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**UVA in Argentina:  
Systems Case Studies**

SYS 2054/3054  
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**Global Commerce Immersion:  
Project Practicum in Argentina**

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January Term 2017: Dec 28, 2016 – Jan 11, 2017

By taking this class you will learn and practice real-world problem solving in an international consulting context.

You will work with winemaking companies in Mendoza, Argentina. Winemaking is one of the main industries in the region and is a global industry which fuels worldwide exports. It is easy to find Mendoza products even in the local grocery stores in Charlottesville! You will work in an interdisciplinary team of UVA students. Presented with real-world business challenges, your team will identify objectives and requirements, identify and evaluate alternative solutions, and present recommendations to your clients. These solutions often involve developing a proof-of-concept prototypes that gather, process, and analyze data (excel spreadsheets, web sites, and/or databases). It will be an excellent opportunity to learn business and engineering concepts by applying them to specific situations.



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## Learning Objectives

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The primary goal of the class is to develop your professional *intercultural competences*, which we define as (1) your appreciation of the cultural differences in business and engineering practices in different parts of the world, *plus* (2) your ability to successfully cope with these differences.

**1. Appreciation of cultural differences.** After taking this course, students will be able to:

- Explain broad cultural differences between Argentina and the US. You will be living in Mendoza and experience everyday argentine life: going the grocery store, tasting the Argentine cuisine, meeting locals, etc.
- Explain the differences in business and engineering practices between Argentina and US by interacting with clients and analyzing their needs; demonstrate this understanding of differences in client interactions, formal reports and presentations, class discussions, and blog entries.
- Demonstrate an ability to adapt to unfamiliar situations in both business and social situations.

**2. Ability to successfully cope with cultural differences in a professional setting.** After taking this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the specific needs of your foreign clients through a variety of methods such as interviews, root cause analysis and direct observation.
- Identity and develop solutions to your clients challenges that fit their specific needs and that are sensitive to the specifics of the business culture and practices
- Present the solutions to your clients, in both writing and in an oral briefing, overcoming communication barriers

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## Teaching Method: The Practicum

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The primary teaching tool for this course will be a *practicum* focusing on an actual problem experienced by a real-world company. *Practica* are learning experiences that involve the supervised application of previously studied concepts and theory. In other words, the focus of this class is on *learning by doing*.

This course gives you the opportunity to apply concepts from a variety of business and engineering disciplines: strategy, industry analysis, financial analysis, operation research, modeling, and systems engineering. You will apply these concepts to a real world situation. The role of practicum faculty is also different. Their main role is to supervise progress, offer high-level guidance, and to help you and your team to overcome obstacles. They do not lecture, they coach.

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## Daily Plan

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Argentine culture puts a premium on seizing opportunity and adaptation. We expect the same from us. Sometimes things will not go according to this plan. It is on us to make the most of whatever unexpected change presents.

<b>Wed, Dec. 28</b>	
morning	Arrival in Mendoza. Pick up at the airport
12:30-2:30	Pizza & Empanadas at El Portal, 4th floor
2:30-4:00	Jose's Introduction to Mendoza
4:00-6:00	Class discussion: Getting ready for the first client meeting
6:00-8:00	Open air bus tour
8:30	Dinner at Anna Bistro – some clients may be present
<b>Thu, Dec. 29</b>	
8:30-1:30	Work at the client sites
5:00-8:00	Project work at hotel
8:30	Dinner on your own
<b>Fri, Dec. 30</b>	
8:30-1:30	Work at the client sites
5:00-8:00	Project work + “The global wine industry” – M. Bollaude
8:30	Group dinner
<b>Sat, Dec. 31</b>	
10:30-4:00	Excursion: Cerro Arco + learning to cook Argentinian fare: asado, mate, and empanadas
10:00 pm	Dinner and New Year's celebration at Club Regattas
<b>Sun, Jan. 1</b>	
	Free day: opportunity to explore the city, rafting, ziplining
	Dinner on your own
<b>Mon, Jan. 2</b>	
8:30-1:30	Work at the client sites
5:00-8:00	Project work at hotel
	<b>First draft of exec report due</b>
8:30	Dinner on your own
<b>Tue, Jan. 3</b>	
8:30-1:30	Work at the client sites
5:00-8:00	Project work at hotel
	<b>Feedback on first draft of the exec report</b>
8:30	Dinner on your own
<b>Wed, Jan. 4</b>	
8:30-1:30	Work at the client sites
5:00-8:00	Project work + “The expat experience” – D. English
8:30	Group Dinner
<b>Thu, Jan. 5</b>	
8:30-1:30	Work at the client sites
5:00-8:00	Project work at hotel
8:30	Dinner on your own
<b>Fri, Jan. 6</b>	
8:30-1:30	Work at the client sites
5:00-8:00	Project work at hotel
	<b>Complete draft of exec report due</b>
8:30	Group Dinner
<b>Sat, Jan. 7</b>	
10:30-4:00	½ class: Excursion: Cacheuta Spa day with buffet luncheon
11:30-4:00	½ class: Tour and Gourmet Picnic at Zuccardi Winery
<b>Sun, Jan. 8</b>	
10:30-4:00	½ class: Excursion: Cacheuta Spa day with buffet luncheon
11:30-4:00	½ class: Tour and Gourmet Picnic at Zuccardi Winery
5:00-8:00	<b>Feedback on complete draft of the exec report</b> + Workshop: presenting to foreign audiences

**Mon, Jan. 9**

- By 8:30 am **Exec report completed**  
 8:30-1:30 Last day of work at the client sites / May opt to stay at hotel  
 4:00-8:00 **Presentation rehearsals**  
 8:30 Dinner on your own  
 Evening Decks and handouts printing, second rehearsals if needed

**Tues, Jan. 10**

- 8:30-1:30 **Final presentations at client sites**  
 7:00-8:00 Final discussion on cultural differences  
 8:30-12:00 Farewell Dinner

**Wed, Jan. 11**

Departure to U.S.

## Pre-departure Activities

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The class includes three **mandatory** pre-departure meetings. We will discuss logistics, current events in Argentina, an introduction to the wine industry, and how to prepare for the project. These meetings will also provide the opportunity for the students to get to know each other.

### Recommended Readings

- [A collection of articles and online resources](#) will give you a background on Argentine history, culture, business, and current events.
- English, David. Expat Entrepreneurs in Argentina: Ten Success Stories, 2013. This book covers the experiences of several entrepreneur expats who are currently running business in Argentina.
- Gibson, J. E., Scherer, W. T., and Gibson, W. F. How to Do Systems Analysis. 2007, Wiley – Interscience.
- “Root Cause Analysis,” by Nelson, R. R., 2012.

## Grading and Assignments

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Your performance will be evaluated as follows:

Assignment	Weight	Responsibility
Pre-departure meetings, attendance and preparedness	5%	Individual
Pre-departure calls with your client	10%	Team
Participation and engagement in the project	25%	Individual
Blog contribution	5%	Individual
Client presentation	50%	Team
Executive summary		
Completing all course evaluations	5%	Individual

## Blog

We will keep an online blog for the course. Each day, a few students will be assigned to write and post the blog entry for that day. The entry consists of a summary of what happened during that day, covering both class work and social activities, plus a couple of pictures taken during key activities for the day. The summary is about 500 words long (this is the total for the students assigned to blogging for the day).

The blog will be public, and is intended to be a means for you to reflect and learn, and also a means for your family and friends to stay connected.

## Client Presentation

Each team is required to offer a final presentation to their Argentine client. The suggested content of the presentation is outlined in a separate document that will be posted on Collab. Example projects and presentations are also posted on Collab.

## Executive Summary

The executive summary describe succinctly your solution from a business point of view. As a guideline, it should be 1200-1500 words long, plus any exhibits/appendices that you feel are useful to fully understand your work or to implement your recommendation (this might include software developed, user manuals, tables with results, etc.). Examples and instructions will be posted on Collab.

# Honor Statement

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This class operates under the UVA Honor System. To be explicit, this includes the time spent abroad.

The University of Virginia relies upon and cherishes its community of trust. We endorse and uphold the University's Honor principle that students will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor shall they tolerate those who do. We recognize that even one honor infraction can destroy an exemplary reputation that took years to build. Acting in a manner consistent with the principles of honor benefits every member of the UVA community.