

Syracuse University
Renée Crown University Honors Program

HONORS PROGRAM “OFF-CAMPUS COURSE SUBSTITUTION”

Successful completion of the following process allows students in the Renée Crown University Honors Program to use certain off-campus experiences (e.g. the Drama Department’s Tepper Semester in NYC; the Maxwell School’s IR/DC program in Washington, D.C.; the Bandier Program’s semester in Los Angeles, and others with permission) as a substitute for one HNR course or “other honors course.” Please direct questions to Hanna Richardson in the Honors office, either at hricha01@syr.edu or 443-2759. **Please be sure to proofread your journal and essays carefully; you will be asked to re-write any poorly written submissions, or those with typos or errors.**

I. Pre-Departure (This segment must be completed before you depart for your semester away, because it is intended to capture your pre-departure impressions. If you have not completed this step before leaving, we cannot accept the remaining materials.)

- A. First, request permission from Hanna Richardson in Honors (hricha01@syr.edu) to complete the Off-Campus Course Substitution.
- B. Well before you leave campus before your semester away, download this instruction packet.
- C. Complete the activities designed to prepare you to write your pre-departure essay.
- D. Write your pre-departure essay.
- E. Email, drop off, or mail items from C and D above to: Hanna Richardson, Honors Program, Syracuse University, 306 Bowne Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244-1200. Hanna’s e-mail address is hricha01@syr.edu. Be sure to include the following in your materials: your name, SUID, where you are studying for the semester, email address, phone number, and date of departure.

II. While Off Campus

- A. Keep a journal recording and reflecting on the experience of being away from campus, as outlined on page 5 of the packet. **For full semester programs, make at least one entry each week. For summer or other shorter programs, make at least two entries each week.**
- B. Write three “critical incident” essays, as outlined on page 5 of the packet.
- C. When your journal and essays are done, send them electronically to Hanna Richardson in the Honors Program, at hricha01@syr.edu.

III. Re-Entry

- A. Shortly after you return, write your re-entry essay as outlined on page 6 of the packet.
- B. Send it electronically to Hanna Richardson at hricha01@syr.edu.

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STEP I: Pre-Departure Essay

- A. Preparation for writing your Pre-Departure Essay
1. Fill out the worksheet **Getting Ready for your Semester Off Campus** on page 3.
 2. Read and reflect on the **Sojourn Action Plan** material on page 4.
- B. Writing your Pre-Departure Essay
1. Share your personal, academic, and professional goals for your off-campus semester.
 2. What challenges do you anticipate you may encounter? How are you preparing yourself for a successful semester away? How has your academic background prepared you for this real-world professional experience?
 3. Refer to the **Sojourn Action Plan** material. Describe your plans to prepare for your semester away, taking into consideration the four dimensions: Emotional Resilience; Flexibility/Openness; Perceptual Acuity; and Personal Autonomy. Reflect on your particular strengths, and give some thought to areas that might provide challenges for you. What new stresses do you anticipate, and how will you respond to them?
 4. Be sure to include the following in your materials: your name, SUID, country you are studying in, email address, phone number, and date of departure.
- C. Prior to leaving for your semester off campus, send copies of all of your materials to Hanna Richardson, Honors Program, 306 Bowne Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244-1200. You can contact Hanna at hricha01@syr.edu or by calling 315-443-2759.

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STEP 1 Pre-Departure: Getting Ready for Your Semester Off Campus

1. What are your personal, academic, and professional goals for the semester? Why are you going?
2. How do you think it will be different from spending a semester in Syracuse?
3. What written or other materials have you been provided by the sponsoring program to prepare yourself for the semester? What materials have you used that you found yourself?
4. Your semester away will involve not only a change of location, but also a significant change in focus from the classroom to a more hands-on application of things you have been learning. After reflecting on this new focus, share your thoughts about what benefits and/or challenges that may bring.

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STEP 1 PRE-DEPARTURE: SOJOURN ACTION PLAN

While the following materials were originally developed for use by students studying abroad in a new culture, they also have relevance for those entering into any new situation.

Each of us has a different capacity to adapt to new situations. In fact, we may be able to adapt fairly easily in some ways yet find barriers in other ways. For example, you may find that while you learn easily in a well-focused classroom or studio, applying your skills and knowledge in a fluid, real-world setting poses unanticipated challenges. **In order to increase your skill at adapting to new situations, it is important to take appropriate actions. It is always possible to improve your ability to adapt.**

To help your semester away be a process of growth, Dr. Colleen Kelley and Dr. Judith Meyers have articulated four dimensions that can help you understand some of the difficulties and rewards you will face during your time off campus. In some of the dimensions you will be stronger than in others. Your goal will be to understand your strengths and to work on your weaknesses. These dimensions are:

PERSONAL AUTONOMY: someone who has a clear personal value system and a strong sense of identity, and who is self-directed and self-respecting.

EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE: someone who is able to bounce back and who has emotional equilibrium, a positive attitude, and a sense of adventure.

FLEXIBILITY/OPENNESS: someone who lacks rigidity, is nonjudgmental, likes people, and enjoys diversity.

PERCEPTUAL ACUITY: someone who is attentive to verbal/non-verbal cues, aware of communication dynamics, and empathic.

Your reactions while away will reflect your strengths and weaknesses along these dimensions.

Adapted from [The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory Action-Planning Guide](#), Dr. Colleen Kelley and Dr. Judith Meyers.

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STEP II: While Off Campus: Journal and Essays

A. **Journal.** Keep a journal with entries that describe and reflect upon the experience of being away from campus. **For full semester programs make at least one entry each week. For summer or other shorter programs, make at least two entries each week.** It’s easier to submit your journal if you keep it electronically.

B. **Critical Incident Essays.** Write three essays (one early in the semester, another at midterm, and a third towards the end or after you return). Each essay should focus upon an incident, event, or encounter that was noteworthy in either a positive, negative, or surprising way. Each essay should be focused and precise, and no longer than three pages long.

Organize your remarks in the following order:

1. Report on a task you were given to, or something that happened. What was the setting? Who took part? What was the significance? What role did you play?
2. How did you draw upon your academic/professional training to approach the task or incident? What’s relevant in that training; what isn’t? What challenges does it present that classroom or studio work does not?
3. Do you think about the task or incident differently than you would a classroom or studio assignment? In what ways? In other words, do you “think differently” in this “real-world” setting than you do in an academic setting?
4. What did you learn from this exercise? Do you see any way you can employ your insights in other situations?

C. **Please be sure to proofread your journal and essays carefully; you will be asked to re-write any poorly written submissions, or those with typos or errors.** When your journal and essays are done, send them electronically to Hanna Richardson in the Honors Program at hricha01@syr.edu.

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STEP III: Re-Entry Essay

A. Write an essay of at least 300 words reflecting on your experiences away. Write (1) about your experiences and thoughts while off campus, (2) about your experiences and thoughts upon returning, and (3) on how your academic or and life plans may have changed or been re-confirmed.

Think back on the goals, expectations, fears or concerns you had before going off campus and use the following questions as thought provokers.

While you were off campus:

1. What were the 3-5 easiest/most difficult things? Why?
2. What did you enjoy the most about your off-campus situation?
3. What were your worst and best moments? Why?
4. What could you never adjust to? Why?
5. Who were your friends? Your support?
6. Were there any incidents or situations that puzzled you? How were you able to understand, solve or accept these situations?

After you return home:

7. Do you think you have changed, a little, a lot, why?
8. How do you feel about these changes?
9. What personal skills have you developed from having been off campus?
10. What are your career goals?
11. What are the ways in which you will integrate your off-campus experience into your future plans?
12. What intellectual and/or professional windows will this experience open for you?
13. How will you approach your classroom differently when you return to campus, given your experience this semester? That is: will you seek to learn in different ways in the semesters ahead, given what you experienced during your time off campus?

B. Send your Re-Entry Essay electronically to Hanna Richardson at hricha01@syr.edu.