

HONORS PROGRAM “STUDY ABROAD COURSE SUBSTITUTION”

Successful completion of the following process allows students in the Renée Crown University Honors Program to use their study abroad experience 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 315-443-2759. This process is NOT required simply to use your study abroad as part of your global awareness requirement. **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 and submitted before you leave the U.S. for your semester abroad, because it is intended to capture your pre-departure impressions. If you have not completed this step before leaving the U.S., we cannot accept it or the remaining materials.)

- A. First, inform Hanna Richardson in Honors (hricha01@syr.edu) that you intend to complete the Study Abroad Course Substitution.
- B. Well before you leave campus in the semester before you go abroad, download this instruction packet. The book, *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, by L. Robert Kohls, is available as a free download from the Bird Library website.
- C. Complete the activities outlined in this packet that are designed to prepare you to write your pre-departure essay.
- D. Write your pre-departure essay (3-5 pages).
- 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 before you leave the U.S. Hanna’s e-mail address is hricha01@syr.edu. Be sure to include: your name, SUID, country you are studying in, email address, phone number, and date of departure.

II. While Abroad

- A. Keep a journal recording and reflecting on the experience of being away from campus, as outlined on page 11 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. Each entry should be about a page and a half long, double spaced.**
- B. Write three “critical incident” essays, as outlined on page 11 of the packet.
- C. When your journal and essays are done at the end of the semester, send them electronically to Hanna Richardson in the Honors Program, at hricha01@syr.edu.

III. Re-Entry

- A. A couple of weeks after you return, write your re-entry essay as outlined on p. 12 of the packet and send it to Hanna 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 Abroad** on page 3.
 2. Read and reflect on the book *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, paying particular attention to chapters 3, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, and 20.
 3. Read and reflect on the **Sojourn Action Plan** material on pages 4-8 of this packet.
- B. Writing your Pre-Departure Essay (3-5 pages)
1. Describe key aspects of your native country’s culture as you perceive it. You may find it helpful to refer to the materials in this instruction packet, **Aspects of Culture** and **Nature of Culture** on pages 9 and 10.
 2. Describe your anticipated reactions to the same key aspects for the culture to which you are going. Which aspects will be easy to adapt to? Which aspects will be difficult to adapt to?
 3. Refer to the **Sojourn Action Plan** material. Describe your plans to prepare for your semester abroad, 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.
 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 the U.S.**, 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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SOJOURN ACTION PLAN

STEP I: A/3

Each of us has a different capacity to adapt to another culture. In fact, we may be able to adapt more easily in some ways yet find barriers in other ways. For example, you may find that intellectually you have no problem accepting other people. Yet there may be times that emotionally you find it rough going. In order to increase your skill at adapting to another culture, it is important to take appropriate actions. It is always possible to grow cross-culturally.

To help your study abroad 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 sojourn abroad. 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 abroad will reflect your strengths and weaknesses along these dimensions. On the following pages Kelley and Meyers make suggestions on how you can prepare for your sojourn abroad. Each set of suggested actions will help strengthen you in that particular dimension.

Adapted from The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory Action-Planning Guide, Dr. Colleen Kelley and Dr. Judith Meyers.

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SOJOURN ACTION PLAN

STEP I: A/3

Suggestions for strengthening your PERSONAL AUTONOMY dimension

- Clarify your personal values. Make a rank-order list of what you stand for or what is genuinely important to you. Examples of values include privacy, love, money, loyalty, and honesty. Identify those things that mean most in life to you and what makes them so important to you.

- Make a decision on the basis of what you find important in a situation, regardless of what others may value. For example, if you think it is important to work on a project and others want to go to a movie, work on the project. Or identify a similar situation in the past when it was difficult for you to make such a decision. Think about what made it difficult for you and how you can create a better outcome next time.

- Learn to value other people who are different from you. Seek them out and find things that you respect or admire in them. This is especially challenging with people about whom you have negative stereotypes. If possible, read a book or watch a movie, which will broaden your understanding and respect.

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

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SOJOURN ACTION PLAN

STEP I: A/3

Suggestions for strengthening your EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE dimension

- Meet someone new, preferably someone from a culture different from your own, or do something new (food, dance, hobby, etc.), preferably relating to a culture different from your own.

- Remind yourself of your strengths. Then do something that you can't do perfectly, where you may make a mistake or show some imperfection. It is preferable to do this in a way that relates to a culture different from your own. Challenges are more manageable when you are building on your strengths. Congratulate yourself on your courage.

- When you experience difficult feelings, especially when you are with others different from yourself or in an unfamiliar setting, pay attention to your underlying thoughts. What are you telling yourself in order to create those feelings? Find more useful and positive things to say to yourself, and practice saying them. Keep a journal of positive statements about yourself, and use it as a resource during difficult times. Review them often.

- Develop your sense of humor. When you are interacting with someone different from yourself, or are in an unfamiliar situation, find a way to laugh at yourself by getting a new perspective on the situation. Collect stories of humorous situations that have happened to others in new situations and add your own to the collection.

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SOJOURN ACTION PLAN

STEP I: A/3

Suggestions for strengthening your FLEXIBILITY / OPENNESS dimension

- Interact with people who are different from you, who do not share your interests, or who think differently than you do. Find out more about them. Identify things that you like about them. If you find yourself becoming judgmental about how they are different from you, find a way to appreciate the differences and identify ways in which you are like them.
- Spend time with a wide variety of people. Participate together in activities that you both enjoy. Concentrate on appreciating and showing respect for others more than on impressing them or “putting on a show” or façade.
- Enjoy being alone from time to time. This can be simple relaxation or an activity, such as hiking, reading, etc.
- Try to do things at a slower pace than you are accustomed to. Or try any pace different from your normal one. For example, if it usually takes you a certain amount of time to do something, take twice as long to do it. Focus on relaxing and appreciating the benefits of this pace.
- Visit a cultural setting different from your own. Examples are another culture’s holiday celebration or an ethnic restaurant. Plan one or two things to do while you are there that will give you pleasure or a sense of fulfillment.

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SOJOURN ACTION PLAN

STEP I: A/3

Suggestions for strengthening your PERCEPTUAL ACUITY dimension

- Learn how people in other cultures normally communicate and how they perceive your culture. This can be done in many ways. Examples are hosting a foreign student, talking at length with a foreign student, and joining an interest group. Identify those things that you particularly like or appreciate about the other person's culture.
- Practice "active listening." Restate in your own words what you hear and watch and listen for the speaker's reaction. Keep exploring until you have understood. If the person you are listening to is from a culture where "no" or "that is not correct" are impolite responses, offer an alternative to your paraphrase by saying: "Do you mean this... or this...?"
- Ask for information from others regarding how they perceive you or Americans in general. It is important to be aware of others' perceptions in order to understand their behavior toward you and to maximize your interactions with them. Remember, however, that their perceptions do not necessarily reflect who you are. It is simply a mechanism to help you understand how other people relate to you.
- Observe others' body language in reaction to what you say and to your own body language. This includes gestures, tone of voice, pace of speaking, facial expression, posturing, and so on. Body language may be interpreted totally differently from what you intend to communicate. Ask questions about this if necessary, to be sure you are "speaking the same language."
- Practice paying attention to body language by watching television with the sound turned down, observing people whose language you do not speak, or watching a foreign-language videotape. Guess what feelings are being expressed and check your perceptions with a person of that culture.

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ASPECTS OF CULTURE

STEP I: B/1

MANNERS

CUSTOMS

BELIEFS

CEREMONIES

RITUALS

LAWS

IDEAS

THOUGHT PATTERNS

LANGUAGE

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

VALUES

CONCEPT OF SELF

MORALS

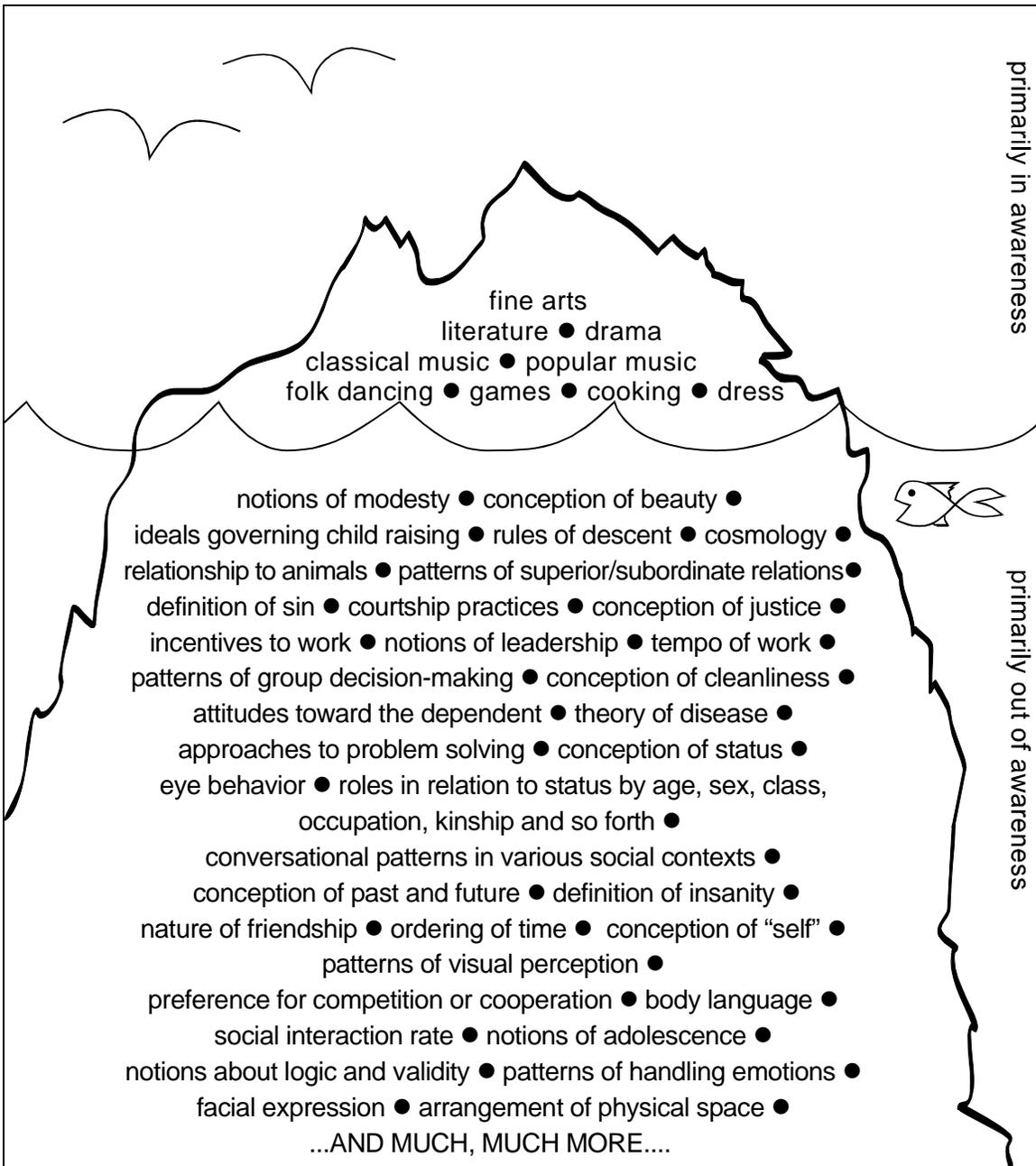
IDEALS

ACCEPTED WAYS OF BEHAVING

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NATURE OF CULTURE

STEP I: B/1



Just as nine-tenths of an iceberg is out of sight (below the waterline), so is nine-tenths of culture out of conscious awareness. The out-of-awareness part of culture has been termed “deep culture.”

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STEP II: While Abroad: 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.** Each entry should be about one and a half pages long, double spaced.

B. **Critical Incident Essays.** Write three essays (one early in the semester, another at midterm, and a third towards the end or upon returning to the United States). Each essay should focus upon an incident, event, or encounter that caused you to think about both the differences and the common ground between your own culture (upbringing, education, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, expectations, etc.) and those of the new place in which you are studying or working. Each essay should be focused and precise, and 3-4 pages long.

Organize your remarks in the following order:

1. **Incident**

Report on what happened, describing the event or encounter in detail. What was the setting? Who took part? What seemed to be said? Who listened in? What objects were involved? What role did you play?

2. **Interpretation**

Interpret the whole scene you have just described. What do you think was “really” happening?

3. **Analysis**

Considering your interpretation of the incident, ask yourself, “What made me think so?” That is, identify significant details and account for how each led you to conclude whatever is recorded in your interpretation of the scene.

4. **Self-reflection**

How did you feel witnessing and/or participating in this scene? Have you even been in a similar situation? When, where, and with what group of people? Did you behave in the same way or differently that time? Did you have similar feelings? Can you explain why?

5. **Summary**

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 3-5 pages reflecting on your experiences abroad and re-entry to the United States. Write (1) about your experiences and feelings while abroad, (2) about your experiences and feelings upon returning home, and (3) on how your lifestyle and life plans may have changed.

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

While you were abroad:

1. What were the 3-5 easiest/difficult things? Why?
2. What did you enjoy the most about the host culture?
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. How were you stereotyped? How did you deal with it?
7. What were your stereotypes of the hosts? Were they accurate? How did you deal with it?
8. Were there any incidents or situations that puzzled you? How were you able to understand, solve or accept these situations?

After you return home:

10. What did you adopt and bring back with you from your host culture (attitudes, gestures, expressions, behaviors)?
11. How did others react to these, and your stories? Are your close relationships being affected? How?
12. Have you found that your family and friends also have been through some transitions or changes of their own?
13. Do you think you have changed, a little, a lot, why? Do others think you have changed? How do you think others react to these changes?
14. How do you feel about these changes?
15. What personal skills have you developed from having been abroad?
16. What are your career goals?
17. What are the ways in which you will integrate your international experience into your future plans?
18. What intellectual windows will this experience open for you?

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