Global Seminar Faculty Workshop #3  
February 8, 2011  
Pedagogy

This was an opportunity for faculty to share teaching ideas, and discuss various methods for teaching, grading, and conducting the courses abroad.

Notes:

1. Integrating the site visits into syllabi and course materials
Professor Gallant teaches quite a bit on-site. He spends about 2/3 of class time lecturing and teaching at the historical sites, museums, outdoors. He recommended making expectations of site visits very clear to students, and let them know what exactly they will be responsible for learning at each of the sites. For example, they should know how much of a particular museum’s contents will be covered on the exams. The excursions are not merely for the pleasure of sight-seeing, but rather educational components of the class, and they will be responsible for learning the material covered through the site visit.
Dr. Shen recommends pre-assigning something before going on the site visit, so they know what to look for at the museum or site. Talking or lecturing during tours is often prohibited, so you may need to arrange for headsets that will provide a guided tour. Or, you should have the assignment on paper for the students to view while at the site, or before going there.
Also, it is always good to have back-up plans in case there is an unexpected holiday, closure, or weather that prevents the site visit from happening that day.

2. Reading materials: What works best for you?
Dr. Shen: Books are too heavy for students to pack and carry. CD’s or thumb drives work best. Dr. Gallant agrees and advised that 8g thumb drives are available at the UCSD bookstore for $5.00 each. He will place all course materials on the thumb drive for students, as internet can be slow abroad and download times were an issue last year. Dr. Kontje mentioned Kindle for downloading books. Kindle apps are available for ipads and other laptops.

3. Grading (what percentage of the grade should be class discussion, papers, exams, etc?)
Dr. Al-Delaimy asked if other faculty members use a curve in the grading process. He has used a C+ curve. Other faculty present at the meeting said they did not use a curve, but follow a typical grading structure of 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, and so on. Professor Gallant stated the average grade in his Global Seminar was a B-/C+.
Professor Shen does not use a curved grading system and bases the students’ grades on a combination of in-class participation (40-50%), and a final paper (for one class), and final exam (for the other class).

4. Assignments (what type of assignments work best abroad?)
Professor Gallant uses photos from the excursions in his final exam. Students must identify what is in the photo and the meaning or historical significance attached to it. The final exam is a combination of multiple choice and short-answer questions.

Dr. Al-Delaimy’s courses include 2 quizzes, a mid-term and a final. All are taken “in-class”, and are multiple-choice. Because he had issues with internet and printing availability in Amman, he printed out the tests and quizzes and gave them to students on the day of the test. I shared that Dr. Meg Wesling conducts all of her written assignments in class. Students are of course required to do their reading outside of class, and come to the lecture/discussion prepared. The writing, however, is all in-class, and there is no requirement for the students to purchase or bring a laptop computer.

Most of the returning faculty discussed site visits and excursions as a significant portion of the class assignments. All required fieldwork for the courses are mandatory. There was some discussion in regards to how to enforce this. It is up to each professor to determine how he or she will handle policies on credit/no credit for required excursions and whether or not students may “make up” credit for missed excursions. It was suggested that tying an assignment with each excursion enforces the academic nature of the site visits and encourages a learning experience rather than a casual viewing of art, museums or historical sites. Both professors Gallant and Shen said they advise the students ahead of time what their assignment will be during the site visit. That way, students know what to expect and know what they are responsible for learning.

5. Strategies for conducting in-class discussions
A few professors mentioned bringing guest lecturers to speak to students. Make sure to tell the students that the “guest lecture material” we also be covered on the tests/exams. Professor Shen bases much of the grade on in-class participation. When students know they will be graded on this, it often encourages them to participate. Professor Gallant recommended breaking the class down into small groups and having them research a site and present on it in class. Students will learn by teaching others, and the students will not get tired of hearing the same person speak.

6. Strategies for successful excursions
Work with the local provider for logistics, planning ahead. BE FLEXIBLE. Always have a back-up plan in case the museum is closed, weather is bad, or other unexpected event comes up. Make sure the students know why the excursion is important and how significant it will be on the exam, paper, quiz, etc. Make sure to advise appropriately on what to wear and proper footwear. For example, if women need to cover their head or arms, or students need to wear closed-toed shoes. They should also be advised of social customs and behaviors such as not talking loudly in the museum or library.

7. How to cope with possible unreliable internet access
Put course materials on CD or thumb drives. Many counties will have slower and/or less reliable internet service. Even in more modern cities, the internet service may
vary from one hotel to another. It is helpful to prepare the materials in advance, and minimize the amount of internet research that needs to be done. As Professor Al-Delaimy learned in Amman last year, sometimes you may just need to print out the assignments and give them to students in-class.

8. How to deal with disruptive students, cheating, tardiness.
Policies should be set forth in the syllabus. Set the tone in the beginning and let them know what your expectations are. With small class sizes it is really easy to see when someone is late or absent and their tardiness can disrupt the class. Each professor should decide on these policies and make sure all students are held to the same standards. When I taught, I took points off for being late or absent. Students knew they had to be there, on time, to earn their points for the day.

9. Other topics
Professor Gallant recommended giving the students some downtime in between classes and excursions. Try not to overwork them. For example, you do not need to lecture to them for an entire 2 hour bus ride. He also suggested offering to take the students out on walking tours of the city during non-class time. Provide them with some after class ideas and options to engage with the local community. After learning that some students were just going to class, then going straight home, he decided to reach out to students and invite them to dinner in the evenings, take them to local restaurants, cafes or art and music venues so they can experience the culture outside of class. That said, you should also set boundaries for when you are and are not in class. Tell them when they can and cannot get in touch with you.

10) Final Logistics workshop will be on Monday, February 28th from 1-2:30 in Oceanids Pavilion at the International Center.