program that suits them best.

**Objectives:**

1. Connections: Students will begin to see the connections between world events and the multiple contexts that inform them, and learn that these seemingly disparate factors are always already interconnected and in flux.
2. Living in the world: Students develop knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to live effectively in a world possessing limited natural resources and characterized by ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism and increasing interdependence.
3. Diversity: Students should gain an awareness of international diversity and learn to think about what the world, or specific issues, might look like from other points of view.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Students articulate their reasons for wanting to study abroad.
- Students identify potential obstacles they would need to overcome before undertaking specific study-abroad possibilities.
- Students calculate when they might study abroad, given the needs of their program.
- Students conduct research to determine which three (3) study-abroad programs might meet their needs (including the requirements of their major).

**Materials Required:** Assignment handout (below).

**Assignment Activities:**

1. Pass out assignment handout and go over it in class.

**Comments:** At Miami University, all ITS majors are required to study abroad, and ITS minors are strongly encouraged to do so. The university has a superb study abroad office to assist students in this endeavor, and there is a wide range of financial aid programs to ensure every student will have some opportunity to study abroad. This project is designed to help students carefully pre-plan so as to get the most out of their study abroad experience.

However, this assignment is not only for majors. Non-majors often find this exercise exciting by getting them to think about study abroad as a serious option, making them explore the possibilities available to them and the learning possibilities.

## Study Abroad Writing Assignment

All students should give serious thought to the possibility of studying abroad before graduation. Ideally, each student will study for at least a semester in a foreign country in which a language other than English is spoken but many other options are available. This assignment is designed to start your planning for the study abroad experience that best meets your needs and challenges you in a meaningful way.

The paper is divided into two parts. In Part I, write a narrative in which you discuss and analyze your study abroad aspirations, needs, and challenges. This section should answer the following questions:

- 1) What do you want to achieve from a study abroad experience? *Give specific goals* (e.g., personal goals, academic goals, particular level of language ability, make friends in another culture, travel, learn about a particular subject, live away from home).
  - a. Be very specific, creative and exhaustive in this section
- 2) What obstacles do you face in studying abroad (e.g., financial, curricular, personal, housing, language ability)? You should do some research about your major's requirements to answer this question fully.
- 3) What timing makes sense for you (both when you would go and for how long)?

Part I is due: \_\_\_\_\_

Part II should be completed *after* you have written Part I and handed it in. Make an appointment with a university study abroad advisor. Give her a copy of your part I at least two days *before* your meeting. After your meeting and your own research in the study abroad library, report your findings on *three* study abroad options that make the most sense for you. At least one option should be a challenge in the sense that it meets your goals outlined in part I, but would demand a lot of preparation, adaptation, language work, courage or other skills on your part. For each study abroad option, report on the following:

- 1) Details of the country, study environment, housing environment, cost, prerequisites, timing, and any other informational material.
- 2) How well does this option meet your goals?
- 3) What does this option offer that perhaps you hadn't considered before?
- 4) Where does this option fall short of what you're looking for?
- 5) How would you have to prepare for this option?
- 6) What obstacles might keep you from pursuing this option?

After writing up the three options, write a short conclusion that summarizes your thinking and plans about study abroad in your own future.

Part II is due: \_\_\_\_\_

Your paper should be presented in the following format:

- 1) A title page that provides the title of the paper, your name, the course number, the date, and the professor's name.
- 2) Up to 5 pages of text for Part I, and up to 6 pages of text for Part II.
- 3) A separate page for a bibliography for additional sources.
- 4) Properly cite all sources in the text where appropriate.
- 5) Number the pages.
- 6) Edit your paper. Make sure it is free of spelling, mechanical and grammatical errors. The argument and information should be presented in paragraphs that logically connect.
- 7) The paper must be typed with reasonable margins and double spacing.
- 8) Staple your paper in the upper left-hand corner.
- 9) Do not hand in folders, plastic covers or paper clips.

In grading these papers, I will look for clear and skillful writing, exhaustive analysis and critical self-reflection. I will especially look for intelligent choices in your three study abroad options. If it is clear that you have simply picked out three easy or random choices, your grade will suffer. Be sure to marry your goals to your choices.