

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## International Experience: Leadership and Communication

**Course code:** BSC 314 / BSC 514  
**Semester:** Winter (January) 2017  
 [Mandatory pre-trip preparation in F15]  
 Lecturers: Robert Warren, MA  
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Office hours: N/A

<b>Semester Credits</b>	3	<b>Language of Instruction</b>	English
<b>ECTS Credits</b>	6	<b>Level</b>	BA - Intermediate MA - Intermediate
<b>Length</b>	3 weeks	<b>Prerequisites</b>	None
<b>Hours total</b>	150	<b>Course Type</b>	Elective

### 1. Course Description

A group of 8-15 carefully selected AAU students will travel to Galle, Sri Lanka for three weeks in January 2017. Through humanitarian work, visiting local businesses/national institutions and daily fieldwork, students will develop their understanding of the island and its culture, culminating in a research paper.

The course has two aspects; preparation and execution. Preparation will be in the form of classes, which will include: training in teaching (English as a second language as well as other subjects); guidance on working in a humanitarian capacity; a background on Sri Lankan culture, politics, economics and history; and how to assemble fieldwork into an academic research paper.

Upon arrival in Galle, execution of the project will involve hands-on volunteer work under the supervision of AAU staff and the Czech NGO, Voluntair. Support and contacts will also be provided by the Sri Lankan consulate in Prague.

Volunteering comprises 50% of the total grade with a research paper comprising the remaining 50%. Specifically the academic work is divided into three parts; (1) research proposal, (2) on-site research, and (3) a research report, which will be completed after students have returned from Sri Lanka.

### Preparation:

#### 1. Cultural:

- ! In order to get the most out of this project, students will be required to gain a comprehensive understanding of Sri Lankan culture from pre-Colonialism, the impact of British rule, post-colonialism, the ensuing civil war, and Sri Lanka's fragile 21<sup>st</sup> century democracy. Prior to departure, students will take a series

of classes detailing Sri Lankan history, culture, politics and economics. As well as examining the current challenges the Sri Lankan government faces in 2016, including; continuing democratic reform, tackling corruption, addressing causes of poverty, reducing linguistic divisions, and encouraging foreign direct investment (FDI).

! Each class will be followed by a quiz.

## 2. Technical:

! Two-thirds of the time spent in Galle will be dedicated to volunteer work. The students will become involved in an already well-established community outreach program run by the NGO, Voluntair. Classes on working in a humanitarian capacity will help students prepare for what will be expected of them, including: cultural sensitivity, finding diplomatic solutions and displaying leadership skills and social responsibility.

! Volunteering will mainly come in the form of teaching. All students will attend 6 preliminary classes of 3 hours in length, detailing the methods used to teach both children and adults in English as a second language.

! Specifically regarding English teaching; once trained, the students will prepare and teach classes in both a primary school and community center based in Smichov, Prague before departure for Sri Lanka.

## 3. Academic:

! Research Proposal

- i. After attending the preliminary classes, students will choose an area of research on which to focus. Prior to departure students will produce a 400 word research proposal outlining what they wish to research and why, specifically outlining their methods of research

## **Execution:**

### 1. Participation:

a. The project is built around the principles of social responsibility and leadership skills. As a member of a working group, each student will be expected to actively participate in all group activities. As well as volunteer work, this participation includes; peer support, compromise in decision making, developing their teaching skills, and displaying a pro-active approach towards cultural and linguistic understanding.

a.i. Volunteer work (under guidance of NGO, Voluntair):

a.i.1. The group will be living and working in the culturally rich town of Galle, which has a population of around 100,000 and is located on Sri Lanka's south-west coast.

a.i.2. Students will be given the opportunity to volunteer in many fields including; teaching English, mathematics, science, arts and crafts, and sports at primary and nursery schools; teaching and playing with deaf, intellectually handicapped and orphaned children; spending time with elderly people at a local care center; doing building and renovation work at Buddhist temples. Other skills are welcome including, photography, computer, and medical – helping locals to supplement their existing incomes.

a.i.3. Students will typically teach three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon five days a week but this is subject to change.

a.ii. Visiting businesses and organizations within the community. (in partnership with Voluntair and local authorities)

a.ii.1. Fishing industry

a.ii.2. Garment/clothing manufacture

- a.ii.3. Tourism industry
- a.ii.4. Precious stones/gems mining
- a.ii.5. Tea plantations
- a.ii.6. Government agencies & NGOs

The business and organization visits will provide students with a firsthand look at the functioning of the respective business or organization they visit. It is hoped, but not required, that students will orientate their research proposals around one of these industries.

2. Written work:

a. On-site Research

a.i. While in Galle, students will broaden their understanding of their chosen research topics by gathering information during business and institutional visits. Students may consider conducting surveys in order to gain a clearer understanding of their chosen topic.

b. Research Report

b.i. Once the students have returned from Sri Lanka, they will be given three weeks to produce a 2000 word research report. The report should bring together both their proposal and on-site research in to a cohesive write-up that forms a well-developed argument. If done properly, the report should show a substantial growth of understanding when compared to the research proposal.

3. Blog:

a. Every two days the group will come together to discuss the mission so far. Ideas will be brainstormed and a chosen writer (different for each entry) will produce a 500 word blog post to be uploaded on the project's website. Along with the written blog, selected photos and video will be added to the post.

## 2. Student Learning Outcomes

Primarily, this course is designed to give students practical knowledge in leadership, group dynamics, social responsibility and cultural understanding. Throughout the period spent in Sri Lanka, students will be continually assessed in their pro-active approach towards daily challenges. In this respect, this course challenges students in a non-conventional manner when compared to other courses at AAU.

Though the course is based largely on hands-on volunteer work, where students are expected to step outside of the classroom and their comfort zones, the academic work they produce will directly reflect this experience, sourcing not only from the usual academic materials, but also from first-hand experiences working in a humanitarian capacity.

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

1. Demonstrate cultural competence by being able to identify and understand the various aspects of a new culture and quickly learn how to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
2. Demonstrate social responsibility by being able to identify and build an awareness of contemporary social issues, and articulate how individual and collective actions have an impact on local and global communities.
3. Teach English as a second language through dynamic and well-executed classes. In a broader context these classes will function as a cultural exchange; an opportunity for the students to learn by teaching and interacting with some of Sri Lanka's least fortunate citizens.
4. Manage group dynamics by effectively communicating within a group setting and execute group meetings using effective scheduling, meeting times and spaces, agendas, minutes and presentations.

5. Fully understand their own key skills, attributes and values, and explore their true capabilities in a humanitarian context (individual growth, self-awareness and career development).
6. Develop and execute an experiential learning project as part of an international team, in an international setting, moving from idea generation, development, execution and evaluation (project management, team work and leadership).

### 3. Reading Material

#### **Recommended Materials**

The instructor will periodically provide readings on topics related to the course.

### 4. Teaching methodology

- ! Active individual and collective student participation to help organize the entire project, including logistics (pre-trip preparation, travel arrangements, housing, etc.) and contacting Sri Lankan partners.
- ! Spending three weeks living and volunteering in Galle, Sri Lanka.
- ! Regular group meetings (pre-trip) and facilitated discussion sessions (trip).
- ! Active participation in volunteer community development projects.
- ! Visits to local, national and international organizations.
- ! Attendance at local cultural events.
- ! Presenting the experience in written and oral form in a post-trip presentation session to the AAU faculty and student body.

### 5. Course Schedule

Preparatory meetings:

- ! 2 weekly meetings of 3 hours in learning how to work in a humanitarian capacity.
- ! 4 weekly meetings of 3 hours in learning Sri Lankan culture and society.
- ! 6 weekly meetings of 3 hours in learning how to teach English as a second language to both children and adults.

Trip: January 2<sup>nd</sup> to January 24<sup>th</sup> 2016

Note: The instructor will arrive a few days early to arrange for local transport, mobile phone SIM cards, double-check the housing, etc.

### 6. Course Requirements, Weights, and Evaluated Student Learning Outcomes

Assignment	Weight in Final Grade	Workload (hours)	Evaluated Student Learning Outcomes
<b>Preliminary Classes &amp; Research Proposal (400 words)</b>	20%	30	- Attendance & quiz performance - Well thought-out structure - Broad range of sources
<b>Participation &amp; Blog</b>	25%	55	- Project management - Team work - Leadership - Social responsibility - Finding group consensus - Writing skills - Web design and publishing

<b>On-site research</b>	15%	35	- Independent work - Showing initiative - Time management - Maintaining focus
<b>Research Report (2000 words)</b>	40%	30	- Balancing experience with objective analysis - Development of cohesive argument - Originality of concept
<b>Total</b>	100%	150	

**Note:** Written assignment requirements are 3000 words for BA students and 4000 words for MA students. Word count may be 10% higher or lower.

Topic must be approved by the project leader, Robert Warren, or the dean of their individual AAU school.

## 7. Assessment breakdown for course requirements

**Assessment Breakdown:** Preliminary Classes & Research Proposal (20%)

! (50%) Attendance & quiz performance

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! (25%) Well thought-out structure

! (25%) Broad range of sources

**Assessment breakdown:** Participation & Blog (25%)

! (10%) Project Management

! (10%) Team Work

! (10%) Leadership

! (10%) Use of foreign language

! (10%) Cultural sensitivity

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! (10%) Finding group consensus

! (30%) Writing skills

! (10%) Web design & publishing

**Assessment breakdown:** On-site research (15%)

! (25%) Independent work

! (25%) Showing initiative

! (25%) Time management

! (25%) Maintaining focus

**Assessment breakdown:** Research Report (40%)

! (50%) Balancing experience with objective analysis

! (30%) Development of cohesive argument

! (20%) Originality of concept

## 8. General Requirements and School Policies

! All coursework is governed by AAU academic rules, and students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work. All

students are expected to be familiar with the AAU academic rules available in the Student Handbook.

- ! **Communication:** The university and lecturers will use only the student's university email address for communication. Students are responsible for checking their university email accounts regularly.
- ! **Attendance** is required. Students are allowed two unexcused absences. Absences above this number may result in failure of the course.
- ! **Mobile phones** should be on silent; no calling or texting during class meetings (wait until the break).
- ! **Computers/tablets/smart phones:** may be used only for course-related work. The penalty for breaking this policy is loss of participation points, at the instructor's discretion. Repeat offenders will be reported to the dean's office.
- ! **Professional behavior:**
  - o Expected behavior in class is based on the "Student Handbook". Students are supposed to come on time, not disturb by private conversations and not leave the classroom before the end of the lesson. Unless required by the lecturer for learning purposes, **electronic tools** (e.g. notebooks, tablets, smart phones, MP3/multimedia devices etc.) and web social networks are not to be used during the class. Cell phones should be on silent; no calling or texting during class meetings (wait until the break).
  - o Expected behavior during the trip is based on the "Student Handbook" and general rules of good and safe behavior. Non-compliance and/or serious breach of the appropriate individual or collective conduct (e.g., aggressive, risky or destructive behavior, drug/alcohol abuse, harassment, low/no participation in project activities, etc.) will lead to immediate suspension from the course/trip at own expenses of the student in question and to failed grade.
- ! **Late work:** Will not be accepted.
- ! **Missed exams:** N/A
- ! **Cheating and plagiarism:** AAU strictly enforces its policy against cheating and plagiarism. Full policy is available in the Student Handbook. Briefly: Cheating and plagiarism results in the failing grade from the assignment at minimum, it may lead to suspension from the university. To prevent any misunderstanding, plagiarism is defined:

**PLAGIARISM** – "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work."

- Taken from the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Random House, New York, 1993.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities are asked to contact their lecturer as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodation.

## 9. Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage	Description
Pass	70-100	The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
Fail	0-69	The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

**Approved by: Robert Warren, October 2016.**





