KIIS Austria, Summer 2019 Syllabus

GERM 105: Introduction to Culture in Germany (D), Austria (A), Switzerland (CH), Liechtenstein (L)

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Syllabus subject to change

Course Description

This course, taught in English, focuses on contemporary cultural topics of Europe’s unique Four-Countries-Corner at Lake Constance (Bodensee). It is especially designed for the Kentucky Institute for International Studies, and will combine traditional course work with country-specific cultural experiences and excursions to significant sites in Germany (D), Austria (A), Switzerland (CH), and Liechtenstein (L), abbreviated D-A-CH-L.

Texts

Gielar, Peter. Culture Smart! Austria. The essential guide to customs & culture. Kuperard Publisher, 2018 www.culturesmart.co.uk

Tomalin, Barry. Culture Smart! Germany. The essential guide to customs & culture. Kuperard Publisher, 2015 www.culturesmart.co.uk

Facts about Germany: Foreign Policy, Society, Research, Economy, Culture www.facts-about-germany.de (Facts for Young Adults)

Hunter, Kendall. Culture Smart! Switzerland. The essential guide to customs & culture. Kuperard Publisher, 2016 www.culturesmart.co.uk


Ganer, Eleanor Ramrath. Eleanor’s Story. Peachtree Publishers, Atlanta, Georgia 1999

Course Objectives

This course offers students the unique opportunity to combine classroom instruction about a foreign culture with the first-hand experience of living fully immersed in that culture. It offers the opportunity to become familiar with important geographical, political, economic, social and cultural aspects of German-speaking Europe, past and present; to visit a variety of sites in the extraordinary region of Austria’s Vorarlberg; to interact daily with Austrian / German / Swiss community and host family members in order to gain a better understanding of their views, customs and beliefs; to be introduced to some relevant however brief German language competencies for students to feel confident and comfortable when meeting people, exploring sites and restaurants, and mastering any emergency and travel situation; and to appreciate a culture very different from that of the United States.
Student Learning Outcomes

The course with its unique immersive experiences and as a meaningful, desirable component of the 5-week Study Abroad Program, will help students develop sustained intercultural competence, cultural sensitivity, and global learning skills. Through the holistic concept of culture that does not limit culture to art, students will be able to learn what has shaped Austria with its global success of small companies and its enviable quality of life. Switzerland with its multicultural cooperation and reforms of the banking sector, Germany with its pluralism, work ethic and environment protection, and Liechtenstein being the world leader in education, responsible architecture and comprehensive sustainability. The goal is for students to become aware of how much tradition combined with innovation lies behind the success and the beauty of these countries. This awareness will enable students to become critical thinkers, more open and sensitive citizens of our global community, ultimately promoting increased foreign language learning and global engagement.

Content Outline

The course will meet for two hours on each day of scheduled classes. On some days, the class will take all day excursions to sites of cultural, historical, or economic significance, and on other days use portions of regular class-time to step outside of the classroom to experience everyday life in Bregenz. Attendance to all classes and on all excursions is mandatory. Classroom work with rely heavily on the participation of all students. Students are expected to complete assignments as scheduled, are always encouraged to ask questions, and to contribute observations and information gathered from their experiences. Themes include history, geography, language, the arts, religion, home life, cuisine, politics, social programs, leisure, media, transportation, shopping, business and education.

Instructional Activities will include lectures, students presentations, group assignments and discussions, readings, films and guest speakers.

Tentative Schedule

- Unit One: Introduction – Democracy, Language
- Unit Two: Open Society – Commitment, Integration, History
- Unit Three: Opportunities – Education, Study, Profession
- Unit Four: New Ideas – Innovation, Research, Green Technologies
- Unit Five: Creative Minds – Culture, Media
- Unit Six: Global Living – Digitalization, Urban Life, Sports

Modifications

Students will be provided adequate notification of any substantial changes. Since all groups of individuals do not progress at the same rate, the instructor may modify requirements (or their timing) as circumstances dictate.

Evaluation and Grading Procedures

There will be presentations, project work and tests on material covered in class, during excursions and from assigned readings. Students will submit reflective and evaluative writings on cultural differences and similarities, and how to cultivate achieved gains once returned to their domestic settings.

The course grading scale is: A (100 – 90); B (89 – 80); C (79 – 70); D (69 – 60); F (59 or below)
Grading Breakdown:

- 25% --- Attendance/Participation
- 25% --- Journals
- 25% --- Presentations
- 25% --- Tests

Attendance Policy

KLIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student’s final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism, cheating or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and may result in a failing grade for the course.

Disability Accommodation

KLIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KLIIS Campus Representative, https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/, early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KLIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KLIIS Assistant Director, Rebekah Golla, rebekah.golla@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KLIIS Assistant Director, Rebekah Golla, or KLIIS Office Manager, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KLIIS may prevent you from participating on your KLIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KLIIS Assistant Director, Rebekah Golla, or KLIIS Office Manager, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus’ disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KLIIS Program Director or other KLIIS Faculty; the KLIIS Office will your KLIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KLIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KLIIS make such a recommendation or require it.
Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director Rebekah Golla (+1-270-779-8091) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU’s Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson (270-745-5398 / andrea.anderson@wku.edu) or WKU’s Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu) or Joshua Hayes (270-745-5121 / joshua.hayes@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered “Responsible Employees” of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center, https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/ at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/; additional Title IX resources can be found here https://www.wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/titleixbrochure.pdf.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other!

Now have FUN:

European Country Code abbreviations you will see on cars: D A CH FL

D - Deutschland /Germany
A - Austria/Österreich
CH - Canton Helvetica/Switzerland
FL - Fürstentum Lichtenstein/Principality of Liechtenstein

When you eliminate the F from FL and just use L, the 4 German-speaking countries put together spell: D-A-CH-L which means “little roof” in German.