Human Resource Management in Latin America: Mexico
Study Abroad
Selected Topics Course HRM 598U -1
Hybrid Format

Professor: Dr. Patricia B. Strait
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Assigned time and place: Hybrid Wednesday (see schedule for exact days) 5:45-8:30

Study Abroad Hybrid Course Structure Defined: A Study Abroad hybrid course uses a mixed delivery format to convey the course material and lectures. That is to say, that part of the time the class will meet on campus in person, as well as classes that will be conducted online. In addition, as a study abroad course, this class will also have a week of study abroad where the students will be exploring the course topics in the target country. Students will need to have reliable access to a computer in order to complete internet assignments, online discussions, and access Blackboard. All students will need to monitor the syllabus carefully to determine the conditions and plans for each individual class session. Internet assignments and online discussions will need to be completed within the time specified by the professor in order to receive credit. As a University of Richmond student, you have free access to the computers in the library and in the student commons area. Another place to find computers is in the public library. All of these resources are free. You will need to be able to access internet web pages, operate internet search engines, and utilize Blackboard technology. If you are unsure how to use or access these items, please advise your professor at the beginning of the semester and assistance will be provided to you.

The course will provide all of the information that you will need to travel to the target country. It is the student’s responsibility to complete all university forms and obtain all needed documentation such as passport or if necessary, a visa. Information will also be provided concerning the language, the culture and the social customs of the target country that you will be visiting.

Being Successful in a Hybrid Course: Although students love the flexibility of a hybrid course, a hybrid course brings with it special challenges. A student must be able to work independently at times, especially when doing the online portion of the course. In addition, because of the hybrid nature of the course, it sometimes takes a little longer to get to know your classmates and your professor. This is natural consequence of a hybrid course. Remember, although part of your class is online, your professor is always available to you via e mail, in person meetings, and phone calls. It is also recommended that you get the e mail address and phone number of one or two of your classmates. Be diligent about keeping up with your work and your online assignments. Remember, if you have questions, ask!
The Working Adult and Student Balance: This study aboard course has been designed to fit the needs of the working adult student by providing a brief but intense introduction to the target country. The life of an adult student is not an easy one. I am keenly aware that most of you have full time jobs, spouses, children, and parents all of whom need and desire your attention. I, too, have been a working adult and a full time student. The best advice I can give you is not to take on more than your schedule and responsibilities permit. If you have problems regarding the balance of work and your academic responsibilities, please come to see me. I want to see you succeed in this course! To that end, please stay in touch and voice any concerns or problems you have early in the semester.

Getting to Mexico: Students will have the option of making their airline reservations through Covington Travel or making their reservations separately. I will also advise students which flight I will be on if they prefer to travel with me as their professor. In addition, I am fluent in Spanish so should there be any issues while we are abroad or traveling, I will able to assist in whatever translations are needed. We will be leaving for Mexico on March 7, 2009 and returning to the USA on March 15, 2008.

Required text: Managing Human Resources in Latin America
Author: Marta Elvira
Publisher: Routledge copyright 2005
ISBN: 0 415 33917 0

Vol 16 Issue 12 December 2005 available on line


General Course Description: This course allows the student to place the role of HRM within a global perspective and demonstrates the borderless and fluid workforce which is currently emerging. The course will focus on the region of Latin America with a study abroad component in the country of Mexico. Aspects of the course will include issues such as outsourcing, worker visas, multi-national companies, cultural differences, immigration patterns and other global issues effecting HRM in Latin America today.

General Course Objectives:
• Improve the student’s skills in analyzing the variables which effect HRM in Latin America including shifts in demographic variables
• Gain an understanding of legislation which effects HRM in Latin America
• Increase awareness of the international ethical issues facing the HRM environment such as child labor, human trafficking, and immigration.
• Improve the student’s understanding of multi-national companies and the challenges they face recruiting, retaining, and compensating employees

**Important Note on the Schedule:** All three credit hour courses require approximately 45 hours of contact time between professor and student. This contact time may take the form of in class activities, online activities, and in our case, abroad activities. Since we will spend approximately 6-8 hours a day in Mexico engaged in class activities, many of our required contact hours will take place in Mexico. Therefore, the hours we spend in class on campus at the University of Richmond will be significantly reduced.

**Semester Schedule:**

1. **14 Jan**  
   Course introduction. Explanation of course structure, study abroad requirements, and abroad activities will all be discussed. Sign up for paper topics.

2. **21 Jan**  
   **ONLINE:** Students help to create an online summary of HRM functions as a means of review so that HRM functions may be better analyzed and compared between the United States and Latin American countries. Each student will be responsible for providing information on at least one HRM function. This database may then be used by all students as a point of reference throughout the semester. *Student contribution to database is worth 25 points toward final grade.*

3. **28 Jan**  
   A presentation on Spain, the primary founder of Latin America will be provided by the professor. The presentation will serve as a template for student analyses regarding HRM functions in the USA v. Latin American and other countries. Blackboard article: **HRM in Spain.** Culture and HRM in Latin America. Chapter 1 in text book.

4. **4 Feb**  
   **ONLINE:** Economics and Business in Latin America. Chapter 2. Students read assigned material in text as well as other assigned readings. A list of economic terms corresponding to the labor market will be given to students to define and explain, and illustrate. These terms will be posted online so that students will create a second database. *Each student’s contribution will be worth 25 points toward final grade.*
5. 11 Feb  No class on campus.

6. 18 Feb  **Online and Reading week.** Assigned reading: HRM in Argentina. Chapter 5. HRM in Brazil. Chapter 6 HRM in Central America. Chapter 7. Comparisons between these countries and HRM practices in the USA. Answer assigned questions online. *Responses to questions will be worth 25 points toward final grade.*

7. 25 Feb  No class on campus

8. 4 March  Class reviews labor market concepts, economic terms, and other relevant elements that we will be analyzing in Mexico. *Final brief before departure to Mexico.*

    **Class will travel to Mexico March 7th and return on March 15th**

9. 8-14 March  Study Abroad In Mexico. There will be special lectures by Mexican faculty, trips to businesses, key historical sites as well as observation and evaluation of HRM practices in Mexico. A detail list of activities will be provided to you on a later date. Expect to be engaged in activities between 6 and 8 hours a day. The students will also have free time to explore the local culture after class activities have concluded for the day. (This will contain approximately 30-35 hours of contact time.)

10. 18 Mar  Rest and catch-up week. Organize your notes and be ready to post and discuss your observations about business and HRM practices in Mexico.

11. 25 Mar  **ONLINE and Reading Week:** Posting of responses to questions posed by professor. All questions will pertain to our abroad visit. HRM in Venezuela. Chapter 3. HRM in Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela Chapters 11, 12 and 13. *Responses will be worth 25 points toward final grade.*

12. 1 Apr  No class.
13. 8 Apr  ONLINE films and interactive web sites. “Child Labour: How the Challenge is Being Met.” Students view 10 minute online film of Child Labor provided by the BBC as well as internet interactive site on immigration:

14. 15 Apr  Papers due via e mail. Papers will analyze and contrast business/HRM practices between Mexico or another Latin American country and the USA according to criteria provided by professor at the beginning of the semester. Student papers are worth 100 points toward final grade.

15. 22 Apr  All papers returned. Class shares their final comments and observations.

Honor Code:
Students are expected to abide by the various tenets of the Honor Code. No material from previous courses may be used in any way for this class unless approved by the professor. All assignment and papers are expected to reflect individual efforts.

How to Avoid Plagiarism
The University of Richmond like other universities has witnessed an increase in plagiarism with the advancement of technology. Plainly stated, plagiarism is the taking of the ideas, works or words of others and representing them as your own whether one intended to do so or not. Ignorance of academic standards or proper citation is irrelevant. Note that these standards apply to written papers as well as PowerPoint presentations. University policies dictate that students who are found guilty of plagiarism will either receive an F on the paper, an F in the course or suspension from the university. There are three common types of plagiarism.

(1) the use of another author’s words in their entirety without citation or quotation.
(2) the use of another author’s exact words whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or phrase with citation but no quotation marks or other indication such as double indenting and decrease in font size (the latter is necessary for extensive quotes) that signify the words were written by another author.

(3) the cut and pasting of an entire document or large parts of it from the internet or some other electronic file.

To avoid this:
FIRST – use quotations sparingly and only as needed to make significant points in your paper.

SECOND – follow official APA style guide requirements on how to quote and cite sources.
THIRD – never, under any conditions, use the exact words of another author without quoting and citing.

FOURTH – read the material, find the concept or thought that is important, think about it, and close the book or turn over the article. Explain the concept in your own words, without returning to check the original source.

The style guide for the papers will be the APA Style Guide. Specific directions will be given at time of assignment.

Attendance: If it is not possible to attend a particular class, the student is advised to inform the professor in advance. The student is responsible for making up any missed information given in class (obtaining lecture notes from other students, viewing any video, case materials which were covered in his/her absence, etc.). Under special circumstances, a student may arrange to take an exam early if he/she is unable to be present for a scheduled exam. Class will start promptly each day. Unless there is a serious illness or death in the family, late papers and assignments will not be accepted.

Grading:
Grading is going to be kept simple and straight-forward. There will be four online assignments and a final paper. The paper will be worth 100 points. Each online assignment is worth 20 points of which there are four. Graduate students will have the additional requirement of leading class discussion and providing verbal summaries of assigned class readings for the class which is worth another 20 points. There is no extra credit or participation grade given in this course. All students are expected to actively participate in class discussions.

Online Assignment One 20 points
Online Assignment Two 20 points
Online Assignment Three 20 points
Online Assignment Four 20 points
Leading class discussion and reading summaries 20 points
Paper 100 points

Total possible points = 200

Note to graduate students: Graduate students will be held to high a higher standard of writing and research than undergraduate students. Their papers will be expected to of greater length and depth. Exact instructions to graduate students concerning their papers will be provided in writing at the beginning of the semester. In addition, Graduate students will also be called upon to lead class discussion and provide verbal summaries of reading assignments. SCS does not award graduate credit for grades less than a C.

Grading Scale:
190-200 = A  170-174 = B-
185-189 = A-  165-169 = C+
180-184 = B+  160-164 = C
175-179 = B  159 and below = F

**Online Assignments:** There will be various articles and case studies and written assignments that you will be completing for the online portion of the class. The purpose of these assignments is to further acquaint the student with the concepts and theories of HRM. A student may earn anywhere between 0-25 points on these online assignments. Online activities will be graded according to two criteria. First, whether the required content is present and correct and discussed to sufficient depth. Second, whether the written response is organized, well written and free from grammatical errors, errors in punctuation, spelling, or syntax. Note that specific directions will be given online for each assignment including required content and length.

**Professor Biographical Information:** Dr. Strait began her career in the United States Navy where she served as an air traffic controller for four years. Upon finishing her tour with the navy, she held various positions in airport management. After completing her Ph.D., she served as a visiting professor of public management at Virginia Tech, and as a MBA faculty member at Old Dominion University. Dr. Strait is a member of the European Group of Public Administration, the Mid-Atlantic Latin American Council, and the European Business Ethics Network. Fluent in both English and Spanish, she has written articles in both English and Spanish involving topics such as labor economics, immigration, and employee ethics. She has also been a speaker at several international conferences including: London, Quebec, Barcelona, Brussels, Vancouver, Valencia, and Berne, Switzerland.