



The Challenges and Lessons Learned in Establishing a Travel Course

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The Challenges and Lessons Learned in Establishing a Travel Course

Abstract: A travel course takes a significant amount of effort in its planning and execution. The logistics are even more challenging when a travel course is introduced for the first time. In the Engineering and Technology department at Western Carolina University (WCU), a faculty-led travel course has never been taught. The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) offered an inaugural grant opportunity, especially for a travel course in STEM. In response to that, a proposal was submitted after discussions among colleagues and administrators. Although the grant proposal was not funded, the CIEE offered a large discount for the program and the CIEE program manager worked tirelessly to accommodate the requests to revise the program. When the initial abstract of this paper was submitted in January 2016, nine student applications had been received, for travel in May 2016. Unfortunately the class was cancelled after two students withdrew reducing the numbers below the required enrollment and budget limits. However, throughout the development of this course, many successful partnerships were fostered. The collaborating parties included: students, departmental colleagues, administration (the Department Head, Dean, and Associate Dean), the International Service Office, colleagues in other departments, the CIEE Program Manager, WCU's Development Officer, and a private donor. It is no small feat for a travel course to be jumpstarted from scratch, and partnerships are the key for successful implementation. Although our travel course was unsuccessful at meeting the final objective, we gained valuable knowledge from the process. The current paper addresses several factors in establishing a new travel course, such as assessing a fair number of credit hours for a relatively short duration, developing an appropriate budget, and incorporating project-based learning into a short time table. Furthermore, the current paper shares some guidelines that may be helpful in establishing a new travel course, such as using survey tools to understand student needs, making infographics to advertise the course, and encouraging the students to talk to their friends and classmates about the course. These tools have been effective but need to be used carefully to avoid misleading the intended audience. The many lessons that have been learned during the development of this course will also be shared in this paper.

Background

The 2015-2016 academic year is the third year the first author has been employed as a tenure-track assistant professor in the Department of Engineering and Technology at Western Carolina University (WCU). The first author was not born in the United States (US) and has gained a great appreciation for studying abroad from her personal study abroad experiences in Japan and the U.S. This appreciation and passion led the authors to engage in the development of the department's first international travel course for credit. During the information collection stage, the authors investigated the causes for the historical absence of study abroad opportunities in the department, determined if the department would support efforts to develop an international travel course, and understood the process for beginning such an endeavor.

Encouraged by the inaugural Generation Access Grant opportunity offered by the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), a non-profit organization founded in 1947, the authors worked with CIEE to develop a course proposal and grant application. The custom program was shaped to be a faculty-led two-week travel course in Berlin, Germany. The course was scheduled for May 2016, with a focus on Project-Based Learning (PBL) and cultural influences on engineering practices. For the grant application, the authors prepared a proposal as well as a travel itinerary (with the CIEE program manager's help) and a course syllabus, although the last two items were not required for the grant submission. Despite presenting a strong case, the authors were not awarded the grant. The initial response to this decision was to end all efforts and pursue other grant opportunities in the future. However, a week later, the CIEE program manager offered a large per student discount (worth about half of the grant that we applied for), because of the strong efforts and close collaborative work with the CIEE to develop this faculty-led custom program. Although the discount was still less than the grant, it was substantial. Thus we decided to move forward with the travel course proposal. There have been many revisions and refinements of the course plan, involving many people as outlined below in six modules.

The first module in collaboration is with colleagues in the department. Collaboration with colleagues is a fundamental step to identify the pros and cons of such a travel course. When the authors discussed the grant application with a few colleagues, the initial response was that the course might not fit into the already overburdened curriculum in our engineering and technology programs. However, after further discussions regarding the PBL core of our curriculum, it was agreed that exposure to global issues was essential for our students, and this travel course would greatly strengthen our potential for meeting the student learning outcomes of the PBL sequence. Furthermore, some programs in our department incorporate technical electives in their curricula, and this travel course could be used for this purpose. The four program directors in the host department expressed support in welcoming such a travel course into their programs' curricula.

The second module in collaboration is with CIEE, or any third party that one may collaborate. While developing the CIEE grant proposal, the authors discussed with the CIEE program manager extensively via phone-calls and email, and many activities were requested that were well aligned with the course syllabus. The offices of CIEE are spread around the world. Therefore, the CIEE program manager was able to work closely with their Berlin site to provide the required information and connections to enable the creation of the custom program. In working closely with the CIEE, we were able to secure a portion of the initially requested funds.

The third module is collaboration with students. The reason for offering a travel course was not just for the sake of offering course credits, but for our students who are earnest in gaining a study-abroad experience. A Qualtrics[®] email survey was distributed in early September 2015 to all undergraduate Engineering and Engineering Technology students. The results clearly conveyed a student passion for a travel course. The response

served as a validation of the efforts to create such a travel course. Nevertheless, a survey response indicating a student's willingness did not always mean that the student would actually register for such a course. This can be due to various concerns, which are discussed later in this paper. Of the prospective students who indicated a desire to participate in this travel course, one student stood out, and was very eager to go on the trip. This student not only talked to her friends, but also accompanied instructors to visit classes to promote this travel course. This student shared her past experiences from studying abroad, and explained how the students could apply for financial aid, etc. Some of the student's friends also applied for the travel course, and this student's help was instrumental in making progress toward the full development of the travel course.

The fourth module in collaboration is with colleagues on campus who have led summer travel courses. Although there has never been a travel course offering in the department, there have been quite a few travel courses offered at the university. The authors took advantage of the on-campus international fair, an international program workshop, and close contacts to get in touch with several faculty members who have led summer travel courses. Those faculty members were passionate about their efforts to lead travel courses and were open and willing to share their experience. There were several common traits discovered about each of these faculty:

- To keep the costs down, many faculty do not request stipends for course development and delivery, despite that fact that the time and efforts dedicated to preparing such a course is greater than all their other courses combined.
- Due to the timing of the travel course, these faculty members often miss family events that happen at the same time as the travel. In spite of such sacrifices, these faculty members choose to participate for their students.
- These faculty members are very diligent to ensure student safety. Some of them are very thoughtful and even send letters to the parents of student participants explaining the travel process and expectations.
- These faculty members are proactive and flexible to include the most exciting and relevant events into their programs. For instance, the itinerary of some travel courses depends on current or emerging events during the travel, which cannot be pre-planned. Hence, those faculty members need to always be alert for such uncertainties, and the students trust them to have their best interests at heart.

Common to all faculty members interviewed was the sentiment that a travel course is far from a vacation for either faculty or students, and it involves a huge amount of preparation and execution. The 10 days or 2 weeks of travel, although seemingly short, is a convergence of all the hard work, and proves to be very intense.

The fifth module in collaboration is with administration, especially when a new travel course is offered. The collaboration with administration was occurring throughout the entire planning phase, to keep all the parties involved and updated. The first thing that the authors were grateful for is the WCU International Office Director distributing the CIEE grant opportunity to all faculty on campus. This grant especially encouraged STEM

majors to apply, so the authors were motivated to explore this possibility. More than providing the grant information, the director also provided detailed information on what resources were available on campus, introduced the authors to a faculty member who had led a travel course and was able to explain the procedure in proposing a travel course, and included the first author in a meeting with the CIEE manager when she visited the campus. The second item the authors were very grateful for is the consistent support of their Department Head, Associate Dean and Dean. Everyone was engaged in discussions about whether to continue the efforts or not, the number of credits for the course, recruitment strategies to attract more students, and other logistical items. All the administrators were extremely understanding and provided many good suggestions. For instance, when we ran into an under-budget situation where insufficient insurance was included in the original budget, our Department Head offered to pay for the difference beyond what we had mentioned to our students earlier.

The sixth module in collaboration is with donors. An experienced travel course leader might have ample experience to accurately estimate the travel costs, but a new instructor of a travel course may be not so good at it. That's what happened to us. When the authors conducted the student survey, we proposed a cost figure based on our knowledge then, but when all the required items were added into the budget, the final budget left no room for project materials. One way to make the budget work was to recruit more students so that the amount per student was reduced. However, the price of such a practice is that the students may lose the small-group environment and the workload of the faculty may exceed the level that makes the teaching effective. Therefore, we solicited donor sponsorship on project materials and T-shirts. In our college, there is a development officer who works closely with donors and she knows which board member would be likely to help our travel course. Through the development officer's connections, a donor gladly accepted our request for course materials and T-shirts. On the T-shirts, we would help advertise the donor's company, making their help more rewarding for them.

Given all the modules in collaboration, a successful launching of a travel course comes from not just a single module, but an integrated efforts of them all. All the modules in collaboration are intertwined, and they are fostered throughout the entire duration of the travel course's development and implementation.

To foster an effective collaboration, the key is to find out the trustworthy collaborators, trust them, learn from them, and appreciate them.

Through the collaborations with a wide-range of colleagues and friends, we discovered a colleague had previously drafted a travel course proposal, but the proposal was declined by the administration. That is why there had never been a travel course offered in our department before. The common concerns include:

1. Why is the travel course, of 10 to 15 days, worth 3 credit hours while an on-campus course of 3 credit hours takes 16 weeks to finish? (incidentally, a 3 week travel course is often worth 6 credit hours.)

2. How should the travel course be incorporated into the program curriculum?

3. In our case, the travel course is part of a Project Based Learning (PBL) course sequence. How feasible is it for the students to finish their projects in a relatively short time?

All of these concerns were valid and required answers before a travel course was offered.

To answer the first question, there are many lessons to be learned from the colleagues in other departments of the university who had led travel courses ¹. The common practices to include travel in a course are mainly in two categories: a travel component course and an independent travel course. An example of a travel component course is a course that can be offered in the spring semester with clear indication that it involves a travel component in the summer. The instructors will assign student grades as incomplete at the end of the spring semester and assign the grades after travel. The advantage of such a course is that the students will have taken a course on campus, and they get to know each other as a cohort before traveling together. So the extra component of travel is not regarded as unworthy of credit hours, as there is no added credits due to travel. However, at WCU, this practice is not allowed, because it is not allowed to assign an incomplete to an entire class section. However when a travel component is scheduled within a semester, such as in the fall break or spring break, then it is allowed. Some courses are designed in this manner. In the department, there is no flexibility to quickly create a dedicated semester long course with a travel component, and this option is not presently available. On the other hand, an independent travel course is a stand-alone course that lasts for 10 days, two weeks or three weeks, with possibly different numbers of credit hours. A common number of credit hours is 3 but has been as high as 6. Sometimes two courses have been offered on the same trip so that the entire trip is worth 6 credit hours, with each course accounting for 3 credit hours. The justification behind these hours is the amount of hard work that the students undertake, the extent of learning that they gain through travel but not by other means, and the course design that helps the students to achieve the learning outcomes in the course syllabus effectively. Typically, a 3 credit course is offered in a 16-week semester, but some universities may offer it in 10-week quarters. A travel course of 10 days or 2 weeks is another point on the spectrum to compress the learning time, by intensifying the learning through direct experiences, with the same or even more contact hours. In reflection when we have experiences that if we were to learn about something we have never seen or experienced, it takes lengthy descriptions, illustrations, metaphors, and analogies, and yet we may still not gain a thorough understanding. However, by seeing or experiencing the objects or events, we immediately discern their characteristics and they form a long-lasting impression in our memory, often with associated emotional responses, as well. Thus, the goal of taking a travel course is to facilitate learning through first-hand experiences.

To answer the second question, we needed to talk to our program directors. Better yet, this included all of the colleagues in the discussion. The department offers two engineering programs and two technology programs, each with mechanical or electrical concentrations.

PBL is implemented across all four undergraduate programs. PBL has been a hallmark of our curriculum, exposing students to different disciplines and fostering inter-disciplinary collaboration. In formal terms an ABET EAC accreditation criteria ² for an engineering program is

“h. The broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global, economic, environmental, and societal context”.

An ABET ETAC accreditation criterion for an engineering technology program is

“j. A knowledge of the impact of engineering technology solutions in a societal and global context”.

Although there is no plan to include the first travel course for assessment in the self-study for ABET accreditation, eventually the assessment plan will need to consider the learning outcomes that may be used in the future. Three out of the four programs include technical electives in their curricula, and this travel course can be a technical elective. The other program does not include a technical elective in its existing curriculum, so this travel course does not count as a major course, but can still count towards the total credits for graduation.

To answer the third question, it was agreed that the travel course should be an elective in the PBL course sequence, and a project would be an essential component. The PBL course sequence ranges from freshman seminar to senior capstone projects, and gradually deepens the students' knowledge to carry out practical projects, and prepares our students to succeed in their capstone projects as well as engineering jobs in industry after graduation. This travel course aims at incorporating the global perspective while allowing each student to work on a team project that is appropriate for their expertise and level. Students are welcomed from all four programs, and their friends in STEM majors or in entrepreneurship majors, at all undergraduate levels to enroll in this travel course. Hence, we have a diversity of expertise and experience levels, which can be both challenging and effective in the teaming.

Team-work and collaboration are key to ensure success in such a course. If this travel course were to happen, students would be encouraged to propose a project they are passionate about. The original plan was to have students find and buy the components they may need for the project in Berlin during our stay so that they would immediately learn about different standards, units, and cultural influences on engineering designs. A classroom would have been reserved with a workshop with tools in a nearby university, so that the students would have the resources to construct prototypes of their projects. At the end of the class, they would present their prototypes to their peers and submit final reports to summarize what they had learned through this process. The prototyping cycle would be intense, but not uncommon in a real world situation. The course would also teach the students how to compose their resumes and how to present themselves in job interviews, especially about their travel experiences.

Another big hurdle to offer such a travel course is the expense. At WCU, there is a scholarship dedicated to study abroad programs, but to be eligible for the scholarship, the students need to take another 3 credit hours during the same summer term. Financial aid in summer also requires the students to take 6 credit hours. Therefore, for the students who plan to apply for financial aid, they are strongly recommended to apply for the scholarship, and apply for it early to increase their chance of success. Apparently some

students in other programs did their internships in Europe right after their travel course, so the students were encouraged to apply for internships in Europe that would start immediately after this travel course, enriching their travel experiences.

Another common concern of the students on the travel course is the fear of unknowns. We had planned to meet regularly before the travel for students and faculty leaders to meet and get acquainted, explain the activities they would participate in during the travel, and answer any questions the students may have. Working with CIEE and having experienced on-site support staff would bring us peace of mind, too.

As the PBL capstone projects are typically funded by industry partners through a center liaison between our college and industries, the travel course should help foster any possible sponsorship of such a capstone project from the site visit hosts. It would be especially beneficial if the projects in this travel course could be a starting point for much more extensive capstone projects later on.

Several useful practices were identified that were effective gauging student interests. However, these should not be the only measure to estimate interest.

1. **Email survey by Qualtrics.** Qualtrics is a survey service sponsored by our university and offers many features to streamline data collection through surveys. We used it twice to reach out to all of our students. The first time was in September 2015 when we were originally planning a travel course and asking ourselves whether we should submit the course proposal to the upper administration or not. We asked the students two questions: (1) if there were no constraints, whether they'd like to join, (2) considering the price range and timing, whether they expect themselves to be able to join. Quite a few students responded yes to the first question but no to the second question. Thus we knew that we should find ways to support our students more. There were also 30+ affirmative answers to the second question, reflecting a strong interest in this travel course from our students, which motivated us to move the idea forward. So we submitted the course proposal. Despite the 30+ affirmative answers to the second question, when our course was officially approved and we could accept course applications in November, many of the students who said yes earlier didn't follow up with an application. Later when the idea of a spring/fall break course was considered, we worked closely with CIEE to develop an adapted program. We sent out the second email survey with a comparison of the two options (a summer course versus a spring break course). We asked the students to tell us their choices as soon as possible. In spite of our impression and expectation that the spring break course would fill up in no time, there wasn't much interest in the spring break option. Instead, the students who had committed to the summer course still preferred the summer option. However, we were very glad that we had sent out the second email to all the students, because some students who gave affirmative responses to the second email had not responded to the first email. If we were to only contact the small pool of students who responded to the first

email positively, we would have missed out on those students who responded affirmatively to the second email survey but did not respond to the first email.

2. **Talk to classes in person.** After our first email Qualtrics survey revealed that the majority of the interests, most were from junior and sophomore students, we identified several major core courses at those levels and visited their classes. Many classes took great interest in it, although not all students were responsive due to concerns of costs and timing. In the several classes we visited earlier, we always talked in a mode to promote this course, and some students responded with some resistance. Then in a later class, a colleague helped us to ask his class why the students still had not registered for this travel course yet. This turned out to be a salient question, as most students immediately opened up and shared their concerns on the costs and timing. A few students asked for spring/fall break travel courses as they wanted to do internships during summer more than taking a travel course. The real-time interactions helped us understand our students' needs. However, later when we proposed a spring break course option and compared it with the summer course that had been approved earlier, no students actually signed up for the spring break option. This made us wonder if some students didn't want to sign up, they would give some reasons or excuses. Even if we did what they asked for, they might still have other reasons to show that we couldn't satisfy their needs. However, this exercise had really benefited our decision process as the students who were committed to the summer course still preferred the summer course, and we knew that we made the right choice for our students in the first place. Also, the exercise we did for a spring/fall break travel course could be useful for later planning, too.
3. **Create infographics and post flyers in the hallways.** An infographic is a graphical representation of information that is more enticing for students to read than pure text. We can embed hyperlinks easily in the infographic. We used piktochart.com to create infographics about the course, and the full version contains multiple pages (see Appendix 1). Then we created a one-page flyer for each infographic to include a QR code link to the full version of the infographic and provide a tinyurl link that the students can rip away (see Appendix 2). The infographic web link can be represented as slideshows on computers, tablets and cellphones. The first infographic was about the details of the summer course, and the second infographic was about the comparison of the spring break option and the summer option, as well as FAQ on questions that we had received by then. Besides the one-page flyers that we posted at almost every turn of the stairways in our building, we had also printed the full version of infographic pages and taped them at two entrances of our building, so our students would definitely see them. Maybe not all students would read them carefully, but a student told us that he did go through all the infographic pages and he had found all the answers he would like to know.
4. **Let the students talk to their friends.** We are lucky to have a student who is an avid traveler. She has accompanied us to promote this course to some classes, and

she has also talked to her friends and classmates to encourage them to sign up this course. The persuasion from a friend is very effective.

The biggest lesson we have learned in student recruitment is that we should recruit early. We started the discussions of a travel course in September 2015, but since we were not experienced in budgeting, we overestimated the student enrollment number and underestimated the budget, so we had to request departmental and donor support to make the budget feasible. Also, because the support came from our department or alumni, we hoped our own students would benefit from them, so we focused our recruitment only within our department. When we realized our recruitment goal was too high in December 2015, we reached out to other STEM and business majors. One of the student applicants was a friend of our own student and from another department. However, since our recruitment goal was too high, we needed to work with CIEE to reduce some activities to make the budget to work, the student from another department did not feel like the trip was worth the money any more, despite the fact that our program had a \$1000 discount per student and we had donor support for course materials. In comparison, our own students were very understanding and flexible, as they understood the efforts we put into creating this travel course for the first time. After the student from the other department withdrew, we could not make our budget work, so we had to cancel the class. If we had started recruiting earlier, we could have established better relationship with all the student applicants, and we could have had the time to recruit more students.

Summary

This paper presented a case study for setting up collaborations in multiple modules in order to create a travel course. These include collaborations within the department (with both faculty and students), across campus, with a third-party provider and their connections abroad, and with local industry donors. The authors would also like to acknowledge the influence of the governmental incentive, because the CIEE grant was in response to the President's strategic plan initiative on study abroad programs³ and the Generation Study Abroad Initiative^{4,5}.

We received nine student applications in total but two had to withdraw. Therefore, we could not get this course off the ground this year. However, if we did not overestimate the student enrollment number and underestimate the budget, a travel course with seven students could have been feasible.

The experiences and lessons learned during this process were very helpful for us and will allow us to do a better job in the future. We hope that this paper will inspire other institutions that have never offered a travel course before to give it a try, to benefit from the lessons that we have learned, and to provide the students a safe, educational, and exceptional faculty-led study-abroad experience.

References

1. LaVelle H. Mills, David Deviney, and Betsy Ball, "Short-Term Study Abroad Programs: A Diversity of Options", The Journal of Human Resource and Adult Learning, Vol. 6, Num. 2, December 2010
2. ABET EAC criterion: <http://www.abet.org/accreditation/accreditation-criteria/>
3. President Obama's 100,000 Strong Educational Exchange Initiatives, including 100,000 Strong China launched in 2009, and 100,000 Strong in the Americas launched in 2011: <http://www.state.gov/100k/index.htm>
4. The Generation Study Abroad Initiative: <http://www.iie.org/en/Programs/Generation-Study-Abroad/About>
5. CIEE's pledge to the Generation Study Abroad Initiative: https://www.ciee.org/generation-study-abroad/downloads/CIEE_Pledge.pdf

Appendix 1: A one-page flyer used in Dec 2015

On the next page.

Appendix 2: An infographic website with introduction of this travel course and our answers to students' questions.

The link is below:

https://magic.piktochart.com/output/8591453-engr493_berlin_2016

The print-out is attached after the next page in the last part of this paper.

Engineering Abroad @ Berlin, Germany 3 credits

May, 14-29, 2016

ENGR493 - Special Topics: Engineering
Principles and Practices in a Global Setting



Instructors

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Do you like building things & traveling? Then join us!

All ET, CM, Business/Entrepreneurship, CS,
STEM majors are welcome!

- 3 Credit Hours
- 10 students on the trip (8 seats filled so far). Act fast!
- 14 nights in Germany (WWII Bunker tour, BMW plant tour, VW plant tour, etc), 4 site visits, 4 guest speakers, 1 one-day trip to Dresden, 1 overnight excursion to Hamburg, cultural events, 1 free day, and 8 days of classroom/workshop usage
- \$3583 paid to OneStop (covering programs, lodging, breakfasts, two dinners, a transportation card with unlimited usage during your stay, insurance)
- Flight tickets (est. ~\$1200) and meals (lunches and other dinners, est. ~\$300) are on your own. In other words, you can use your frequent flier miles, if any, and you won't get stuck on a meal plan that you don't like.

Course info: <http://tinyurl.com/nfgrype>

Application Form: <http://tinyurl.com/ofk4nbo>

Email us for more info, and submit your application by Jan 15, 2016!

ENGR493, Berlin, 2016
Slide Show, PRESENT:
<http://tinyurl.com/nfgrype>
Application form:
<http://tinyurl.com/ofk4nbo>

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Engineering Abroad @ Berlin, Germany 3 credits

May, 14-29, 2016

ENGR493 - Special Topics: Engineering
Principles and Practices in a Global Setting



Instructors

YanJun Yan Paul Yanik
yyan@wcu.edu pyanik@wcu.edu

[Link to course application form](#)

- already prefilled with course info
- download it to fill in pdf and then print it out
- sign it with a pen (electronic signatures are not accepted)
- submit it to Belk 334 or 338 in the first week of Spring 2016



Act fast if you want to join!

COURSE DESCRIPTION



This is an international experiential course undertaking the study of engineering practices and principles, teaming, project planning, and conceptual design processes.

The 3 credits earned in this course may be applied to E&T technical elective degree requirements. Please talk to your advisor regarding your specific degree evaluation.

Construction management, CS, business/entrepreneurship, and STEM majors are all very welcome.

OBJECTIVE



Research Skills



Writing Skills



Critical Thinking



Teamworking Skills



Communications



Global Perspective

TOPICS



- 1 Project management
- 2 Project requirements and constraints
- 3 Project planning
- 4 Project implementation

- 5 Process metrics and quality
- 6 Effective communication
- 7 Project demonstration and presentations
- 8 Cultural impact on engineering practices

WHY JOIN?



See and
experience



Boost your
resume



Broaden your
horizons



This is the 1st
travel course in
our E & T Dept



Exposure to
cutting-edge
technologies



Opportunities
yet to be
revealed

This trip needs 10 students to happen. Act fast if you want to join.

Well, we understand that this travel course requires a big commitment financially and in other aspects. We will try our best to offer travel courses in the future to different destinations. If you can not make it this time, you are welcome to join later.

ESTIMATED COSTS

Pay to OneStop (include program, lodging)	\$3583
Flight ticket	\$1200
Meals	\$300
	\$5083

Blessing 1: The price above has already included a \$1000 per person discount offered by CIEE, which is rare. A travel course is expensive, but given our extensive program activities, our course really is a great deal.

Blessing 2: The E & T Department Head has kindly offered to pay for the OneStop payment difference beyond \$3500, up to \$83, as reimbursement.

Blessing 3: The fee for project materials is NOT charged to the students. Instead, we asked for donor support, and a generous donor has kindly agreed.

Other expenses depend on you:



The flight ticket is estimated to be \$1200 (check StudentUniverse.com). We will share info in the travel group and/or buy together to save.



The breakfast, as well as the welcome dinner and the farewell dinner, are included. You need to buy/cook your own lunches and other dinners.



The Berlin airport pick-up/drop-off is included as a group (not individually). You will be given a Metro card to have unlimited usage of public transportation.



E-passport waives the visa.



In collaboration with CIEE:

Lodging
 Transportation
 Event arrangement

[Link to CIEE](#)

DAILY ITINERARY IN BERLIN ★

5/14/16 Sat	Leave USA	In flight
5/15/16 Sun	Check in. Welcome dinner	Berlin
5/16/16 Mon	City tour. Orientation	Berlin
5/17/16 Tue	Site visit 1 (TU of Berlin). Guest lecture 1 (ABO Wind)	Berlin
5/18/16 Wed	Guest lecture 2 (Railway engineering)	Berlin
5/19/16 Thu	Site visit 2 (BMW plant tour)	Berlin
5/20/16 Fri	Field trip to Dresden (VW plant, Baroque Saxon tour)	Berlin
5/21/16 Sat	Site visit 3 (WWII Bunker tour). Community engagement	Berlin
5/22/16 Sun	Depart for Hamburg for an over-night excursion	Hamburg
5/23/16 Mon	Urban development visit. HafenCity REAP Group	Berlin
5/24/16 Tue	Site visit 4 (Berlin Adlershop tour)	Berlin
5/25/16 Wed	Guest lecture 3 (Telekom Innovation Labs)	Berlin
5/26/16 Thu	Guest lecture 4 (SCAITI)	Berlin
5/27/16 Fri	Class	Berlin
5/28/16 Sat	Free day. Farewell dinner	Berlin
5/29/16 Sun	Leave Berlin for USA. Arrive on the same day	Home

★ Subject to change, depending on actual reservations in spring 2016. The guest lectures might be different, but similar to above.

The schedule will include 8 days of classroom and workshop usage at a nearby university. The classroom time will primarily focus on project design and prototyping.

SIGN UP FOR THE TRAVEL COURSE

Jan 15, 2016

Interview with the instructors, submit application.
[Link to course application form](#)

Jan 15, 2016

If you wish, submit WCU Away Scholarship application (up to \$1500, for GPA \geq 2.75), which requires you to take another summer course from WCU, either on campus or online. Financial aid also requires you to take 6 credits in summer.
[Link to scholarship application form](#)

★ **Feb 15, 2016**

Pay \$500 nonrefundable deposit at OneStop. The travel group will regularly meet after Feb 15 (roughly once every two weeks).

★ **Apr 1, 2016**

Pay \$3083 at OneStop.

Apr 1, 2016

Buy your flight tickets. It is preferred, but not required, that the class travel together.

★ We have to follow the hard deadlines at OneStop. Because the \$500 deposit is nonrefundable, please first let us know that you are joining. We will confirm with all the prospective participants to make sure that all are sure to go, and then you go to pay for it.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

PREPARED

Be prepared, focused and ready to learn.

RESPONSIBLE

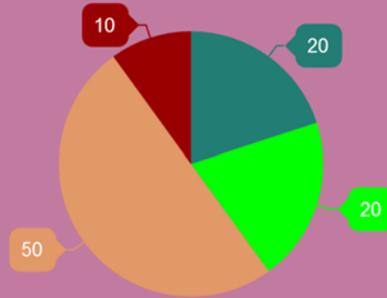
Be punctual.
Submit all assignments on time.
Actively participate in all activities.

PROACTIVE

Be open-minded, flexible, and adventurous. Share your thoughts and work as a team!

RESPECTFUL

Be respectful towards teachers and classmates.
Encourage one another and stay united as a team!



GRADING

Pre-trip Participation	20%
During-trip Participation	20%
During-trip Projects	50%
Final Report	10%

100% 

KEEP IN CONTACT



Belk 334, 338 @ WCU
CIEE G27 site,
Gneisenaustraße 27,
10961, Berlin @ Berlin



Check your
campus email



Go to all events
on time



TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

"As engineers, we value critical thinking, clarity, and intellectual honesty. We envision ourselves as facilitators who share the educational experience by maintaining an interactive learning environment to which everyone can contribute. We, working together, will make sure that this trip is safe, educational, and exceptional!"

Detailed course syllabus
[More info from next page](#)

Contact: Yanjun Yan
yyan@wcu.edu

Paul Yanik
pyanik@wcu.edu

FINANCIAL HELP

Financial Aid



Require 6 credit hours in summer



WCU Away Scholarship
[up to \$1500,
GPA >= 2.75]



Require another 3 credit hours course from WCU in summer

Department Head Promised Help



Reimburse up to \$83 difference [above \$3500]



Donor Support



Project materials

FOR YOUR DEGREE

Credit Hours



3 Credit Hours

No Tuition



For current WCU Students

In-Course Project



Designed to suit your expertise and level

This trip needs 10 students to happen, and we have got 10! We'd love to have more students to join. E&T students, construction management students, business/entrepreneurship, computer science, and other STEM major students, are all welcome.

This course is blessed by so many people's willingness to help financially and in other ways, and we are looking forward to your joining us!

PROGRAMS

Double or Triple
Hostel Stay



Meininger Hotel in
Mitte, or alike, easy
access to bus



Airport Transport



Group, not
individually

Prepaid Transit Card
to Use Buses



On-site Orientation



Welcome Dinner



Breakfast



Farewell Dinner



City Tour



BMW Plant Tour



WWII Bunker Tour



Berlin Adlershof Tour



PROGRAMS, Continued

Day field trip to Dresden
[Volkswagen Plant, Baroque
Saxon Walking Tour]



Neighborhood University
Classroom and Workshop



Project Manager [PM]
Talk by ABO Wind



PM Talk by
Bombardier
Transportation



Quality & Usability
Talk by Telekom
Innovation Labs



Quality Assurance
Talk by DCAITI



TU-Berlin Tour



Two-day Overnight
Excursion to Hamburg



Program Assistant
from CIEE



iNext Travel
Insurance, Health
Insurance, Trip
Cancellation Insurance





Q1: I want to do internship in summer. What should I do?

A1: Employers often value studying abroad experiences, and if they like you, they would work with you to allow you to start your internship from June, for example. Or, find an internship in Europe and go to that internship right after this travel course! If nothing above works, I am sorry that you can not join this Maymester trip. Instead, let us know what time in the year you prefer to take a travel course, and we will consider it in the future.

Q2: How much financial aid can I get?

A2: Every student's situation is different. Please make an appointment at OneStop (Killian Annex) to talk to Ms. Jennifer Thomas about it. The financial aid won't be approved until mid-spring for the Maymester trip, but at least you will know how much you can expect to take out.

Q3: Am I qualified for the WCU Away Scholarship?

A3: Below is the answer from the lady who's in charge of it.

- GPA is 2.75 or above.
- There are a limited number of scholarships so applying early is important.
- The scholarship is actually a reimbursement process. Students have to make their purchase of plane tickets or hotel accommodations in advance and can receive up to \$1500 (based on their expenses) after they've completed their summer courses.
- All receipts turned in by the students must have their name on the receipt. The funds do not cover items such as food, clothing, class materials.
- The additional course does not need to be linked to the travel course in some way but the student does need to enroll in a summer WCU course. WCU Away funds are only available to undergraduate students.

Q4: Can I get back the full amount of \$1500 Scholarship?

A4: The scholarship applies to lodging and plane tickets, but not food. The official response we got on 12/14/15 is that "Students who apply for WCU Away funding can only be reimbursed if they pay for their travel expenses on their own. That is to say not via One Stop or a third party booking agency. Each student would need to submit receipts with their name on it in order for us to reimburse them. I know this makes use of WCU Away funds difficult for some trips but we have to operate under state regulations."

We have made a request to CIEE to see whether we can separate lodging from the program fee so that you pay for the lodging directly yourself, but not through OneStop. However, it is not determined yet.

Q5: Can my friend from another department or another university take this course?

A5: Your friend is very welcome, as the friendship shared in a cohort could help you enjoy your studying abroad experience immensely. Please be aware of the rules below:

If your friend is a student at WCU, s/he follows exactly the same financial rule as you (no tuition and possibly s/he can apply for financial aid). This course may not help with his/her major credits, but should count towards the total credits for graduation.

If your friend is from another university, s/he has to apply to be a visiting student at WCU (\$75 application fee with filled forms, etc), and s/he also has to pay for the tuition (depending on the credit hours) besides the travel costs.

We have got a special discount in the Maymester program from CIEE, and our course is blessed with the generous support from our department head and a donor, so we hope that you will take advantage of all these.

Q6: Where do I use the credit earned from this course?

A6: The Maymester course's 3 credits can be applied as technical elective for BSE, EE and ET, but not yet ECET. Still, whatever major you are in (CM, CS, BE, or STEM), this course' 3 credits count towards the total credits for graduation.

Q7: Can I choose to take this course with or without credit?

A7: Sorry, it is not a personal choice. A travel course is either with no credit for the entire class, or is with credit for the entire class. This course is with 3 credit hours. If you prefer a travel course without credit for a shorter time, let us know, and we will consider it in the future.

Q8: Can an international student take this course?

A8: Yes, absolutely. Please talk to WCU IPS to make sure that you can obtain the Schengen visa to visit Germany and the US visa to come back to campus. You should have your I-20 form signed by the IPS.

Q9: How many students will be on this trip?

A9: The CIEE proposal is based on 10-14 students or 15 students, and the price for 15 students is less.

Originally when we talked with CIEE, we aimed at recruiting 15 students in order to get a better rate (\$3585 to OneStop, otherwise it would be \$400 more per person). Our proposal was based on this rate, and we can not charge any more than our proposed price.

Later we got to know that many travel courses at WCU had about 4 students, 5 students, 7 students, or 10 students, so 15 students can be a bit of stretch. So we contacted CIEE again on the possibility to give us the same rate for 10 students, and they suggested two options:

(1) If we were to cut some of the programs, we would need to cut the Dresden day field trip and one or two talks, which were not desirable.

(2) If we would revise our lodging option from CIEE site to a hostel, we could manage it to work without altering any of our events. The hostel they had in mind is Meininger Hotel in Mitte, whose online photos actually look pretty neat. You can google them. If CIEE can't reserve this hostel, they will book something similar for us.

So we opted for the second option, and our recruitment goal is to have 10 students on this trip. Act fast if you want to join!

Tips on Saving Some Money

KEEP TRACK
OF YOUR
SPENDING



SHARE INFO ON
FLIGHT TICKETS



USE CREDIT CARD WITHOUT
FOREIGN TRANSACTION FEE

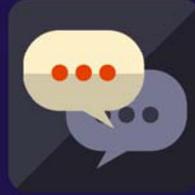
PREPARE SOME EUROS IN CASH



COOK SOME MEALS YOURSELF



COMMITTED ANSWERS



COMMENTS

Think about it over the winter break, and let us know whether you can join us, or what kind of travel course you like, in the first week of Spring 2016 semester!

Contact: Yanjun Yan
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Paul Yanik
Belk 338
pyanik@wcu.edu