



SUMMER ABROAD PROGRAM & LEARNING OBJECTIVES¹

Overview

Housed at Woodsworth, the Summer Abroad Program helps to strengthen departmental-college ties. Students in the program complete undergraduate degree courses from the Faculty of Arts & Science that are relevant to each international location. Those studying the language of the host country have the opportunity for full linguistic immersion; others participate in frequent field trips to local sites connected to the academic content of their courses.

Courses are offered across a broad range of subject areas, employing a variety of teaching strategies in a small-class environment and adding to the diversity of pedagogical approaches available in the Faculty of Arts & Science. These courses also complement program offerings and encourage interdisciplinary approaches (for example: a cultural anthropology course offered in Berlin on “Germans, Muslims, and Jews”).

In all cases, the Summer Abroad Program aims to be as open and accessible as possible. Aside from language courses, all teaching is done in English. There is also no academic pre-requisite for most courses, provided that students have a CGPA of at least 1.5. Summer Abroad staff work closely with the office of Accessibility Services to ensure that all students receive fair consideration in terms of their international opportunities and that, to the extent that we are able, all student needs are met.

The Summer Abroad Program frequently encourages in participants a high level of excitement and interest either in the subject explored, and/or the course location itself. Many students have reported plans to pursue graduate study in a field connected to their Summer Abroad Program, or else to return overseas to the site of their course for personal or professional reasons.

Program Objectives

The Summer Abroad Program will provide students with significant pedagogical benefits, including:

- A rich international experience designed to significantly enhance their academic life at the University of Toronto;
- The opportunity to build close connections with other members of the university community (i.e., instructors and other students);
- A small-class educational environment that will facilitate cross-cultural learning, and that will add to the diversity of their academic experience (this diversity may exist as a result of self-guided study, inquiry-based activities, interdisciplinary approaches, and/or language immersion).

¹ These objectives were developed with the ideas of Bloom (1956), Keeling (2006, 2008) and Strayhorn (2006) in mind. However, most work done on learning objectives has focused on domestic campus environments, and is not always applicable to the international contexts of study abroad programs.

Student Support Learning Objectives

Through various means (e.g., publications, orientations, staff), the Summer Abroad Program will provide students with access to information, tools, and support that will assist them in becoming better global citizens.² In particular, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate self-reliance (including the ability to mitigate risks of international travel);
- Enhance the student community (e.g., showing mutual support and respect);
- Integrate with the local community (e.g., showing respect for and openness towards others).

Student Course Learning Objectives

Each Summer Abroad instructor will be asked to prepare course learning objectives and to include these on their course syllabus. The course learning objectives should relate to the Summer Abroad student learning objectives as well as the departmental degree objectives. The requirements for instructor proposals to teach abroad will be amended to include draft course learning objectives.

Upon completion of their Summer Abroad course, students should demonstrate the ability to:

- Relate classroom study to real-world situations abroad through critical analysis and synthesis of course materials;
- Identify issues and problems, and formulate questions, in a specific field of study that reflects understanding of a particular international context;
- Incorporate consideration of specific international issues and concerns in their writing.

References

- Bloom, B.S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives, handbook I: The cognitive domain*. New York: David McKay Co Inc.
- Keeling, R.P. (Ed.). (2006). *Learning reconsidered 2: A practical guide to implementing a campus-wide focus on the student experience*. Washington, D.C.: ACPA, ACUHO-I, ACUI, NACA, NACAD, NASPA, & NIRSA.
- Keeling, R.P., Wall, A.F., Underhile, R., & Dungy, G.J. (2008). *Assessment reconsidered: institutional effectiveness for student success*, Washington, DC: International Center for Student Success & Institutional Accountability (ICSSIA).
- Strayhorn, T.L. (2006). *Frameworks for assessing learning and development outcomes* (D.G. Creamer, T.K. Miller & J. Arminio). Washington, D.C.: Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education.

² We use the term “global citizen” in accordance with the Faculty of Arts and Science *Final Report of the Curriculum Review and Renewal Committee*: “By global citizens, we mean those who: have a broad understanding of world issues and environments, drawing on historical, cultural, social, technological, and scientific knowledge; learn and adapt to changing local and global conditions; understand their own place, and the place of Canada, in the world; appreciate the value of diversity in a framework of mutual respect and tolerance; and act responsibly and ethically within their various communities.”