

2010 Viet Nam Plus 3 Syllabus  
International Field Project to Viet Nam  
BUSSP0041 and ENGR0033

**Course Description**

BUSSP00XX and ENGR00XX are optional three-credit study abroad opportunities offered as a follow-up to Managing in Complex Environments (required of freshmen CBA students) or ENGR0011 and ENGR0012 (required of freshmen engineering students) at the University of Pittsburgh. These courses involve teams of both business and engineering students who will work on a project involving travel to one of four international destinations.

Official registration information for each course is as follows:

Engineering Students			Business Students		
Country	Course number	CRN		Course number	CRN
Valparaiso, Chile	ENGR0023	19884		BUSSP0037	13734
Beijing, China	ENGR0024	19886		BUSSP0038	13732
Augsburg, Germany	ENGR0026	19890		BUSSP0036	13736
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam	ENGR0033	25076		BUSSP0041	25200

The course consists of three parts:

- A pre-departure component that will include a brief introduction to the historical, cultural, economic, and social environments of the country/region of the field study (Chile, China, Germany, or Viet Nam), and will also introduce the companies that will be visited during the field study. The student will write a short individual report and a team oral presentation for this part.
- A field study component to Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. The field study includes company visits, sightseeing, and lectures at the University of Economics and Finance (UEF) located in Ho Chi Minh City. Each student is required to keep a daily journal and participate in the local activities for this part.
- A post-departure component that involves the writing and presentation of a research poster focused on one of the companies visited by the group and another poster on some aspect of the culture of the country visited. Both business and engineering viewpoints related to the national and global industry in which it operates must be considered in the company poster and in the presentation. The cultural/environmental poster can be chosen by each team.

**Faculty**

Faculty from the University of Pittsburgh will travel with students, and they have designed a number of academic activities for the trip. The Plus 3 program is a study abroad experience where the classroom is a real world experience of another culture. Thus, the instructors act more as guides, helping the student have a successful experience.

During any study abroad experience the faculty also have the role of chaperones. We are assuming all the students are adults and will act as such during the trip. The instructors are there to help, but we do not watch every step every student takes 24 hours a day. It is impossible to do this. Thus, it is assumed that the students have the level of maturity necessary to conduct themselves properly during this experience. Faculty members participating in the courses in 2010 are:

Country	Professor	Office	Phone	Email
Valparaiso, Chile	Josephine Olson	308 Mervis	8-1715	<a href="mailto:jolson@katz.pitt.edu">jolson@katz.pitt.edu</a>
Beijing, China	Di Gao	1249 Benedum	4-8488	<a href="mailto:gaod@pitt.edu">gaod@pitt.edu</a>
Augsburg, Germany	Ray Jones	2503 Sennott Square	3-7493	<a href="mailto:rayjones@pitt.edu">rayjones@pitt.edu</a>
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam	David Berman	5115 Posvar	8-7311	<a href="mailto:dberman@pitt.edu">dberman@pitt.edu</a>

## Program Outline and Evaluation

The Program and evaluation of student performance is based on three components:

### I) Pre-departure (25%)

Four mandatory workshops will be scheduled that include discussions of socio/political/historical context of your country; the analysis tools for your project; a crash course in language; information on the companies that will be visited; advice on traveling to your country; and the study abroad contract. There will be assigned reading materials. Dates/topics are:

Date	Time	Location	Topic
February 25	6:00 PM	G16B Cathedral	History, economics, politics, and geography of the country
March 23	6:00 PM	342 Cathedral	Language, culture, and history of the country; Writing a journal.
March 28	1:00 PM	125 Benedum	Study abroad contracts—company and team assignments
April 13	6:00 PM	342 Cathedral	Group presentations on your country; Ho Chi Minh City

### Pre-departure portion (25%)

There are three components to the **pre-departure portion** of the course:

- a) **Mandatory attendance/Website (5%)**. Attendance at each of the four sessions is required, including your active participation. Each Plus3 destination will have its own website. The purpose of the individual websites is to provide family members and friends with access to the students while they prepare for the trip and while they are on their trip. You will need to set up your blog before the departure.

**An individual report (10%)**. Each student should prepare an essay of approximately 1200 words on the following subjects.

#### I. *Introduction - My Current Attitudes and Beliefs toward Travel and Your Plus-3 Country*

Students should briefly describe their travel experience to date, particularly with respect to international travel and/or times when they traveled with a group of peers. What personal reasons (interest, family background, professional relevance) do you have for traveling to the Plus-3 country? How much did you know about its culture and professional background before you were selected for the trip?

#### II. *Individual/Personal Issues in Your Plus-3 Country*

Based on some reading and research, what cultural differences do you expect will affect your interactions with the citizens of your Plus-3 country? How do people in the country handle issues such as conflict, time management, encountering "foreigners", and drinking alcohol? What is their basic value system? What are the major differences in living, economic and political conditions for the average citizen in your Plus-3 country? More specifically, how are the people you meet on the streets every day likely to view someone who is an American citizen and/or who goes to school in the U.S.? And - if you are not an American citizen, how are people from your national background typically received among individuals in your Plus-3 country? Feel free to comment on any interesting cultural difference you expect will affect your daily interactions.

#### III. *Company/Professional Issues in Your Plus-3 Country*

Based on some reading and research, what cultural differences do you expect will affect your interactions with business people and engineers on the company visits? What is the "organizational culture" typically like for companies/organizations in your Plus-3 country (are companies very formal and highly organized/mechanical, or do they tend to be more informal and open/creative?) Describe the current business environment in your Plus-3 country, particularly with respect to the companies you will be visiting on the trip. Feel free to comment on any interesting professional or industry trend that is likely to have an impact on the companies we visit.

#### IV. *National/Societal Issues in Your Plus-3 Country*

Based on some reading and research, what are the most important current political trends facing your Plus-3 country? How does your Plus-3 country fit into the global and political system with respect to issues such as major products and services, relative economic importance (Country GDP vs. Global GDP), role in innovation, environmental leadership,

and human rights? Feel free to comment on any interesting national/societal issue or trend that is likely to be going on during your Plus-3 trip.

#### V. *Conclusion - My Personal Action Plan for My Plus-3 Trip*

After thinking about what you have learned about individuals in your Plus-3 country, company/professional issues in the country and its most important national/societal issues, how do you plan to use this knowledge when interacting with local citizens, when approaching the company visits, and when thinking about the society/culture during your two week trip?

#### VI. *Sources:*

List at least two specific websites, books or articles you consulted for each section of your reflection paper (two each for Individual/Personal, Company/Professional and National/Societal - so at least six total). Do not just list "the internet" or "Wikipedia" - give us a sense of where you found information, and try to list a specific website and/or article title whenever possible. It is fine to use Wikipedia to help find information, but any good Wikipedia article has links to specific websites and articles that go into greater detail and are written/published by established organizations. Please refer to the "Recommended Reading List" that appears on the Viet Nam Plus 3 website for additional readings. Please use an established reference style such as MLA, Chicago or APA. See the library's site on citations for more information, particularly on how to cite materials from the internet: <http://www.library.pitt.edu/guides/citing/>.

**This essay must be submitted by April 30 one week prior to our departure.** It should be double spaced with normal font and margins. You can submit it by email to Professor Berman at (dberman@.pitt.edu). You do not need to post it on your blog.

- b) **A group presentation (10%) April 13.** Before we leave for each country and during the field trip, each student should be thinking about the following topics and they should be presented in a power point presentation. If your group knows the company you are visiting, focus primarily on your company. If you don't know your company or cannot get much information on it, focus on the industry and/or on your cultural/environmental issue in Viet Nam. Students should note that the suggested topics related to the company should match the main sections of the post-trip report. As such, students should think of these concepts as preparation before we leave for the country as an initial opportunity to consider concerns that they will analyze in the final project.
- **Global/National Environment:** (Preparation). What interesting political, economic, social or technological factors affect the firm that you will visit? Why are these factors of interest to a professional in business or engineering?
  - **Industry Analysis:** (Preparation) Describe the firm and the industry of the firm that you are going to visit. What are the major product categories in this industry and who are the firm's major competitors? What unique challenges or opportunities exist for firms in this industry? Why is this industry of interest to a professional in business or engineering?
  - **Engineering Principles:** (Preparation) Research the basic engineering principles involved in the company process. How is the product or service produced, what raw materials are required, how do the raw materials get to the site, how is the product shipped to the customers, what variables must be considered, what are the safety concerns, what environmental factors must be considered, what skills must the workforce involved with the process have and must they be engineers? Do you see a connection between the engineering requirements and the need for a background in the sciences?
  - **List of questions:** (Preparation) Read the requirements for the students journals listed below. From this, make at least 2 power point slides with a list of questions you would like to ask. One slide should be the questions you will ask the professionals you meet, and the other slide should be the questions you would like to ask the students you interact with.

The Power Point presentation should be 10 - 15 minutes long and should be an introduction to the company you will visit and a short description of the culture and business environment of Viet Nam. The presentation should include two components: 1) A short introduction to Viet Nam; 2) A short introduction to your company. When you prepare your presentation, assume you will be talking to a group who does not know anything about the company or country or about the advantages and challenges of doing business there. For resources, you should use the material presented in the pre-departure sessions, the assigned readings, and other reference work that you develop. The deliverables are the oral presentation and an electronic copy of your PowerPoint slides. Figure that you probably can cover about 10 -15 slides in 10 minutes. **PRACTICE SO THAT YOU DO NOT EXCEED THE TIME LIMIT!** The copy of the powerpoint file should be emailed to your professor before you make the presentation and a copy will be posted to the trip web site.

## Two-week study abroad experience (45%)

The scheduled departure date for the group is Saturday, May 8 and arriving in Ho Chi Minh City the evening of Sunday May 9. We depart from Ho Chi Minh City on Saturday morning, May 22, and we arrive back in the United States on the evening of Saturday, May 22 as well.

### There are two components evaluated as part of the Study Abroad Trip:

#### a) Individual Journal (30%). Due Monday, June 7

During the two week in-country component of the course, each student is responsible for keeping a daily professional journal of their reflections on various professional issues and concerns that are encountered during the trip. We expect the average daily entry to be at least 250 words in length. We expect that each entry will discuss the daily experiences, and describe what each student did and saw; however, this is also a professional journal. This means that each entry must include not only descriptive comments about what you saw or did, but it should make connections between the daily experiences and how they help in your development as an engineering or business professional. The journal is intended to compel students to make direct connections between what they are observing and experiencing on the trip and the types of issues and concerns they will face as professionals. These observations can be comparative (how the country is the same or different from the U.S.) and can include comments on day-to-day life, anecdotes, language, politics, geography, stores, social life, the popular culture of the country, etc. As you write on these topics, try to frame your comments in such a manner that they explain how this helps you understand the people and the lifestyle of your country and how this impacts your professional development in the area of global issues. As part of this journal, you must also include a description of how the program of study and life of an engineering or business student (whichever you are) is the same as and different from that of a comparable student in the U.S. **(You may post your journal as a blog but be certain to censor out things that might offend or upset people.** You can include those sensitive observations in the journal you submit to Professor Berman.)

In addition to writing on their daily activities, students must also submit a final summary journal entry that addresses topics on the following five (5) professional development topics. It is suggested that each student try to include something from the following list in each daily activity. At the end of the trip each student will then summarize their view on each on the following five topics by addressing each item in a separate paragraph (minimum of 200 words for each) and this will be the final journal entry.

#### 1. Ethical Issues in My Profession:

Give an understanding of the professional and ethical responsibility you see as a result of the United States industries becoming global players. For example, do you see things in Viet Nam that would not be allowed or are not typical industry standards in the United States, such as safety issues, environmental issues, employee issues (wages, benefits, working conditions, etc.)? Does Viet Nam address diversity issues (gender, race, religion, lifestyle choices) differently than the United States? Because of these differences you see, could a company make more money, or do more business by doing the same thing in Viet Nam as in the United States? If so, how does this affect life and business in the United States?

#### 2. Educational Breadth as Professional Development:

Based on your experiences traveling in this country, describe the need for a broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering/business solutions in a global and societal context. Is it important? Are there enough differences between your country and the United States that you believe students should expand their classroom experience to include learning about different cultures? If so, explain what future courses you should take to prepare you for a global economy.

#### 3. Lifelong Learning, Continuing Education as Professional Development:

As you go to the company visits, ask yourself and the people you meet, what part of their job did they learn in school and what part did they learn on the job. Ask them if their education allowed them to do their job throughout their career or did they need to learn new things each year. Ask them how technology has changed their jobs and how did they learn how to use this technology. Then, give recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning and explain how this is needed to compete in the future.

#### 4. The Social Environment of Professional Life:

As you travel around the country try and discover the connection between peoples' social life and their professional life. Do you see any connection? Ask people in your country if they know anything about the social and political issues in the United States. Do you know the same about their country? Read the local newspaper, watch the local television shows, what are the topics addressed in what you see on TV, hear on the radio, read in the newspaper or magazines. If you cannot understand the material in their media, look at the pictures, and ask the local students to explain this to you. Explain why it is important to have knowledge of contemporary issues related to the global economy. What political, social, economic and diversity issues are involved within engineering/business that are involved within your industry on a global scale? How does this affect life and business in the United States?

5. Functioning on Multi-Disciplinary Teams:

It is important for professionals to be able to function and communicate effectively as a member of a team of individuals from diverse backgrounds. How do you work when you are a member of such a team (for example – you are either an engineering student who is traveling with business students, or vice-versa)? What are some of the challenges involved in establishing and maintaining effective communication on this type of cross-functional team?

Your journal should be updated daily and an edited electronic version submitted to the trip web site daily, or as web access is available. Bring digital or standard cameras to document your trip and include photos with your journal if possible. At the end of each day go back and reflect on what you wrote for each day of the trip and continue to update your journal.

We have found that the time goes by very fast during the trip, and students do not always have time to completely finish each day's journal during the trip; thus, you have until **Monday, June 7** to reflect on each day and edit/modify/complete your journal. If you are not going to complete an entry for any given day and are going to wait until you return to complete your journal, then you must at least produce and post online an outline of your activities each day on your blog.

**b) Participation (15%).**

**Professional activities.** Each student is expected to attend each and every planned event, including the sightseeing trips, the company visits and the lectures at the local universities; be on or ahead of schedule for all events; participate in all work activities; and be actively engaged in asking questions of lecturers and speakers. The professors will maintain participation records. After each company visit each student should complete an individual reflection on what they saw and write down any observations and/or questions they have from the trip. Then each student should use these observations as starting points for the next company visit. Consider such questions as: What interesting strengths or weaknesses were discussed (or are apparent) in the firm that you visited today? Does this firm face any interesting opportunities or threats from the external environment? Why is this firm of interest to a professional in business or engineering? What engineering issues are involved in the process? What technology or lack of did you observe? What business practices did you observe? Student groups are encouraged to share their thoughts with others groups and with each other.

**Personal activities.** We understand that each student is an adult and as such has the right to spend his or her free time in the country as he or she wishes. However, all students must also understand that while they are on the site visits and also while they are on their own time, they are representing the University of Pittsburgh. Thus, their actions directly reflect on the university's image and the image of the United States. **Failure to maintain acceptable behavior will result in a lower grade or failure of the participation component and can be grounds for a lower final grade or failing the course and being sent home.** Acceptable and unacceptable actions will be described in the pre-departure sessions.

**Post-trip reports (30%)**

Teams: Each country trip will have approximately 15 to 25 students, some from business and some from engineering. There will be 4 - 6 company visits/country, thus the students will work in teams of three to five students. Each team will be composed of both business and engineering students. Final team assignment will be made during the March 23 meeting to enable students to prepare for the trip before they leave the United States.

The post-trip assignments will consist of three components:

- a) **Company (15%).** Each student group must prepare a poster paper on their company with 10 to 15 pages of content (text, graphs, pictures, slides). The content of the project is described below. A draft of the poster presentation is due

**on Tuesday, September 7.** A poster presentation time will be scheduled for late September or early October. This will be printed out for the poster paper presentations and the poster will also be placed on the Plus3 website.

- b) Cultural/Environmental Poster (**10%**). Student teams will prepare a poster paper on a specific cultural or environmental topic of their choice (it may relate to their industry or be unrelated). Each team will choose a specific topic on the trip that is of interest and will take pictures and gather information. The poster should be about 10 to 15 pages of content (text, graphs, pictures, slides). This will be printed out for the poster paper presentations and put on the Plus3 website.
- c) Group Poster Presentations (5%). Team members will take part of a day in CBA or in Engineering in the early fall to present their posters to students, particularly to freshmen who might be considering Plus3.

Each student will also evaluate their individual group members to determine what percentage of the research and group posters was done by each member. Final group report grades will then be distributed based on these percentages.

**Critical dates:**

**Tuesday, September 7**

**Draft of posters due.**

**Poster Presentations TBA**

## **Company Poster Assignment**

Completion of the project will require the use of a variety of data sources. A few places to check for these data on the web include bigcharts.com, ceoexpress.com, the Global Edge section of Michigan State's CIBER website (<http://globaledge.msu.edu>), the CIA website. Your poster must include a list of your references using a standard method of documentation such as Chicago Style, MLA or APA. See <http://www.library.pitt.edu/guides/citing/> for guidance on citing, particularly of internet sources.

For articles on companies, industries and countries use the University Library System's Electronic Databases ([www.library.pitt.edu](http://www.library.pitt.edu)), particularly the Business and International ones. Some of these are Business Source Premier/EbscoHost; Business and Company Resource Center/InfoTrac; National Newspapers; Stat-USA (particularly good for country information); Global Market Information Database (Euromonitor, good for marketing studies). Other sources: for competitiveness and economic freedom ratings - Economic Freedom of the World PCL (<http://www.freetheworld.com/index.htm/>); Index of Economic Freedom (<http://www.heritage.org/Index/>); The Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum (<http://www.weforum.org>).

For industry information: Investext\*; NetAdvantage\* (Standard and Poor's). For company information, see Disclosure Global Access and [www.Hoovers.com](http://www.Hoovers.com) (though this source applies to US firms, at least primarily). The information provided by the Career Services and Engineering Library throughout the first year can also be used to find information on your company.

Project Content. The posters must consider both business and engineering points of view

### **Below are issues that should be considered in your company poster.**

#### Overview of the Company

Who owns it? How long has it been in business? Where are its headquarters? What products or services does it produce?

#### Industry Overview:

Describe the industry. Is the firm competing in a local market or a global market or both? Who are its major competitors (global and/or local) and what are their market shares?

What are its revenues (private firms may not provide this but you can ask on your tour) and market share?

#### Operations of the Company

Describe the production process of the firm in significant detail. Describe the process, the raw materials involved, the supply chain and infrastructure needed to support the company. Finally how does the system work, how do they make whatever they make, and/or what are the scientific principles behind the product? How many employees does it have or appear to have? What percentage of the work force are professionals (engineers and/or business)? What types of engineers work for the firm? What business disciplines are most important for the business professionals?

#### The Firm's Environment

Why is the company located where it is? What is the fit with its national environment? What is the fit within its industry?

What national and global Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors affect your firm?

Firm Analysis - SWOT Analysis: What specific environmental factors does your company face, that are internal to the company (Strengths or Weaknesses)? What environmental factors does your company face that are external to the company (Opportunities and Threats)?

#### The Firm's competitive strategy

What is the firm's competitive strategy, and how does it "fit" with the various environmental conditions it faces globally/nationally, in its industry, and with respect to the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats it faces (SWOT analysis)?

What are the main things that your firm is doing well in order to be innovative and compete successfully? Which areas are not fully developed in your firm, or, are not being addressed adequately?