

MBA ECT- Assumption Program
THIRD ANNUAL 3-WEEK STUDY TRIP TO ITALY (Rome, Florence & Milan/Como)

MBA 727 – Doing Business in Europe & Italy (3 credits)

First Summer Session 2015
June 2, 2015 to June 28, 2015

1. INSTRUCTORS:

Eric Drouart: edrouart@assumption.edu

Rome/Florence Segment: Tomasz Jaster: tjaster@assumption.edu

Como Internship Segment: J. Bart Morrison: jmorrison@assumption.edu

2. COURSE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVES:

The course is designed to provide MBA students with an in-depth understanding of the business behaviors and practices of one major country in Europe, Italy, and in particular to increase their understanding of the growth prospects and challenges of the European Union.

The European Union (EU), with its 28 Member States, and more than 500 million consumers enjoys a mature economic relationship with the US that is characterized by massive two-way trade and an extensive investment relationship. However, the EU market is a differentiated one, with each member state market having supply, distribution, demand, cultural and legal differences that merit individual attention.

The Assumption-MBA program works closely with the Como Chapter of UNINDUSTRIA (Italian Association of Small to Medium Sized Companies). Students will be placed in a small to medium-sized Italian company for a two-week professional placement and will work with the companies' owners and upper management teams to identify the international potential of their products in the US.

Students have been paired with their respective company and have been able to communicate with the management of the company before their departure to gain in-depth knowledge of their products, and outline and structure the project objectives and deliverables.

The first week and a half will be spent in Rome and Florence with visits of companies and cultural landmarks. The last two weeks will be spent in Como, north of Milan.

Students will be expected to:

Show an understanding of how macro-policy issues at the level of the European Union have an impact on the marketing of both products and services.

Increase their knowledge of EU institutions and identify areas where recent as well as future EU regulations and policies will impact businesses operating in Europe.

Show an understanding of the Italian economy (the current Italian debt crisis) and the current business environment.
Increase their knowledge of the role and importance of small to medium-sized companies (SMEs) in the European and Italian economy.
Define the structure of these companies and their organization by industrial clusters and networks of companies (manufacturers and suppliers).
Describe these companies quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of innovation, focused strategies, competitive advantages, organizational structure, and international competencies.
Understand the roles of private and public economic actors in Italy.
Understand globalization strategies used by companies where they will be placed or that they will visit during the trip.

COURSE OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

Demonstrate, through written work and Blackboard Collaborate discussion forum participation, an understanding of the business culture of Italy and its impact on the business operations of small to medium-sized companies.
Demonstrate an understanding of the European Union's institutions and policies and the resulting impact on the European business environment.
Understand the importance of history and culture through critical reflections on this international living experience
Apply critical thinking to assigned readings on European Union and Italy issues.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES:

This course will incorporate and use a number of teaching methods, including:

- **Lecture/readings of international/EU/Italy management concepts** – This will consist of a limited number of face-to-face or online class sessions that will provide a review of the history and culture of Italy and the European Union. A number of background readings will be placed on the Blackboard component of the course and students will be expected to come prepared with discussion points on each assigned reading.

In addition, students will be asked to be familiar with current events in Italy related to the business, economic, and political situation in Italy, before the trip, based on readings of the international business sections of general newspapers and business periodicals (i.e., Business Week, Fortune, etc.) and contribute materials related to Europe in general, and on Italy-specific companies and organizations.

- Daily de-brief sessions as well as Blackboard Collaborate sessions will be scheduled for a comprehensive sharing of placement experience across all trip participants

READING MATERIALS (Placed in Blackboard):

Handouts and links to websites will be used as readings, particularly from **McKinseyQuarterly**, McKinsey Company, and BCG (Boston Consulting Group).

Current events in business should be a fundamental part of any business course. News events in Europe and about American companies operating in Europe will be discussed. Students will be expected to read regularly business periodicals like Business Week and/or the WSJ, and to highlight articles on business issues/practices in Europe.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A. One-page overview of the company project (Due by email on Wednesday June 17 end-of-day):

After the kick-off meeting on Monday June 15, and the first two days of work in your company, the instructor would like to receive an in-depth outline of the project as discussed and agreed with your company's management. This will insure that both parties can manage expectations and understand the outcome of the project.

B. Draft of Additional Presentation to Company (Due by email on Wednesday June 24 end-of-day):

You should send me by email a copy of your draft presentation that I can review with you ahead of the wrap-up meeting and final presentation day of June 26.

C. Final Presentation (Due by email on Friday June 26 end-of-day).
D. Final Reflective Paper (Due by email on Friday July 3 end-of-day):

The course will conclude with an individual student reflective paper including a personal reflection of the trip as well as suggestions on how the trip can be improved in the future.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Behavior on the Trip: Based on past experience with field trips, a "Two Strikes" rule will be implemented in order to evaluate "Good Behavior" on the trip. Listed below are a few actions by individuals which can cause significant problems to the group as a whole and that should be avoided

• Missing deadlines for submitting payments, required paperwork or documents.

• Lateness of five minutes or more for any activity on the trip.

• Inappropriate attire – business attire or business casual dress is required for all lectures, meetings and company visits.

• Any other action that causes significant problems to the group as a whole.

These actions will impact the final grade as follows:

1. First Offence – Warning

2. Second Offence – Lose one full letter grade (i.e. A becomes B, etc.)

CREDITS:

Students will receive a total of 3 Credits for the successful completion of all assignments.

3. TRIP ITINERARY

Departure Date: June 2 Tuesday – Boston – Rome with one stop

June 3 Wednesday – Arrival in Rome Fiumicino Airport

June 3 – 10: 8-night stay at AC Rome Campus

Assumption College Rome Campus (Villino Dufault Building)

Via San Pio V, 55

00165 Roma, Italia

June 4 – Free Day

June 5 – Visit of EU Offices (TBD)

June 6 and 7 – Free week-end in Rome/Possibility of Visiting Pompeii (Based on students' decisions)

June 8 – Visit of US Embassy in Rome (Confirmed in afternoon)

June 9 – Visit of Central Bank of Italy (Confirmed for 3:00 p.m.)

June 10 – Visit of UNINDUSTRIA National Office (TBD)

June 11 – Travel to Florence

Confirmed Exchange Workshop with James Madison University students at 5:30 p.m. followed by Social

June 11 – 13: 3 nights stay in Florence

B&B Address:

Sanctuary B&B Firenze
Convent Guest House in Florence
Borgo Pinti, 15 Firenze 50121
Bookings and Inquiries: +39 334 372 76 69
Email: info@sanctuarybbfirenze.com

www.sanctuarybbfirenze.com

June 12 – Free Day

June 13 – Free Day

June 14 – Travel from Florence to Como

June 14 – 27: 14 nights stay in Como

Hotel Address:

Vittorio B&B Borghi

Via XX Settembre 36 CO Italy

Como

Tel.: 39 327 102 0080

http://www.bedandbreakfastcomocentro.it/index_eng.html

June 15 – Kick-Off Meeting with Companies

June 15 – June 26: 2-week practicum

June 19 – Presentation on EU at Unindustria Building

June 20 and 21 – Free Week-end (Milano World Expo)

June 26 – Wrap-up of Company Assignments/Presentations

June 27 – Free day

June 28 – Departure Milan for Boston

4. GUIDELINES TO WORK WITH COMPANIES:

Italian companies will be located in and around Como, and should be easily accessible by public transportation from the hotel. It is anticipated that the company will pick you up in the morning and bring you back at the end of the working day.
Breakfast and dinner will be provided around the hotel and should be taken as a group to provide for the opportunity to share company placement experience. Lunch will be provided by the companies. Lunch could be one hour or two hour in length.
English language issues might arise because there could be a limited number of people fluent in English, and these persons might not available everyday due to business conflicts. You should be ready to work independently on your project with minimal supervision and/or guidance from the management of the company.
Because of their small to medium size, companies might not have computers available or computers using an Italian-language software. Bring your own laptop.
Dress Code: Be mindful that it is the summer in Italy and that AC might be at a premium. Be aware also that Italian put more emphasis on personal appearance and personal clothing than Americans. See what the dress code of your company is and dress accordingly. Business casual could be acceptable.

Please note that it is anticipated that the kick-off meeting on Monday June 15 might include a press conference with the leadership of the Unindustria Como region, and media interviews. This might be one event to dress up for.

The main goals for your time with the company would be to assess very quickly at the beginning of your placement the scope and overall objectives of the international expansion project. You might have to spend time early to fully understand the products and the business processes of your company, the international countries where they have some business… and to identify what could be the differentiated attributes of their products vs. competition.

Based on last year's companies, the main area of weakness was in their lack of marketing knowledge: Many companies had difficulty outlining the real competitive advantage that they offer vs. their Italian or foreign competitors.

5. PRACTICAL MATTERS:

A. Money Exchange:

The best exchange rates can be obtained using withdrawals from ATM machines. Most ATM accepts US credit cards or debit cards. You get a better exchange rate than exchanging cash at airports or major cities. This also ensures that you do not have to carry a lot of cash during your trip.

You should call your bank/credit card company before the trip so that they are aware of the dates of the trip and that you will use your card in Italy. Otherwise, the bank/credit card

company might think that the card has been stolen because of sudden overseas use.

B. Major credit cards like Visa, Master Card are widely used; however, AMEX might be less widely accepted than other cards because of their higher merchants' fees. Traveler's checks are no longer very much used and could be difficult to cash.

Check with your credit card company to see if they will add an international exchange fee to transactions in Italy. They also might have special arrangements with a corresponding Italian bank for withdrawals. Some AMEX and Capital One cards might be without these fees.

C. Electronic devices:

The voltage in Italy is different than in the US. Italy runs on 220 volts whereas the US uses 110 volts. Most laptops can run on both 220 volts and 110 volts. However, you will need an adapter for the plugs used in Italy. Be careful also with any other appliances such as hair dryers or curlers. You would need a transformer. Hair dryers should be available in the hotel.

D. Meals: You should immediately notify us if you have any food allergies, or specific diet requirements like gluten-free food or vegetarian fare. Hotel can accommodate advanced requests.

E. Hotel laundry:

This can be an expensive proposition. Last year, students were very surprised with the laundry bills. Please check the rates before giving a bag of laundry. Do not request it for same day because it comes at a premium.

Laundry mats might be available in the vicinity of the hotel in Como and the campus residence in Rome.

F. Definitely bring cameras and video recording equipment to document your Italian experience.

G. Potential Activities on free days/week-ends:

Students are responsible for their own organization of visits and activities as well as the costs for these activities. Based on the experience of last year's trip, there could be a diverse range of individual preferences between shopping or cultural visits. With enough advance notices, things like car rentals or organized tours can be booked. Students should share interests and work together to share costs and experience.

6. COSTS:

The individual cost of the trip will be $4,500.00 and will cover airline transportation, local transportation in Rome and between cities, hotel accommodations, and 2 meals per day.

A first deposit of $1,500.00 is due by February 15, 2015

A second deposit of $1,500.00 is due on March 31, 2015

A final deposit of $1,500.00 is due on April 30, 2015

7. UNINDUSTRIA Como Contacts:

Our main contact will be Mr. Graziano Pagani in charge of educational training for Unindustria Como and Mrs. Antonella Mazzucato of CRM.

Unindustria Como

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