European Field Seminar 2010 – IM851

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Course Websites
http://smgpublish.bu.edu/IM851/
https://smgtools.bu.edu

Program Description
Following a series of preparatory meetings in Boston, the participants will travel to four European countries (Netherlands, Belgium, France and Hungary) for a two week period. This field study program will include visits to businesses and governmental organizations and lectures from European specialists. The seminar will cover a broad range of topics, including macroeconomic policy, European integration, finance, marketing and communication, operations management, international trade, business culture etc. Consequently, this seminar should appeal to a broad segment of the MBA population.

The European Field Seminar will introduce students to current issues firms and consumers face in the European environment. Opportunities and tensions stemming from a broad European Project with 27 member states, a single European currency, and a growing influence of the European Union institutions are examples that are changing the European competitive landscape.

In order to gain an appreciation of the European Business environment, we will visit and meet with prominent firms in the private sector, both in the new and old economy, in the industrial, agricultural and service sectors. We will also visit institutions such as the European Commission or agencies that advise government and companies.

Texts

Also there will be many live links and documents available through SMGtools.
Attire
At most visits while in Europe, business attire is de rigueur. Pack accordingly! Also do not count of having convenient access to a laundry facility. Hotels will offer cleaning services, however the cost is fairly high. Remember to pack a travel umbrella and bring some type of briefcase/book bag. Also, PACK lightly – There are severe weight limits on bags for flights within Europe (23 kg = 50 lbs), and the excess weight is rather expensive. Further cabin bags sizes are much stricter than in the USA.

Evaluation
Each participant is expected to keep a journal during this trip. Although the journal is your own and I will not be reviewing it, it is a key source of information gathering and reflections. Your daily logs and field notes will prove quite useful for your group project (see below) and your final paper (also see below)

- Pre-visit research memo and in class briefing 15% (memo delivered on May 11th)
- Individual participation during program 35% (while in Europe and in Boston classes)
- Group Wrap up Discussion 15% (the last day in Europe)
- Final Research and Reflection Paper 35% (to be delivered electronically by July 1st)

Pre-visit research brief
During our first class (May 1st, 2010), each seminar participant will be assigned a research topic. The topic will typically be a company we will visit, an institution, or a current European issue. Your job is to research your topic (make sure to footnote your sources in the memo, and make sure to have more sources than just a few websites!) and prepare a 2-page (max) memo (12 font, 1.5 spacing) (plus one page of appendix if needed) describing relevant background and current problems/opportunities/ tensions etc. You can use bullets as you see fit.

The goal of the brief is to insure that every participant is fully prepared before each visit, so that greater value added can be obtained. On May 11th, you will bring a copy of the brief for each participant (total 15 copies – double sided) and also email the document to Amit (the course TA) so it can be uploaded on SMGTools. At the end of the class, all of us will have a full dossier that can be taken on the road and used before each visit.

Group Wrap up Discussion
I will form three teams (2 teams of 4 and 1 teams of 5 people – to be announced by May 1st). Each team will be responsible for animating a wrap up discussion on our last day in Europe. I will be work with each team on defining a topic and going over the debrief exercise. More details to be provided as needed.

Final Research and Reflection Paper
Following the seminar completion each one of you is required to complete a final paper. This is a 10-page maximum (1 inch margins, font 12, 1.5 or double spacing) research and reflection paper. You should select a topic that is close to your heart or career. There is no formal pre-screening of your topic (but you can bounce off ideas if you wish). Your paper should discuss how this course experience has (1) informed you on the issue at hand, (2) changed some of your perspectives, or confirmed them!, (3) confirmed or disconfirmed some of your pre-trip expectations with respect to Europe and European Business. In many ways, one can sum up this as a “What have I learned?” paper. However, this is not a journal, and it should be a long laundry list of points either. This is an integrative paper, with content reflexive of your experience and also published sources. As such, make sure to have a significant variety of sources and perspectives represented throughout your paper. The sources can of course include: introspective self-assessments, field notes you took in your journal, books, relevant articles in the press, white papers, websites etc. As appropriate and needed, make sure to footnote all of your sources in the paper.
You will be graded not on your opinion, but rather on your ability to provide an informed discussion that goes beyond clichés and stereotypes, as well as the depth of your analysis and your ability to reflect and integrate knowledge. Also, the paper should reflect the field experience. In other words, even though you could have read all the books and articles in Boston, this paper is only possible because of the unique insights you personally gained from your field experience.

**Schedule**

### USA Component

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>9 AM – 12 noon (SMG room 322)</td>
<td>• Read entire book “The European Union”</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>6 PM – 9 PM (SMG room 322)</td>
<td>• Read Part 1 (all of it) and Part 2 (sections on Belgium, France, Hungary and the Netherlands) in the “European Business Customs &amp; Manners” book. If needed, finish reading “The European Union”</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>6 PM – 9 PM (SMG room 322)</td>
<td>• Research brief is due (15 copies)</td>
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<td>• Prepare a 3-5 minute oral briefing to be given from your seat (think of it as a case opening) on your assigned topic of the brief (no need to have PowerPoint slides)</td>
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<td>• Get familiar with live course material on website</td>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>By July 2 nd 2010</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Final Paper Due. Electronic submission is fine.</td>
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**Daily European Schedule**

*See separate document*