

Academic Travel Courses - Fall 2026: Overview

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AHT 222T - Design Studies

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Art Histories, Ecologies, Industries

Faculty Leader(s): Johanna Fassel

Destination(s): Singapore and Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

Travel Duration: 10 days

Supplemental Fee (if any): CHF 1175 (for students invoiced in CHF) or USD 1565 (for students invoiced in USD)

Prerequisites (if any): N/A

Course Description:

This course explores the fascinating histories of objects and environments that qualify as icons of design. How do the Eiffel Tower, Empire State Building or the Burj Khalifa stand as markers for values and ideals? Why makes for the longevity of the Little Black Dress as a fashion icon? These and other questions prompt the course to study built-environments and landscapes, designed spaces of interiors and for performance, as well as graphic design, industrial design, the decorative arts, and fashion design. Through an interdisciplinary framework that considers materials, technology, culture, consumption, politics, and sustainability, students will acquire the theoretical underpinning to understand how design is shaped and how processes of 'iconization' are at work for both tangible products and non-tangibles, including lifestyles.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

- investigating cultural heritage
- assessing sustainable building practices
- understanding architecture and design with the contexts of faith & culture
- calligraphy workshop
- permaculture garden experience

Skills Students will develop:

- Critical visual and cultural analysis – the ability to analyze objects, spaces, and visual forms within broader historical, social, political, and economic contexts, and to interpret how cultural meanings and values are constructed through design.
- Interdisciplinary research and synthesis – the capacity to integrate perspectives from fields such as art history, material culture, technology studies, sustainability, and consumer culture in order to evaluate complex design phenomena.
- Design thinking and creative problem-solving – the ability to apply iterative design-thinking methods, from conceptualization to prototyping, to develop innovative responses to conceptual or practical challenges.
- Concept development and communication – the skill to articulate design ideas clearly through visual, written, and verbal formats, and to present analytical and creative work to

diverse audiences.

Learning Outcomes:

- Acquire overview and knowledge about the history of design
- Explain the differences between the aesthetic, cultural and commercial value of design
- Understand how processes of "iconization" are shaped by various factors (culture, technology, etc.)
- Apply knowledge of history and theory to investigate specific non/tangible design products Analyze how specific frameworks intersect with and apply to other disciplines
- Evaluate what qualifies as successful design today and projecting future needs and visions
- Create prototype for a design idea through a guided design thinking process
- Apply the knowledge of the history of design to other disciplines
- Work independently and create original and innovative works, ideas and solutions
- Assess your course experience in terms of learning and personal growth
- Formulate future-oriented professional and personal goals

TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

Plane travel: Malpensa - Singapore - Kuala Lumpur - Singapore - Malpensa

Type Accommodation:

Hotel Accommodation

Accommodation Arrangements:

Double Rooms

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

Walking but not extensive, depending on the heat condition

Climate & Environment:

Tropic

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

Passport must be valid for at least 6 months at time of entry to Singapore and Malaysia - visa may be required for certain citizens - routine up-to-date vaccinations are recommended (i.e. hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus, etc.)

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

Singapore has very strict laws what concerns behavior in public: key rules include prohibitions on littering, smoking in public, chewing gum, jaywalking, and public displays of affection. Public intoxication is banned after 10:30 PM, and serious offenses like drug smuggling carry the death penalty. Malaysia is a Muslim country: Key rules include dressing conservatively (covering shoulders/knees in religious spots), using the right hand for eating/giving, avoiding public displays of affection (PDA), and not touching people's heads

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Students should be independent, cultural curious, with a sense of adventure to explore and embrace the unknown

AHT 263T - Art & Food

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Art History

Faculty Leader(s): Gabriel Gee

Destination(s): France (Marseille, Lyon)

Travel Duration: 8 nights

Supplemental Fee (if any): N/A

Prerequisites (if any): N/A

Course Description:

This course looks at connections between the visual arts and food, considered both under the perspective of edible substance, and the culinary arts. First, it explores the representation of food in pictorial traditions in the early modern and modern ages, considering social, cultural and economic visual and culinary intersections. Second, the course engages with contemporary art practices that place food as their core material and subject matter. In doing so, the discussion moves to present issues regarding the politics of food. Here, aesthetics confront socio-economic and environmental debates by placing relations on the centre stage. The course involves some encounters with artists and scholars who work with contemporary culinary aesthetics and food politics. The travel component is France.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

- have gained an overview of significant art historical modes of representing food cultures through the ages.
- be able to unfold different modes of interaction between artworks and society as mediated through culinary and nutritional motifs and issues.

Skills Students will develop:

- have acquired the visual literacy in order to read works of art in terms of their formal organization and symbolic content
- be familiar with the methods and models of art history, and to be able to apply them to specific case studies
- be able to write and speak analytically and critically about art works and ideas
- be able to use library and university resources to complete papers and presentations

Learning Outcomes:

- have acquired the visual literacy in order to read works of art in terms of their formal organization and symbolic content
- have gained an overview of significant art historical modes of representing food cultures through the ages.
- be able to unfold different modes of interaction between artworks and society as mediated through culinary and nutritional motifs and issues.

- be familiar with the methods and models of art history, and to be able to apply them to specific case studies
 - be able to write and speak analytically and critically about art works and ideas
 - be able to use library and university resources to complete papers and presentations
-

TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

train

Type Accommodation:

hotel

Accommodation Arrangements:

shared rooms

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

walking

Climate & Environment:

mild

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

EU travel

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

N/A

BIO 215T - Alpine and Nordic Ecosystem Dynamics

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Environmental Science

Faculty Leader(s): Silvia Piccinelli

Destination(s): Italian Alps - Bormio

Travel Duration: 9 days (8 nights)

Supplemental Fee (if any): N/A

Prerequisites (if any): ENV200 or BIO101

Course Description:

This course explores alpine ecosystems and their responses to environmental change, with particular attention to the impacts of climate change on mountain environments. Through field-based learning in the Italian Alps, students will directly observe ecological processes and mountain environmental systems in high-elevation landscapes. Students should be prepared for outdoor activities in varied weather conditions and mountain terrain.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

- Experiential field-based learning in alpine ecosystems where students directly apply ecological concepts introduced in the classroom.
- Guided hikes and environmental observation across different alpine environments including glacier landscapes, high-elevation vegetation zones, and protected mountain areas.
- Hands-on environmental field activities examining vegetation communities, dendroecology observations, snow and permafrost-related processes, and broader mountain ecosystem assessment, including environmental research methods and field data collection.
- Integration of the instructor's alpine field research experience to illustrate how environmental research is designed, conducted, and interpreted in real-world ecosystems.
- Interaction with researchers/professionals working on alpine ecosystems, wildlife, and environmental research in protected mountain areas.

Skills Students will develop:

Field observation and environmental assessment; critical thinking and analytical skills; ecological data collection and interpretation; application of environmental field research methods; problem-solving in natural environments; teamwork during field activities; scientific communication; ethical reasoning related to environmental conservation and human–nature interactions; adaptability and resilience in challenging outdoor conditions.

Learning Outcomes:

- Apply ecological concepts to real alpine ecosystems
- Analyze how environmental factors influence plant and animal communities in mountain environments
- Examine ecological processes and species adaptations in cold ecosystems

- Assess the impacts of climate change and human activities on alpine ecosystems
 - Gain experience with environmental field research and data collection
 - Evaluate conservation challenges in protected mountain environments.
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TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

Primarily bus (possible train for specific excursions).

Type Accommodation:

Hotel

Accommodation Arrangements:

Shared rooms (typically 2–4 students per room) with private bathrooms.

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

Daily hiking and outdoor field activities in alpine environments requiring moderate physical effort. Students should expect extended time outdoors with extensive walking on mountain trails, including uneven and steep terrain at high elevation. Appropriate mountain equipment is required (e.g., hiking boots, backpack, and outdoor clothing); detailed preparation instructions will be sent to enrolled students during summer.

Climate & Environment:

Weather in high-elevation mountain environments is often unpredictable. During the travel period, temperatures may range roughly from about –5 to 10 °C (23–50 °F) and can be colder at higher elevations. Conditions may include rain, wind, and possibly snowfall. Field activities will take place outdoors in variable alpine weather conditions, so students must come prepared with appropriate warm layers and rain protection.

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

No specific vaccinations are required for travel to Italy. U.S. citizens do not require a visa for short stays. Students should inform the instructor as soon as possible of any relevant medical conditions, allergies, or dietary restrictions.

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

Students must follow all safety instructions during field activities and remain with the group while hiking. Leaving the group or moving away from designated areas during hikes or activities is not permitted. Due to the alpine environment, careful and responsible behavior is required at all times, including respect for wildlife, vegetation, and natural areas.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Students should have a strong interest in environmental science and outdoor field-based learning. The course involves extended time outdoors in alpine environments and requires moderate physical effort, including hiking on mountain trails and participating in field activities in variable weather conditions. Students must come prepared with appropriate mountain clothing and equipment. Active participation and engagement in field observations and discussions are essential for the success of the course.

BUS 243T - Personal Finance

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Finance

Faculty Leader(s): David Suleiman

Destination(s): Frankfurt and Berlin (Germany)

Travel Duration: 8 nights

Supplemental Fee (if any): N/A

Prerequisites (if any): N/A

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the basic concepts and tools needed to make wise and informed personal financial decisions. The content of this course is presented from a practical point of view and with an emphasis on the consumer as the financial decision-maker. The primary objective of this course is to help students apply finance practices to their own life. For example, students will learn how to plan and manage personal finances, how to obtain credit to purchase a home or a car, and how to invest personal financial resources in stocks, bonds, and real estate. Students will also learn how to interpret financial and economic news that have an impact on personal finances. The travel component of this course will include visits to several cities in Germany such as Frankfurt and Berlin.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

- Guided tour of the European Central Bank
- Visit to the Deutsche Börse City Center with an introductory lecture on global financial markets.
- Visit to the German Federal Bank (Bundesbank) and Money Museum exploring the history of money and financial institutions.
- Lecture on monetary policy by economist from ECB at the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management.
- Lecture on Real Estate Finance at Frankfurt School of Finance & Management.
- Cost-of-living scavenger hunt assignments in Frankfurt and Berlin, analyzing everyday expenses and financial decision-making in major European cities.
- Cultural visits may include visits to places such as the East Side Gallery in Berlin, Heidelberg Castle and Frankfurt's Palmengarten, offering insight into Germany's historical heritage and urban cultural landscapes.

Skills Students will develop:

- Financial literacy and understanding of financial systems
- Budgeting and cost-of-living analysis in international contexts
- Critical thinking and applied economic analysis
- Observational research and data collection
- Intercultural communication and global awareness
- Teamwork and collaborative problem-solving

Learning Outcomes:

- Explain the role of central banks, financial institutions, and stock exchanges in the global economy.
 - Analyze how monetary policy, financial markets, and real estate markets influence personal financial decisions.
 - Compare cost-of-living and financial behaviors across different urban environments.
 - Apply personal finance concepts to real-world economic contexts through experiential learning.
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TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

Train and plane

Type Accommodation:

Hotel

Accommodation Arrangements:

Shared double or triple rooms

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

Some walking required

Climate & Environment:

Mild to cold weather; rain possible.

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

N/A

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

Alcohol consumption is not permitted on the train or plane.

CLCS 205T - Paris Protagonist: Lost in Translation

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies

Faculty Leader(s): Fabio Ferrari

Destination(s): Paris, France

Travel Duration: 8-10 days

Supplemental Fee (if any): N/A

Prerequisites (if any): N/A

Course Description:

A hybrid creative writing/cultural studies class which explores narrative and artistic representations of Paris, with emphasis on francophone short stories. Students gain valuable knowledge on the history of the city and how it impacts the ways in which the city is portrayed over time. Working with the tools acquired through our lessons on Parisian cultural history we travel to Paris as inquisitive authors of essays and short stories that probe some of the key phenomena that frame contemporary first-hand experiences of the capital.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

3-hour morning tours, 2-hour writing workshops (with guest speakers/authors/artists when available)

Skills Students will develop:

Creative writing, critical thinking, analytical, intercultural, communication, teamwork, problem-solving

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and contextualize major literary and artistic movements associated with Paris within their historical, social and ideological frameworks
 - analyze representations of Paris in French short fiction and related artistic productions, including film
 - interpret urban space as discourse, engage primary texts in situ, compare aesthetic paradigms, distinguishing how different movements frame urban experience
 - synthesize cultural history and creative practice
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TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

Plane to Paris, metro and significant travel on foot

Type Accommodation:

Hotel

Accommodation Arrangements:

Usually doubles with small kitchenette

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

Extensive walking

Climate & Environment:

October in Paris can be rainy and cold

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

None

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

There's a lot of independent work on site and group tours/experiences that require concentration and maturity

CLCS 310T - The Culture of Cities: Sustainability

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies

Faculty Leader(s): Caroline Wiedmer

Destination(s): Berlin

Travel Duration: 10 days

Supplemental Fee (if any): N/A

Prerequisites (if any): N/A

Course Description:

This course approaches the culture of a city through the lens of social justice in Berlin, asking how questions of ethics, civic participation, inclusion, and sustainability are negotiated. Students examine overlapping and interacting dimensions—from the material (housing, infrastructure, streets, and climate-conscious public spaces), to the symbolic (narratives, memory, heritage), and the performative (art, music, film, protest, and everyday practices). This course will be a collaboration with students from Minerva University.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

Collaboration with students from Minerva University, Lugano becomes a classroom, contact with local population in both Lugano and Berlin, chance to participate in end-of-semester conference, opportunity to do some of the coursework in German.

Skills Students will develop:

Social competencies, linguistic competencies, IT competencies, critical and analytical competencies in reading texts and urban textures.

Learning Outcomes:

- Explain key concepts related to urban culture, ethics, justice, and sustainability, including migration, gentrification, urban commons, social inequality, and environmental responsibility.
- Describe how historical, political, and cultural contexts shape urban development in two very different European cities.
- Apply ethical, cultural, and policy frameworks to analyze urban case studies in Lugano and Berlin.
- Use observation, interviews, and urban fieldwork methods to assess how ethical challenges are negotiated in everyday urban spaces.
- Integrate cultural analysis with policy perspectives, spatial analysis, and empirical observation to develop interdisciplinary understandings of urban life.
- Connect material, symbolic, and performative dimensions of the city in comparative analyses of urban transformation.
- Analyze how urban policies and cultural practices affect different social groups, particularly migrants, refugees, and marginalized populations.

- Reflect on how individual and collective actors shape—and are shaped by—ethical choices in urban environments.
 - Develop a deeper concern for issues of justice, inclusion, and sustainability in contemporary cities.
 - Articulate informed positions on ethical responsibilities related to urban citizenship and civic participation.
 - Formulate meaningful research questions about urban ethical challenges and pursue them collaboratively.
 - Critically evaluate sources, data, and narratives related to cities and apply these skills to future academic or professional contexts.
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TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

train/plane

Type Accommodation:

Apartments

Accommodation Arrangements:

Shared apartments with shared bedrooms and singles in case of justification. Shared bathrooms.

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

City walks, nothing too taxing.

Climate & Environment:

Mild but changeable, average highs around 15 degrees.

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

No recommended vaccinations, safe, wide choice of cuisines, typical forms of dietary restrictions (vegan, vegetarian, lactose intolerance, coeliac, kosher, etc.) can easily be accommodated, Schengen, no specific visa requirement.

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

No, be your lovely selves

COM 230T: Communication, Fashion and the Formation of Taste

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Communication and Media Studies

Faculty Leader(s): Sugiyama

Destination(s): Italy (Milan and Florence)

Travel Duration: 8 nights, 9 days

Supplemental Fee (if any): N/A

Prerequisites (if any): N/A

Course Description:

This course examines the role communication and media play in shaping fashion and taste for food, clothing, and other cultural activities in contemporary society. Through on-campus activities (e.g., course readings, lectures and discussions, and relevant assignments) and field activities during the travel (e.g., meeting with professionals, museum visits, field work), students will learn to reflect and analyze the fashion communication and media, and gain an insight into the related industries.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

- Field study experience in the Italian cities that lead the global fashion and cultural industry
- Opportunities to interact first-hand with the industry leaders and professionals

Skills Students will develop:

Analytical skills for media and communication; Research skills; Field observation skills; Critical thinking; General communication skills applicable to career development; Intercultural competence

Learning Outcomes:

- Define taste and fashion in the context of contemporary everyday consumption
 - Describe the role media and communication play in the fashion process and taste formation
 - Observe and analyze fashion media and communication
 - Recognize the work of relevant professionals
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TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

trains

Type Accommodation:

hotel

Accommodation Arrangements:

Twin rooms but there might be some triples depending on the number of students and group composition

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

Walking in the city

Climate & Environment:

nothing extraordinary

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

Nothing extraordinary

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

Students are not allowed to bring their external guests to our hotel including the lobby area

HIS 241T: Modern Türkiye

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: History

Faculty Leader(s): Ariane Mottale

Destination(s): Istanbul

Travel Duration: 9 days

Supplemental Fee (if any): N/A

Prerequisites (if any): N/A

Course Description:

Modern Türkiye has risen as a major player on the international scene in its century-old life span and claimed its place as one of the main heirs to the Ottoman Empire. The course contextualizes the imperial origins and future perspectives of the Turkish republic by discussing the evolution of the Ottoman beylik into a multi-continental empire and its legacies in the 20th and 21st centuries.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

- Visits to some of the major sites of Ottoman administration: Topkapi, Dolmabahçe, and Yıldız Palaces
- Visits to major sites of worship and of artistic value: Aya Sofia/Hagia Sophia, Sultanahmet Mosque (Blue Mosque), Basilica Cistern
- Experience of a Sufi ritual
- Visits to Jewish and Christian sites to learn about the minority experience within empire
- Tour(s) with expert on historical restoration

Skills Students will develop:

- critical and historical thinking
- intercultural communication
- primary and secondary source analysis

Learning Outcomes:

- becoming acquainted with the major trends in Turkish and human history from the 16th century to the present
 - interpreting the use of historical memory
 - becoming familiar with the types of primary and secondary sources available for the study of Ottoman and Turkish history
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TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

plane, bus, by foot

Type Accommodation:

Hotel

Accommodation Arrangements:

Shared rooms with shared bathrooms

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

extensive walking in urban environment

Climate & Environment:

mild weather

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

Some students may need a visa

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

Students should be aware that the country they are visiting is generally safe, but that many behaviors that are either tolerated or lightly punished in Switzerland may bear much harsher consequences in the location we visit. Any student who joins the course is expected to maintain their critical engagement with sites we will visit and people we will meet, while also displaying a respectful demeanor that is mindful of the changing political climate.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Students should be aware that the course has a substantial reading component and that classes are often discussion-based

POL 176T/376T International Environmental Politics

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Political Science

Faculty Leader(s): Professor Armando Zanicchia and Professor James Jiler (Costa Rica)

Destination(s): Costa Rica: Jardín de Poas sustainable coffee farm; Poás Volcano National Park; Guayabo National Monument archaeological site; the Bribri Indigenous Territory; Canto del Río Cloud Forest Reserve; Cahuita National Park; Villa de Luz for sustainable food and cheese production; and the Ara Project Conservation initiative to save the Great Green Macaw.

Travel Duration: 11 days (departure/return)

Supplemental Fee (if any): CHF 1'350 (for students invoiced in CHF) or USD 1,800 (for students invoiced in USD)

Prerequisites (if any): N/A

Course Description:

International cooperation is essential for exploring and applying solutions to global environmental problems. This course will examine the origins of environmental challenges facing nations such as climate change, desertification, biodiversity, and international trade in endangered species. Further topics for investigation will include the impact of globalization and the feasibility of sustainable development in the industrial north and developing south, as well as the effectiveness of international treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol and CITES in the current international political climate. Our academic travel case study will be a variety of locations in Costa Rica.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

This course will include site visits, tree planting and field research at Jardín de Poas sustainable coffee farm; intercultural immersion at the Bribri Indigenous Territory in Costa Rica where primitive conditions will prevail; moderate hikes to Poas Volcano National Park, Canto del Río Cloud Forest Reserve and the Guayabo National Monument archaeological site; a snorkeling and jungle experience at Cahuita National Park; volunteer activities at the Ara Project in Puerto Viejo dedicated to the recovery of the endangered Great Green Macaw; and a diverse series of lectures and seminars related to the above.

Skills Students will develop:

Students will have numerous opportunities to apply critical thinking skills, analytical field work, ethical reasoning, and intercultural engagement in the modern and Indigenous Indian context. Further, oral and written communication skills will be applied to sustainable problem-solving as well as related team building exercises.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to analyze local environmental policies in the broader international context, apply research methods in a variety of field exercises, evaluate cross-cultural practices between the modern and traditional sectors, and understand the challenges and

successes of Costa Rican conservation in a country long-known for combining extraordinary biodiversity, vibrant cultural traditions, and a commitment to sustainability. Outcomes will be positioned within local communities, academic presentations, and cultural exchanges to deepen students' understanding of Costa Rica's environmental stewardship and social development.

TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

Bus/Plane/Bus

Type Accommodation:

Eco-coffee farm; hotel; indigenous Bribri shelter/lodge

Accommodation Arrangements:

shared rooms/shared bathrooms

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

Medium difficulty hikes/ some river and coral reef ocean swimming.

Climate & Environment:

Comfortably mild Caribbean climate, some mountain weather and elevation, rain likely on Pacific side of Costa Rica.

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

Normal travel vaccinations and safety recommendations (none required); all diets (e.g. omnivore, vegetarian, vegan, etc.) will be accommodated; all meals are included with the exception of several dinners where monetary compensation will be provided by the travel leader; visa requirements dependent on individual passport (students are recommended to check in advance).

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

We are traveling as a group during the entire trip (24/7), so supportive, collegial, and mature behavior is expected. Any disruptive behavior impacting the group will result in the student(s)' dismissal from the academic travel with repatriation at their own expense.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Students will be living in close quarters and will be expected to consistently exhibit teamwork and helpful assistance to our hosts and invited speakers.

PSY 230T - Psychology of Emergencies: Stress, Trauma, and Crisis Response

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Psychology

Faculty Leader(s): Martino Ongis

Destination(s): Soave and Bergamo, Italy

Travel Duration: 8 nights

Supplemental Fee (if any): N/A

Prerequisites (if any): N/A

Course Description:

This course explores how people think, feel, and act when everyday life is disrupted by accidents, hazards, or fast-moving public emergencies. Drawing on cognitive, social, and clinical psychology, students examine acute stress, decision-making under pressure, teamwork, crisis communication, trauma, and recovery, while learning practical, evidence-based tools such as psychological first aid and emotion regulation. Through scenario-based activities and an off-campus learning component in Italy, the course connects psychological theory to real-world emergency preparedness and response.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

- SAFE Field Module in Soave and the former Monte Calvarina training area: students participate in a structured field component developed with SAFE Foundation, linking the psychology of emergencies to a real training environment rather than a classroom-only setting. The draft module includes safety/risk-awareness briefing, crisis protocols, and guided activities at SAFE's operational site and ex-base Calvarina.
- Lectures, testimonies, and applied seminars with professionals: the travel component is designed to include theoretical/testimonial sessions on crisis contexts, stress, trauma, resilience, and decision-making, giving students direct exposure to how emergency-related psychological principles are used by practitioners.
- Scenario-based experiential learning: students engage in guided, non-contact scenario activities focused on teamwork, communication, stress management, and practical decision-making under pressure. These experiences translate core concepts from cognitive, social, and clinical psychology into observable behavior and applied skill.
- Structured debriefing and reflective analysis: a distinctive feature of the module is the emphasis on debriefing after activities, allowing students to connect field experiences to course frameworks such as threat appraisal, acute stress, group processes, and recovery. The course may also include a short final report or structured reflection linking observation to theory.
- Applied introduction to preparedness practices: the planned module may include introductory elements of orientation and/or basic first aid, where appropriate to the group

level and SAFE policies, helping students understand how psychological readiness interacts with basic preparedness skills.

- Learning through partnership with a specialized organization: the course is academically distinctive because it is delivered through a formal collaboration between FUS and SAFE Foundation, a non-profit organization active in security, civil protection, governance, and training activities in the Soave area. This gives students access to an applied learning setting that supports case-based and field-based study of emergencies.

Skills Students will develop:

Critical thinking and analytical reasoning, decision-making under pressure, teamwork and collaborative problem-solving, clear communication in high-stakes contexts, risk awareness and situational judgment, emotional self-regulation and stress management, ethical reasoning and role-boundary awareness, reflective practice and self-assessment, adaptability in unfamiliar environments, intercultural and professional communication

Learning Outcomes:

- Explain major psychological frameworks relevant to emergencies, including threat appraisal, acute stress, cognitive load, group dynamics, trauma, and recovery.
- Analyze real or simulated emergency scenarios to identify the psychological mechanisms shaping behavior, coordination, and outcomes.
- Apply evidence-based strategies for functioning under pressure, including attention management, emotion regulation, teamwork, and communication.
- Evaluate how risk and crisis communication can reduce confusion and harm in specific contexts.
- Differentiate between common acute stress reactions and potential red flags for trauma-related difficulties, while recognizing appropriate non-clinical support boundaries.
- Demonstrate effective collaboration, role clarity, and adaptive problem-solving during field-based activities.
- Integrate observations from the Italy travel component into a structured reflection or field report linking theory to practice.
- Develop greater self-awareness about personal coping, wellbeing, and performance in high-stress environments.

TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

Train, bus

Type Accommodation:

Hotel, with a possible overnight stay in a compound on a former military base, subject to availability.

Accommodation Arrangements:

Shared rooms

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

Substantial walking is expected throughout the course, along with extended standing during site visits, travel days, and field-based learning activities. Students may also

encounter stairs, uneven outdoor terrain, and variable weather conditions, but no swimming or high-intensity physical training is required.

Climate & Environment:

During the travel period, Soave and Bergamo are typically mild to cool, with daytime temperatures gradually dropping over the month and cooler mornings/evenings. Rain is possible in both areas, and students should be prepared for variable autumn conditions, including overcast skies, occasional showers, and some sun exposure during outdoor activities.

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

The course includes a field module with SAFE Foundation, a non-profit partner organization that provides security and preparedness training in the Soave area. Participants must complete the required SAFE screening/privacy forms, disclose relevant health, dietary, medication, or mental health needs in advance, and follow all safety instructions; activities may involve outdoor exposure, managed stress, and simulations with loud noises or flashing lights, and participation is not permitted during pregnancy or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or impairing medications. EU students should carry a valid ID, while non-EU students may need a passport and any required Schengen visa/residence documents; students should also be up to date on routine vaccinations, including measles/MMR.

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

Yes. In addition to standard campus conduct rules, students must follow the site-specific safety and discipline requirements of the SAFE field module: attend and comply with all safety briefings, remain with the group under instructor supervision, avoid handling equipment or entering training areas unless instructed, and not participate under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medications that impair judgment or reaction time. Photography, audio/video recording, interviews, and sharing identifying details about activities or participants are not permitted unless expressly authorized. Dangerous, uncooperative, or non-compliant behavior may result in immediate suspension or exclusion from specific activities or from the Academic Travel course; practical activities are designed as non-contact exercises and do not involve weapons.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This course requires maturity, punctuality, and full engagement in a structured, professionally supervised learning environment. Participants must be 18+, complete the required SAFE forms before departure, be prepared to work in English, and remain flexible, as some activities or logistics may be adjusted for safety, weather, or operational reasons; additional clothing or equipment requirements may also be communicated closer to departure.

SJS 377T - Sustainable Education in Madagascar

COURSE SNAPSHOT

Academic Discipline: Social Justice and Sustainability

Faculty Leader(s): Rossana Galli

Destination(s): Madagascar

Travel Duration: 15 days

Supplemental Fee (if any): CHF 1500 (for students invoiced in CHF) or USD 2000 (for students invoiced in USD)

Prerequisites (if any): SJS100 and FRE200 recommended

Course Description:

This course immerses Franklin students in rural Madagascar, exploring challenges such as limited schooling, low-quality education, scarce employment, poor infrastructure, and environmental and health issues. Students are hosted by local schools, conduct field research, and participate in the activities of the Swiss NGO Boky Mamiko, gaining first-hand insight into poverty, environmental challenges, and community life. Along the way, students develop intercultural competence, ethical reasoning, adaptability, and teamwork, while reflecting critically on their experiences and engaging meaningfully with local youth, teachers, and entrepreneurs.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS ON TRAVEL

Distinctive Academic Experiences:

- community engagement through the support of 4-day workshops organised by the NGO for local students
- sharing daily life with local students for a week
- several nature/environmental site visits, including a marine reserve and a world heritage site

Skills Students will develop:

intercultural competence and communication skills; ethical reflection and responsible decision-making; field research skills; adaptability and teamwork

Learning Outcomes:

- Gain insight into the lived experiences and perspectives of people affected by poverty
 - Develop an understanding of the social and ecological impacts of environmental issues in rural settings
 - Develop critical thinking and observational skills through field-based investigation
 - Experience first-hand how non-profit organizations operate and contribute to local communities.
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TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Transportation:

Plane, boat, car

Type Accommodation:

hotel, school hostel, dormitory

Accommodation Arrangements:

shared rooms, shared bathrooms (up to 8-10 people per room)

Daily Mobility & Physical Demands:

extensive walking, swimming

Climate & Environment:

hot weather; mostly dry; strong sun exposure

Health, Safety & Visa Considerations:

Hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid vaccines required; anti-malaria prophylaxis voluntary; fish-based diet; visa on arrival

Behavioral or conduct policies that differ from standard campus expectations:

100% alcohol free travel

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Students should be prepared for travel to a remote region of Madagascar, where living and transportation conditions are basic. Pre-travel volunteering, such as preparing school materials or supporting charity events, is encouraged but optional, and all participants are expected to represent the Swiss NGO Boky Mamiko responsibly. Flexibility, open-mindedness, and active engagement with local communities are essential, as is following safety guidelines and reflecting thoughtfully on the experience.

Completion of SJS100 (Social Justice and Sustainability) is recommended, as is an intermediate level of French to facilitate communication with the local community.
