

Baltic States: Business at the Crossroads of EU and Eurasia

MGG 200 S1G (#23340)

Spring 2018



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Office Location: Jacobs 338

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Class time: pre-travel meetings 11am – 12:20pm Tuesday & Thursday
(w/o Apr 9th – Apr 27th)

Office hours: *by appointment* – please email me at ksnesper@buffalo.edu to establish a time

Course Description:

In today's global economy, it is important for students to expand their horizons to include international perspectives. "Baltic States: Business at the Crossroads of EU and Eurasia" provides students with a unique interdisciplinary and cross-cultural experience. In addition to the joy of international travel, students will gain knowledge that will be useful throughout their careers. Students will gain an awareness and understanding of the history, the people and the business climate of the Baltic States and how these have played important roles in making the area a hotbed for innovation.

This seminar provides exposure to European Union business practices through an intensive *two-week* visit to Riga, Latvia. Conducted in partnership with the Riga Business School

(RBS), this experience consists of visits to local and regional businesses, government offices and other institutions. In addition, there will be cultural experiences and classroom sessions at RBS. Latvia is a member of both the European Union and NATO and is strategically located in the Baltic region between Sweden and Russia.

Overview and learning outcomes: This course with its pre-departure activities and travel abroad program component is designed to increase students' knowledge of the international business environment specifically in the Baltic States. In addition, this course is designed to expand students' knowledge in the following areas:

- 1) Understand that the world is a system of interconnected countries and cultures;
- 2) Understand that our actions impact other regions of the world;
- 3) Develop an appreciation of global diversity and a critically informed perspective of the points of view of others.
- 4) Discover how different forces (political, geographical, and historical) have shaped the development of different cultures
- 5) Compare and contrast different countries/cultures/societies.
- 6) Recognize the interdependence of countries/cultures/societies.
- 7) Understand one's self and one's own culture through contact with ideas from other countries/cultures/societies.
- 8) Gain new proficiencies and skills to navigate unfamiliar cultures and situations.
- 9) Appreciate diversity within relationships, organizations, and societies.

The pre-departure activities, readings, and research, the coursework in Riga, Latvia, and post-trip activities will fulfill these goals and enable the student to acquire and to demonstrate greater understanding of the economic, political, geographical, and historical issues that have shaped the global societies of the twenty-first century in the Baltic State region.

The experience affords students the opportunity to experience life in a vibrant city, Riga, Latvia and surrounding areas, as they learn about the history, culture, and politics surrounding business in the Baltic States. This study abroad opportunity allows students to benefit from the carefully constructed itinerary developed by the Riga Business School (RBS) where the University at Buffalo students will be housed. Along with students currently enrolled in the RBS Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), the University at Buffalo students will in a two (2) week seminar explore the various aspects of successfully starting, growing, managing, and financing a manufacturing or service company in the region. It will be an in-depth cross cultural experience working with the students at RBS.

Riga Business School:

<http://www.rbs.lv/http%3A/%252Fwww.rbs.lv/lv/node/1992>

Course website: <https://ublearns.buffalo.edu>

Course Materials: Will be distributed through UBLearn

Course Components: The course includes two main components:

- 1) classroom sessions – before the travel portion, and
- 2) a two week cultural and business tour of the Baltic States including visits to historical sites, museums, company facilities and cultural activities during the month of June 2018.

- **Attendance and Active Participation on Travel Abroad Seminar:** Class participation is essential to the learning environment. Class attendance is mandatory for all field trips, all meetings held during the program, and all other activities stated on the itinerary for the course. Excused absences will only be granted in case of illness, which must be reported to the instructor. Students who are not ill and miss a class, meeting, or field trip will lose one letter grade per occurrence. Students who are late for a class, meeting, or field trip will not be “waited on” and will thus miss the activity, resulting in the loss of a letter grade.
- **Expectations paper:** Once accepted into the study trip and prior to the class sessions, all students will prepare a two (2) page paper expressing their expectations for the course and trip. **Due: on or before w/o Apr 9th.**
- **Research and presentation:** Prior to departure to the Baltic States, students enrolled in the course will be required to research and give a PowerPoint presentation on an assigned company, government entity or non-governmental organization (i.e., nonprofit) to be visited during the trip. The presentations will be made during the pretravel class sessions. **Due: presentations to be scheduled on Tuesday, April 24th.**
- **Activities during the trip:** All students will attend all planned events in the Baltic States, will be respectful and well-behaved representatives of the University of Buffalo, and will actively participate in the seminar at the Riga Business School and its environs.
- **Reflection Journal:** Students will be required to maintain a class journal. The journal provides an opportunity to reflect on study abroad experiences, class learning, field trip experiences, free time experiences, and other cultural experiences. The minimum requirement is a one paragraph entry for each item in the trip’s itinerary. **Due: TBD**
- **Student Research Paper:** Students will be expected to write an eight to ten (8-10) page well documented research paper on a topic of interest from the Baltic State trip. Some of the possible topics might include Investment and Entrepreneurial Opportunities in the Baltic States, Managing a Business in the Baltic States, and Cultural Aspects of Doing Business in Latvia. Students will use at least 3 books or articles dealing with their topic as well as primary sources. Each student is encouraged to select a topic that best serves his or her own academic disciplines as well as intellectual curiosity and reflects on their experience on the trip as well. **Due: TBD**

SUMMARY OF COURSE COMPONENTS:

20%	Participation in bi-weekly sessions, activities and assignments before the trip
30%	Activities during the trip
15%	Reflection journal
25%	Research Paper

10% Professionalism and participation
100%

Grading Scale:

90-92=A-		93-100=A
80-82=B-	83-86=B	87-89=B+
70-72=C-	73-76=C	77-79=C+
60-62=D-	63-66=D	67-69=D+
59 and below=F		

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Proper classroom etiquette that shows respect for your instructor, peers, and guests of the classroom is expected. Classroom etiquette expectations are outlined in the University's Student Conduct Regulations at

<http://www.studentaffairs.buffalo.edu/judicial/classroom.pdf>.

Just as you will need to conduct yourself appropriately in the business meeting, it is important for you to behave appropriately in the classroom as well. Examples of inappropriate behavior (i.e., things you should avoid) include: arriving late, leaving early, getting up and leaving during class, not paying attention to the speaker (me or your fellow students), having a cell phone ring, using a laptop during class, etc. If you need to do one of these things (e.g., you are expecting an important phone call, you need to leave early, etc.), please see me before class.

Incompletes: Incompletes (I/IU)*: A grade of incomplete ("I") indicates that additional course work is required to fulfill the requirements of a given course. Students may only be given an "I" grade if they have a passing average in coursework that has been completed and have well-defined parameters to complete the course requirements that could result in a grade better than the default grade. An "I" grade may not be assigned to a student who did not attend the course.

<http://undergradcatalog.buffalo.edu/policies/grading/explanation.shtml#incomplete>)

Assignment of an interim 'IU' is at the discretion of the instructor. A grade of 'IU' can be assigned only if successful completion of unfulfilled course requirements can result in a final grade better than the default 'U' grade. The student should have a passing average in the requirements already completed. The instructor shall provide the student specification, in writing, of the requirements to be fulfilled.

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES:

If you have any disability which requires reasonable accommodations to enable you to participate in this course, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources, 25 Capen Hall, 645-2608, and also the instructor of this course .. The office will provide you with information and review appropriate arrangements for reasonable accommodations. <http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/>

UB Statement of Principle on Academic Integrity:

The University community depends upon shared academic standards. Academic dishonesty in any form by a student represents an impairment of these standards. If an instance of suspected or alleged academic dishonesty by a student arises, charges will be brought against the student

and formal proceedings, established by the University, will be initiated. The School of Management strictly enforces this policy. The normal penalty for an act of academic dishonesty in a School of Management course is an F for the course. Certain egregious acts of academic dishonesty and repeated acts of academic dishonesty can result in expulsion from the University. **Please go to <http://mgt.buffalo.edu/programs/undergrad/handbooks/handbook>**, Chapter VII, for more complete information regarding University and School of Management policies and standards.

Any claim of ignorance of the rules of academic integrity by any student is unacceptable.

COMMUNICATION

You are expected to check the Announcements page of the course website and your school email **frequently**. Announcements may be made regarding info/changes in homework, class schedule, etc. If you prefer to use your personal address (e.g., gmail), be sure to set up a “forward” from your UB address to your personal address at the CIT website.

Important: apply for a passport if you do not have one or if you need to renew it. Your passport must be valid at least through September 2018. If you are not a US citizen, please see the instructor immediately.

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Pre-Departure sessions:

Session Date	Topic	Assignment
1. Tues, Apr 10	* course overview /expectations * culture/etiquette/dress	Expectation Paper
2. Thurs, Apr 12	* history of the Baltic states/geography	
3. Tues, Apr 17	* business in the EU - Baltic States	
4. Thurs, Apr 19	* business in the EU – Baltic States	
5. Tues, Apr 24	* companies/government entities/NGO visits	pre-visit presentations
6. Thurs, Apr 26	* itinerary/trip details	

Itinerary at Riga, Latvia:

Day	Activities
	Welcome
1	Tour Riga Business School city of Riga, Latvia
	Tour

2	Intro to the Baltics Company/Govt/NGO visit Big neighbors: Intro to Scandinavia
3	Intro to Russia Company/Govt/NGO visit
4	Managing a company Financing a Business Strategic Management in the Baltics Company/Govt/NGO visit
5	Launching and Scaling Up a Business LEAN start up methodology
weekend	tourism What is Business
6	Fundamentals of Management Group Work Introduction
7	Intro to Business Reporting Current Trends in Business Company/Govt/NGO visit Group Work
8	Concepts of Finance Manufacturing vs. Service Company/Govt/NGO visit Group Work
9	Evaluation Your Investment Presentation and Communication Skills Company/Govt/NGO visit Group Work
10	Managing People Group Work Awards & Closing Event

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.