BEHV 5250/4900

Study-Abroad in Behavior Analysis: Education, Language, & Culture in Italy
Credits: 03

Department of Behavior Analysis
The University of North Texas

Summer, 2015

PROFESSOR: Traci Cihon, PhD, BCBA-D

PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION:
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COURSE DATES: Summer, 5wk2 2015

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Graduate and undergraduate students will take part in a study abroad program and course that
incorporates aspects of service learning and applied research while simultaneously providing
opportunities for cultural immersion and global studies. Students will take part in one (or more)
service learning/applied research foci: behavior analysis and its applications to autism
intervention, behavior analysis and educational interventions for students at-risk for school
failure, behavior analysis and organizations, and/or behavior analysis and staff training. These
programs will occur at Centro TICE (Piacenza and Rubiera) and the University of Parma’s
Master’s program in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). In an effort to minimize program costs
and maximize the cultural immersion experience, University of Parma students will host UNT
students and/or UNT students will share an apartment during the traditional workweek when
both groups of students will conduct research and engage in service learning activities at Centro
TICE. On weekends, UNT students will travel to surrounding areas (e.g., Milano, Firenze,
Genoa) and take part in guided tours emphasizing cultural, historical, and environmental
dimensions of the regions to foster their understanding of Italian language, history, and culture.

SUGGESTED PREREQUISITES:
One semester or more of participation in Dr. Traci Cihon’s Global Studies and Second Language
Acquisition research, training, and service lab. Participating students are interested in cultural
differences and similarities, interdisciplinary approaches to student learning and behavior,
international studies, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. We have two distinct lines of
research: second language acquisition and the effects of study abroad on student learning and
behavior. And a semester of formal instruction in Italian.
Practica or special problems courses completed in your preferred focus area for international work/global studies.

Familiarity or fluency in Italian, Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, or French.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PARTICIPATION:**
Undergraduate students should have a declared major or minor in Behavior Analysis, have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 and a discipline specific overall GPA of 3.0. A letter of support from a current faculty member from the Department of Behavior Analysis is recommended.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
Students will develop knowledge of their own cultural heritage/world view.

Students will identify their personal biases with respect to cultural groups similar to and different from their own, and describe how these biases may impact their professional practice, professional role, and scholarship.

Students will develop a knowledge base of other cultures and world views and display openness toward learning about other cultures, values, and belief systems.

Students will explain how bias, prejudice, and discrimination might be established in a person and a group in terms of operant and cultural selection.

Students will describe the importance of and methods for ensuring that procedures and outcomes of treatment are compatible with personal and cultural variables.

Students will design, discuss, implement, and evaluate culturally sensitive behavior analytic interventions for their chosen focus area (behavior interventions for individuals with autism, fluency-based interventions for children at-risk for school failure, parent training, or second language acquisition).

Students will be able to explain the philosophical assumptions of the science of human behavior, such as the lawfulness of behavior, empiricism, experimental analysis, and parsimony and how it relates to practices in both their home and host cultures.

Students will describe and provide examples of the benefits of environmental explanations of behavior as applied to human affairs, group differences, and diversity issues.

Students will develop a basic Italian vocabulary including discipline specific vernacular.
LEARNING ACTIVITIES & EVALUATION:

Attendance, Engagement, & Behavior
This course is heavily based in experiential learning activities. In addition, when studying abroad, participating students are representatives of the University of North Texas and the Department of Behavior Analysis at the University of North Texas (among other important representations such as Texas, the United States in general). Also, participating students will be interacting directly with clients of Centro TICE and will be housed by our colleagues attending the University of Parma. Consistent attendance at required activities, high levels of engagement, and professional behavior are an absolute necessity of participating students. Moreover, the study abroad experience itself hinges on students attendance and engagement in the arranged activities. Attendance at and completion of pretrip and posttrip class meetings/events/activities are critical to both create a context for the study abroad experience, for reflection, and to support students in applying the impacts of the experience on future endeavors. For the sustainability of the program as well as the well being of the students, inconsistent attendance, lack of engagement, and unprofessional behavior will not be tolerated and will result in systematic loss of one letter grade at each offense.

CHE Log Reflective Journals
Students will be asked to keep a reflective journal of their experience throughout traveling and the course (including before and after the trip). Prior to the trip students will be asked to consider their expectations regarding the study abroad experience, identify and discuss what they hope to acquire from a disciplinary perspective regarding their anticipated focus area, and what personal strengths and barriers they foresee will impact their experience. Students should practice incorporating the aforementioned reflection topics in the observations recorded in their pretrip CHE log reflective journal entries for the month prior to studying abroad. During the trip, students will also fill out CHE log entries. Following the trip, students will be asked to reflect on their study abroad experience focusing CHE log entries around observations that are consistent and inconsistent with how their expectations for study abroad were or were not met, what they did or did not acquire from a disciplinary perspective during their study abroad and how that is or is not impacting their work/studies upon returning to UNT, and what strengths and barriers they are experiencing upon their reentry for the month following studying abroad. At each time period (pretrip, during trip, and posttrip) students will be required to fill out at least two entries (one page) in the CHE log reflective journal. Students will be asked to share the information they have obtained regarding their observations and reflections with their peers (before, during, and after the study abroad experience) and to learn from peers (before, during, and after the study abroad experience).

Microthemes
Eight short writing assignments will be due throughout the semester (four before the study abroad experience and four after the study abroad experience). A microtheme is a short (no more than 50 words) writing assignment on a specific topic. The writing should be succinct and free of
grammatical and structural errors. Each microtheme response should be written on a 3x5 notecard. Each microtheme is worth 15 points. The topics are listed below:

**Microtheme 1:** Describe your own cultural heritage/world view.

**Microtheme 2:** Describe your own personal biases with respect to cultural groups similar to and different from yours.

**Microtheme 3:** Describe how biases you described in Microtheme 2 may impact your professional practice, professional role, and scholarship.

**Microtheme 4:** Describe one expectation you have for your study abroad experience.

**Microtheme 5:** Using behavior analytic terminology and from a functional perspective, describe an application of behavior analysis that you observed during your study abroad experience that differed or was similar to an application of behavior analysis that you have observed prior to studying abroad and why it was different or similar.

**Microtheme 6:** Describe the most salient experience you had during your study abroad experience.

**Microtheme 7:** Describe how the experience you chose for Microtheme 6 will impact your future work as a behavior analyst.

**Microtheme 8:** Provide a definition for global/cultural competence as it pertains to behavior analysis as a discipline and those working within behavior analytic contexts.

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**SAFMEDS**

See All Fast Minute Each Day Shuffle (SAFMEDS) is an instructional tool that allows students to become both fast and accurate with a variety of course content including basic concepts and terms and definitions (cf., Eshleman, 1985). SAFMEDS will be used to assist students in acquiring a basic Italian vocabulary. SAFMEDS checkouts will be conducted in the airports/on the airplanes during travel to Milano. Students will checkout with a 1-min timing. The goal for the final checkout is 50 correct responses per minute, with the pinpointed learning channel being: see picture or English word/say Italian word. Fifty total points are available for the SAFMEDS checkouts. Points will be awarded based on the following criteria:

- **50+ cpm**  100 points
- **25-49 cpm**  50 points
- **13-24 cpm**  25 points
- **6-12 cpm**  2 point
- **5 or less cpm**  0 points

*cpm = correct responses per minute*
Independent Study/Service Learning/Research Project

Prior to departure, all students will be given an emphasis area for their independent study/service learning/research project (based on student interests when possible). Four focus areas are available: behavior interventions for individuals with autism, fluency-based interventions for children at-risk for school failure, organizational behavior management, or staff training. Each focus area will have a corresponding core set of assigned readings in addition to the required readings for the general study abroad course. During the study abroad experience, students will be required to partner with Centro TICE personnel (under the supervision of the course instructor) to further explore this topic in-vivo with current Centro TICE clients. Students will design, discuss, implement, and evaluate culturally sensitive behavior analytic interventions for their chosen focus area. The interventions may be one that is already in place upon arrival at Centro TICE or may be a newly designed intervention constructed from conversations between the student, course instructor, and Centro TICE personnel. Regardless of the nature of the focus area or intervention selected, students will be asked to provide a rationale for the intervention based on the client’s past behavior (i.e., baseline) that is empirically supported (notes literature references) and is contextually appropriate (based on key ecological, cultural, and environmental variables). Moreover, students will be expected to collect ongoing treatment data and make clinical decisions regarding the client’s progress with the target intervention. Students will also be responsible for discussing (with the aforementioned persons) and making data-based changes when clinically relevant. At the end of the independent study/service learning/research project, students will be expected to communicate the results and impact of their work in the abroad setting as well as upon their return to UNT (see independent study/service learning/research project presentation guidelines below).

Independent Study/Service Learning/Research Project Presentation & Paper

Students will present their Independent Study/Service Learning/Research Projects in one of the first Behavior Analysis Research Colloquiums (BARCs) held in the fall of 2014. At the onset of the BARC, the course instructor will provide a brief overview of the nature of the study abroad experience and her work in applications of behavior analysis in this area. Following the instructor’s presentation, the BARC will unfold into a poster presentation format. Students will have prepared a poster presentation depicting their Independent Study/Service Learning/Research Projects that will be presented at this time - including rationale for the project, research questions/client treatment goals, supporting data (both baseline and intervention when possible), a summary of their findings, and a discussion of the implications of their work. Posters should be constructed in a manner that maintains the professional standards of the discipline; however, students should create a visual context for their presentation that helps their peers to appreciate the cultural context in which the work was conducted. Graduate students will create individual posters and undergraduate students will have the choice between presenting individually or as a group or set of smaller groups. Poster presentations will be evaluated by a review panel that consists of at least three faculty members, senior graduate students, or staff members.
Select projects will be invited for potential submission for possible publication in a behavior analytic journal. The details of this course component are still in development. Interested students should contact the faculty advisor and will work directly with the faculty advisor during the Fall 2015 semester in a special problems course to develop the manuscript for submission.

COURSE GRADES
CHE Log Reflective Journals (210 total points)
   Thirty-five entries of pretrip logs @ 2 points per page = 70 points
   Thirty-five entries of CHE logs during the trip @ 2 point per page = 70 points
   Thirty-five entries of posttrip logs @ 2 point per page = 70 points

Microthemes (120 total points)
   Eight microthemes @ 15 points each = 120 points

SAFMEDS (100 total points)

Independent Study/Service Learning/Research Project (200 total points)

Independent Study/Service Learning/Research Project Presentation (100 total points)

Total Points = 630 points

GRADE EQUIVALENTS (% of 630 points earned):
A: 90% to 100%     B: 80% to 89%     C: 70% to 79%     F: 69% or less

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at http://www.unt.edu/oda/apply/index.html. Also, you may visit the Office of Disability Accommodation in the University Union (room 321) or call us at (940) 565-4323.

POLICIES
No individual exceptions can be made to the syllabus.
Re-grades: If a student believes an error has been made in grading, a written request for reconsideration of the item(s) in question may be submitted within 1 week of receipt of the graded material. The written request should specify the item(s) in question, and the reason the student believes the answer given was correct, citing relevant sources (e.g., page number from readings on which the answer was based).

Absences: If a student must be absent for any reason, s/he should arrange to submit the applicable written assignment early, as no assignments turned in after the due date can be accepted. Students are responsible for making their own arrangements to obtain information from any missed class period. There will be no additional make-up opportunities for missed examinations.

Student Conduct: Each student automatically certifies that any material submitted for grading is his/her own independent work. UNT policies require reporting of plagiarism or any suspected violations that constitute possible academic misconduct. Students are responsible for being familiar with the Code of Student Conduct.

Group work is encouraged; however, in the past there have been situations in which group work could have been considered cheating or plagiarism. “Legitimate” group work takes advantage of consultation with your peers, provides you with ideas, suggestions, corrections, etc., which you take into consideration in the development of your unique and individual product. Examples include reading the text and writing answers to the study guide items, then working closely with other students to compare study guide answers, and to attempt to resolve different understandings. Failing to do the reading, and memorizing answers that another student has written for the study guide is not legitimate group work; it is cheating. Drafting the assignments, then comparing specific aspects of your product to others’ is appropriate. Copying someone else’s work products (or making your work available to another student to copy) is not legitimate; it is cheating. Always, if you are unsure about boundaries of legitimate group work, please (1) ask for clarification from the instructor, and (2) make full disclosure so that there is no question about your intentions. We are very happy to talk about these boundaries and work with you to maximize your learning and maintain individual accountability.

Assistance: Students are encouraged to contact the instructor (by email or during office hours) or teaching assistant any time clarification or additional help in understanding the material is needed. Any questions that will aid you in mastering the material are welcomed.

Diversity Statement: It is the policy of the University of North Texas (and this instructor) not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability (where reasonable accommodations can be made), disabled veteran status or veteran of the Vietnam era status in its educational programs, activities, admissions or employment policies. In addition to complying with federal and state equal opportunity laws and regulations, the university through its diversity policy declares harassment based on individual differences (including sexual orientation) inconsistent with its mission and educational goals. Direct questions or concerns to the equal opportunity office, (940) 565-2456, or the dean of students, (940) 565-2648. TTY
access is available through Relay Texas: (800) 735-2989.

REQUIRED READINGS BY GENERAL TOPIC AREA
(note reading list may change prior to departure)

Behavior Analytic Interpretations of Culture


Learning Communities & Global Studies


The Globalization of Behavior Analysis


**Italian Language and Culture**


**Centro TICE: History & Background**


**Understanding Diversity and Working in Diverse Settings**


**REQUIRED READINGS BY FOCUS AREA**

*(note reading list may change prior to departure)*

**Autism Intervention**


Greer, R. D., & Ross, D. E. (2004). Verbal behavior analysis: A program of research in
the induction and expansion of complex verbal behavior. *Journal of Early and Intensive Behavior Intervention, 1*(2), 141-165.


Educational Interventions for Students At-risk for School Failure


Behavior Analysis and Organizations


Behavior Analysis and Staff Training


**OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS**
(note readings will be added prior to departure)


*Parent Training*


*Second Language Acquisition*


