Course Objective:

MBA 795 is the global business perspectives course for the GMU MBA program. The objective of this course is to provide students an exposure to how business is conducted outside the United States. The knowledge gained in this course can be useful both for students who are interested in working for a foreign company and for students who aim to lead a domestic business into an increasingly global marketplace. The focus of the course has varied depending upon the location, background and international experience of the faculty member. This section of MBA 795 has a focus on manufacturing and/or technology firms in China.

As one of the world’s largest and fastest growing economies, China presents both major opportunities and challenges to U.S. businesses. Over the past ten to fifteen years, most of the prominent multinational corporations in the world have set up operations in China to take advantage of its low labor cost or tap into its huge consumer base. At the same time, as Chinese companies grow bigger and stronger, they are becoming increasingly powerful players in both domestic and international markets and are now actively looking overseas for growth opportunities. The growing importance and complexity of the business interactions between the U.S. and China make it imperative for students to develop an understanding of the many unique aspects of Chinese society, including its culture, custom, value system, and political and economic regimes. It would also be very beneficial for students to obtain first-hand knowledge about the structure, operation, and management of indigenous Chinese companies as well as Chinese subsidiaries of foreign multinational corporations. These experiences should help students as future business leaders to formulate better strategies in dealing with their Chinese counterparts and local authorities, and adapt more smoothly to local environments.

Course Structure:

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the course is expected to include visits to Chinese companies that are important players in their respective industry or have major international presence, as well as Chinese subsidiaries of multinational corporations.

Built on the experience from previous MBA 795 offerings, this course is designed to produce a stronger educational experience by focusing on a limited number (about 7) of site visits and attempting to do a more in-depth analysis of these firms than to consider a wider array of companies. The analysis of the individual companies will be done on a team basis with each student assigned to one team. When applicable, students are encouraged to uncover theoretical support for firms to engage in multinational business and consider these firms from the perspective of global business strategy.
Pre- and Post-trip Sessions and Deliverables:

There are two pre-trip sessions for the entire class scheduled in the evening of April 20, 2012 and May 4, 2012.

During the first session, we are going to lay out ground rules and structure of this course, go over the logistical details of the trip, discuss pertinent background knowledge about China, international trade, and globalization, and specific opportunities and challenges for doing business in China.

During the second session, you will break into groups and perform individual company background briefing, and present the key strengthens and weakness of the individual company including the important questions expected to resolve during the visits.

There is one post-trip session for the entire class scheduled in the evening of June 15, 2012. You will present a detailed business plan devised over the course of this class that combines your ingenuity, independent research, and the knowledge, understanding, and perspectives you gained about China through this residency trip. The business plan can be either to bring a product or service to the greater China region or set up a business venture in China. In preparing the business plan, you should think of yourself as either entrepreneurs seeking funding from angel or venture capital investors or entrepreneurial employees of an established corporation seeking funding from the corporate headquarters.

Attendance and Participation:

Students are required to attend both class sessions scheduled prior to the trip, each of the business visits in China, and the final session after the trip. Failure to attend any session or business visit will negatively impact your course grade.

Grading:

Your grades will be determined based on the following components and weights.

- Pre-trip company briefing/analysis/questions: 30%
- Attendance/participation for all in-class sessions and business visits: 30%
- Post-trip business plan analysis and presentation: 40%