MBA 795
Global Business Perspectives
Chile / Argentina

Instructor: Dr. Kevin Rockmann
Office: 217 Enterprise Hall
Telephone: (703) 993-4988
E-mail: krockman@gmu.edu
Website: courses.gmu.edu
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

The global residency is the hallmark of the George Mason MBA program and provides a platform to develop and deepen a global mindset. The course builds on the foundations developed in the MBA program and is designed to give students an opportunity to develop personal familiarity with the global environment and issues faced by global managers. Beyond the social and cultural dimensions that the residency explores, the course will focus on developing an increased understanding of global markets, competition, and business opportunities.

By providing opportunities to hear directly from Latin American managers and entrepreneurs, the residency will build on the foundations developed in the MBA program. We will explore applications of core ideas in situations involving organizational adaptation and change in order to develop new perspectives on the roles of information, technology, and market forces in influencing business opportunities and performance. You already have some experience with the U.S. business environment. The residency will allow you to compare and contrast that with the environment in two other countries. Here are some of the themes that you will be thinking and reflecting on, both in pre and post-trip reading assignments and during the trip:

- Political history of Chile/Argentina and how it has impacted the current business climate
- Chile and Argentina’s current state of economic development and its impact on the demand for goods and services
- Chile and Argentina’s physical infrastructure (transportation and energy) and its impact on the domestic economy and international trade
- Chile and Argentina workforce characteristics and the implications for labor supply
• The legal environment (e.g. patent protection, enforcement of contracts) and its impact on business in Chile and Argentina

• Significant social and cultural norms that affect the conduct of business in Chile and Argentina

Course Goals and Objectives

There are three main competencies we will work on during this residency course. They are as follows:

Global Industry Competence
During this trip you will build your knowledge of global industries and economies.

- What are the products moving around the world and how do they play a role in determining growth of countries / currency markets / political controversy, etc?
- What are the roles of both emerging and developed nations?
- What are the arbitrage opportunities from doing business in a country with an emerging economy?

Cultural Competence
We will attempt to better understand the role of relationships in building businesses in other countries.

- How are relationships built?
- What does it take to “get things done?”
- How do individuals in other cultures respond to certain ideas, and more specifically, ideas that come from the U.S?

MBA “Capstone” Competence
This course provides a platform for you to test out your MBA knowledge in a “laboratory” setting.

- Can you find a feasible business idea?
- Can you engage in due diligence in developing that business idea and vetting it out?

Honor Code

You are expected to follow the University’s honor code as presented in the University’s publications. I consider it to be inappropriate and a violation of the University’s honor code to (i) use someone else’s work, including spreadsheet models, and submit them as your own, (ii) to use a purchased case or research project solution as a significant portion of any assignment, or (iii) to not give credit (CITE) for ideas gained from other’s work.
### Course Schedule

The link to the Harvard Cases is [here](#). All other readings can be obtained through the GMU online library system. All course materials listed in the schedule should be read before the relevant pre-residency meeting.

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<th>Event</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<td>Pre-trip</td>
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<td><strong>Deliverable</strong>: Research Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-trip</td>
<td>Research Assigned Companies and Prepare to Talk in Pre-trip Meeting about those Companies</td>
<td>December 3(^{rd}), 6:30 – 10pm</td>
<td>Fairfax, Innovation Hall 134</td>
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<td>Meeting #3</td>
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<td><strong>Deliverable</strong>: Site Visit Report</td>
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<td>Business</td>
<td><strong>Deliverable</strong>: Project and Executive Summary due by e-mail Wednesday, Feb 23(^{rd}). Hard copy of Project and Team Member Evals due Feb 26(^{th}).</td>
<td>February 26(^{th}), 8:30am – 2:00pm</td>
<td>Location: Fairfax Innovation 208</td>
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<td>Plan Team</td>
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Deliverables

1. Class Participation (15% of course grade)

Engaged participation means attending all seminars, site visits, and other activities and actively engaging in the discussions by asking appropriate questions and participating in the group discussions.

You must be able to attend ALL of the class sessions scheduled prior to our departure, each of the business visits in Chile and Argentina, and our final session. If you miss a pre-residency or post-residency meeting it will be a one-grade deduction in your overall course grade. Lack of attendance at meetings during the residency will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Of course emergencies will be taken into account.

A note on “asking questions” during the trip: The value of the residency is greatly affected by the intelligence of the questions that you ask of our presenters. Good questions elicit interesting points and help speakers align what they say with what you want to learn. That is why you are asked you to do substantial reading in advance and work on the pre-residency research paper (see more below). The quality of individual participation affects the learning potential of the residency in another way: Questions shape the atmosphere on the residency and the relationship between the group as a whole and each presenter. That relationship affects how much or how little everyone can learn from a presenter.

In grading participation, I will be thinking about not only whether your questions, comments and behavior *add* to the intellectual enterprise but also whether they *damage or detract* from it. The latter is a particularly serious issue because it reduces the learning potential of the entire group, and I will grade accordingly and initiate any other actions that are warranted. Also, please keep in mind that, for most of our presenters, English will be (at least) their second language so you need to be clear and concise.

2. Research Paper (20% of course grade)

The purpose of this research paper, which will be completed in teams of one, two or three, is to expand your knowledge base prior to the Global Residency on the two countries in Latin America that we will be visiting. Hopefully, this background knowledge will enhance your ability to ask informed questions during the site visits and lectures and will help you prepare for the business plan team project (more below).

In this research paper you should address one of the following topics:

1. What makes Chile and Argentina a desirable country to trade with? How is trade facilitated in Chile and Argentina? What dangers lie in relying heavily on exporting for economic growth? What do American businesses need to think about when doing business in and/or trading with Chile and Argentina?

2. Often U.S. firms have sought out international expansion motivated by the low-cost of labor and/or capital. What opportunities exist for U.S. firms, specifically in the high-tech IT industry? Do you think that any of these opportunities are relevant for Chile and Argentina? How is IT changing the economic environment of Chile and Argentina?
3. Pick one of the main social challenges facing Argentina and Chile? How are the governments attempting to manage these challenges? How do the social challenges affect growth in these countries or opportunities for international partnerships?

4. Pick another industry in Argentina and/or Chile (e.g., wine, fruit, real estate, farming, fishing, manufacturing, tourism, etc.) and discuss the history of that industry in these countries. What challenges do they face in growing that industry?

5. Other? If you have another idea, send it to me...

You are required to use and cite at least four sources outside of those listed above as you write this paper (some possibilities for sources are listed below). These could be magazine, journal, or newspaper articles from reputable sources (i.e., no blogs). There are MANY articles on both the Austral website and the Blackboard website to help you get started. If you come across a term or terms (tariff rates / arbitrage opportunities / devaluing currency / pegged currency / etc.) which might be confusing, look it up, define it in the paper, and build a competent level of knowledge in that area.

Papers should be approximately 1700 - 2000 words, 12-point font, with a separate title page and a separate page for your outside references in MLA format.

Hints for writing a strong research paper:
• Begin with an introduction / end with a conclusion. Have a title, key arguments, and relevant research findings.
• Do NOT summarize facts about Chile and Argentina that are already in the cases listed in the syllabus or are elsewhere. Summarizing is lazy research and boring to read.
• Avoid putting extraneous material into your paper (e.g., Chile’s coast is 4000km long…).
• Be thorough! Don’t just use wikipedia – go find the source that wikipedia is using or find other sources.

Possible Outside Sources (not exclusive)
• See list of articles on Blackboard and the Austral Group’s website.
• The Santiago Times: www.santiagotimes.cl
• Buenos Aires Herald: www.buenosairesherald.com
• IBC: www.international-business-center.com (helpful for terms/jargon/resources)
• bUSiness CHILE: www.businesschile.cl
• Fundacion Invertir Argentina: www.invertir.com (gov’t – be careful!)
• Extra cases on the Harvard website: Harvard link
• Wall Street Journal: www.wsj.com
• Harvard Business Review: www.hbr.com
• Forbes: www.forbes.com
• Business Week: www.businessweek.com
• Fortune: www.fortune.com

3. Site Visit Report (15% of course grade)
For this assignment and for the business idea project, students will be placed into 5 or 6-member teams. Each student team will be individually responsible for preparing for one or multiple site visits in accordance with the schedule below. The team should prepare a report on the company/agency, which should include a summary of the company/agency to be visited and detailed possible questions to ask the company/agency representatives in light of the readings above. This assignment should be no more than 2 pages for each site visit.

The report is due by the 3rd residency meeting via the course Blackboard site (Discussions – Site Visit Reports), and the team should be prepared to give a 10 minute overview of the company during that meeting and/or immediately before we visit with that company.

Also, although engaged participation by all students is expected, the assigned group is ultimately accountable for having prepared relevant questions for the site-visit presenters. They will be our “leaders” for that particular site visit, which means they will introduce our class, GMU, present any gifts we have, and should be first to ask questions.

4. Business Idea Team Project (50% of course grade)

See separate assignment

5. Extra Credit Opportunity (up to 2% extra credit)

By yourself, I want you to take an hour or so and explore the city in your free time. On your journey you should engage in a discussion with a Chilean or Argentinean citizen (can be anyone). Post to the discussion board on our course website (marked “extra credit assignments”) a one-page entry which answers the following questions:

1) Where did you go?
2) What did you see or notice about the city?
3) Who did you meet? What did you talk about? What struck you as really interesting?
4) Was exploring a foreign city on your own a new experience for you - what did you learn?
5) What interests you about the city? The culture? The people?

This should be completed during the residency.

Evaluation and Grading Standards

Grades on the assignments will be assigned relative to the other assignments submitted in terms of both substance and organization. In general your grade is a function of the clear identification of a key idea, the quality of your analysis, and the appropriateness of your conclusions. I will also take into account creativity of the ideas presented, thoroughness of the research and ideas presented, the resources/references you present, and overall writing style and comprehension. In other words, as you only have two major writing assignments for this course, I expect a high level of competence. Late submissions will be subject to a 10% penalty for each 24-hour period it is late. Except for extraordinary circumstances, “incomplete” grades will not be granted. The grade distribution will be similar to other MBA electives. I will use plusses and minuses in evaluation.