MBA 795 Global Business Perspectives, Spring/Summer 2013
Warsaw, Poland and Prague, the Czech Republic
Travel Dates: May 19- May 25, 2013.

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Primary Learning Goal: To develop a perspective on how businesses operate in a global economy.

The global residency is the hallmark of a George Mason MBA and it aims to develop and deepen a global mindset. It builds on core courses in the MBA program and gives students an opportunity to develop personal familiarity with some aspects of the global environment and some issues faced by managers in that setting. Broad course objectives include learning about issues arising from globalization of business activities, exploring the opportunities and challenges of globalization, developing effective strategic responses, and understanding differences in cultures and their impact on business practices. To be successful in this course you will need to apply the knowledge gained in your MBA core classes in a global context.

This section of MBA 795 will focus on the challenges of global organizational leadership as experienced by executives in firms located in middle Europe, Poland and the Czech Republic

Course Content:

The nature of global business calls for preparation for serving in global leadership roles. Whether it’s a multinational company, a US subsidiary operating in a foreign land or a global consultancy, those who expect to move into more senior levels of management must have the requisite attitudes, skills and abilities. The focus for the residency will be on preparing our MBA students to actively consider pursuing opportunities for developing their capabilities and thus become more capable at managing and leading global organizations. While the Czech Republic has done well since coming out from under the influence of the Soviet Union, Poland can claim to have been one of the few countries that have successfully emerged from its legacy as a former Soviet Union country. Thus the trip will allow for both comparison and contrasts in the search for insights relative to senior organizational leadership models and leadership development practices.

Course Objectives

The industry make-up of Czech Republic and Poland are similar. But the recent economic positions of these countries are very different. A second goal of this residency will be to compare and contrast industry in two culturally similar, geographic neighbors with very different recent economic histories.
Through a combination of pre-residency study, in-country company visits, and post-residency analyses, this course will offer an opportunity to identify global business issues, experience first-hand the manifestation of these issues in the specific context of the Czech Republic and Poland, and understand their impact on the conduct of business in an important region of the world. It will also be an opportunity to reflect on global business on a broader scale outside the European region.

Another focus for the trip will be on the business demands that must be addressed by those occupying middle or senior level managerial positions. The information gained will be contrasted to the course material reviewed in preparation for the trip. Students will also learn about the way that non-U.S. and global firms manage their human talent in support of their global business strategies. For example, how do they recruit (what do they look for), how do they develop people once employed. And how do they evaluate and assess individuals in order to ascertain their potential for more responsible assignments. Of particular interest will be the challenge of preparing for or managing expatriate assignments.

**Course Materials**

**Reading list**: You will be expected to read a set of papers designed to familiarize you with the challenges facing global leaders.


**Cases**: Required Cases are available for purchase as downloadable PDF documents at Harvard Business School Publishing. The link for this course pack is:

[https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/18815048](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/18815048)


AMD Dresden: Copy Inexactly! HBS Case Study, Willy Shih, December 2010, HBSP Product Number 9-609-004.
Additional information and data can be found on the following web resources:

buyusa.gov/czechrepublic/en/

buyusa.gov/poland/en/

www.doingbusiness.org/data

www.doingbusiness.org/custom-query

http://export.gov/poland/

Student teams

Students enrolled in the course will be assigned to learning teams. Several of the course assignments will require effective team work in order to be performed successfully. Working well as a member of a learning team will be expected and will factor into the participation component of the course grade.

Course Deliverables

Your course grade will be determined based on your performance on the deliverables listed below. On the first pre-residency meeting we will form student teams which will be responsible for the team-based deliverables.

1. **Business Plan/Proposal** (*Team assignment*). This is the major deliverable for the course.

   Each group is to develop a strategic plan for exploiting a specific business opportunity in either the Czech Republic or Poland for an existing company operating in Virginia.

1. **Virginia Company Summary** (*Team assignment, 10% points*). You are to identify a company doing business in Virginia and adopt or use of this company’s “perspective” in order to make a business idea more concrete, credible and potentially valuable (see below). This company need not be headquartered in the Commonwealth but should have a presence here, be viable and also be one that you feel could take advantage of doing business in either country involved in our residency. Note that the nature of the arrangement that you will propose is going to be a major choice for your team. There is no requirement that the Virginia company selected actually already have a physical presence or even plans to set up an operation in the Czech Republic or Poland. But by virtue of your selection you may feel that this remains an option. In fact any kind of strategic initiative might be proposed (licensing arrangement, supplier agreement, potential acquisition, franchise potential, etc.)

   In anticipation of the work to be done, each team will provide a succinct (up to 2000 words) report on the Virginia company selected. This report would include information relative to each of the following:

   - History/Industry sector
   - Financials
   - Product/service mix
   - Unique attributes
Current activities or plans for a global footprint
The specific initiative that has potential for the middle Europe market.
Other relevant information

You might want to select a company that you know personally, are interested in joining, or one that has a reputation for doing business globally. You might go to sources describing which companies are already operating in the two countries of our residency. In this regard use any number of Virginia commonwealth or County government or local Chamber/Economic Development Offices for guidance. Once a company has been identified much of the information needed can be obtained virtually. However the more ambitious team might actually make contact with the a representative of the Virginia company selected for this assignment in order to learn more about their capabilities, their products/services, and to see what plans are in place for their future.

This will be due by our third pre-trip session (May 4th)

2. **Business plan/proposed initiative paper** *(Team assignment 25% points)*. Issues to be addressed in the presentation of the strategic opportunity include (but not limited to):

   Important economic features of your chosen industry. For example, market size and growth rate, range of product/services, number and size of major competitors, availability of key resources, nature of distribution channels, rate of technological change, level and trend of industry profitability, barriers to entry, etc.

   Level of competition, sources of competitive pressures (local and international). Rivals, buyers, input suppliers, potential entrants, substitute products/services might be considered.

   Major forces operating to change competitive conditions in the industry. For example, demographics, growth in income, changing tastes, product innovation, technological change, government policy and regulation, etc.

   Critical success factors. These include capital requirements and sources, labor law/cultural issues, methods for marketing the product service, and other major requirements in the functional areas – marketing, finance, operations, human resource management, etc.

   Patterns in organizational/structural arrangements. For example, configuration and coordination of activities, import/export, licensing, strategic alliances, etc.

   Specific problems requiring managerial attention. For example, foreign exchange risk, governmental regulations, immigration issues, requirements for sharing of strategic information/skills, etc.

   Significant government/cultural/institutional features that influence industry performance. For example, trade and investment policies, education systems, enforcement of property rights, legal system, social and cultural attitudes, etc. Proposed location of business opportunity; potential strengths and weaknesses of the location that justify pursuing the business opportunity.

   The report should be written from the standpoint of the particular Virginia business seeking to exploit a business opportunity in another country. While the report will certainly need to address issues that arise in making the business case for any opportunity, it should take care to also address and analyze the global business aspects of this specific company and opportunity. This would include a deep consideration of the particular product or service of this company that is being considered.
Your report should include the following sections:

Executive summary
Goals and Strategy
Marketing
Management
Logistics and Implementation
Financial Plan

More details will be provided in a separate hand out.

Your written group report should be based upon publicly available information, and should be prepared with the understanding that readers, while having MBAs and significant experience, may not possess much industry-specific knowledge. You may also refer to the comparative analysis reports created in deliverable II 1. The report should be succinct, and not exceed ten single spaced pages in 12 point font (not including references and supporting information provided separately in tables, charts, graphs, maps, etc.). The report must contain a one paragraph executive summary (not included in page count). This will be due upon our return.

3. Post trip plan presentation (Team assignment; 5% points). Each group will make a presentation of their proposal. The presentations will be held on June 5th. Power point slides for the presentation must be posted on Blackboard before this class period. Evaluation criteria will include how effectively ideas are communicated, how engaged the presenters are with the audience, the flow of the presentation and the quality of the presentation slides.

Materials for the presentation will be due by June 5th.

II. Global Intelligence

1. Doing Business Summary (Team assignment; 15% of grade). Using the World Bank Reports, U.S. Department of Commerce Reports, and any additional resources you see fit, your group is required to prepare an executive summary that analyzes and compares the business environment in the US, the Czech Republic, and Poland. Each group will be assigned one of the following topics related to doing business in these countries:

   a. Economic outlook
   b. Business Startups
   c. Exports & Imports
   d. Investing, Investment Climate, & Investors
   e. Selling Products and Services
   f. Finance, Credit, & Taxes
   g. Infrastructure, Technology
   h. Workforce and Human Capital considerations
   i. Political climate
   j. Social/cultural issues

Each summary should provide a comparative analysis of the assigned topic relative to the Czech and Poland economies. Approach this assignment from a business executive’s perspective – what would you consider as essential elements of each topic and how do these elements impact the prospect of conducting business in these countries. You may use chart, graphs, and tables as necessary to convey appropriate information. These reports will be combined to create one comparative brief that will be distributed to the entire class before the trip. (Limit to 1000 words for each country summary.)
2. **Pre-trip position paper** (*Individual; 20% of grade*). Based on your readings, class discussions or other sources each student is to produce a position paper relative to the following question:

What are the key opportunities and challenges associated with leading or managing a small to medium size enterprise in Poland or in the Czech Republic? Note that you are to choose only one country to be the focus of your paper. Papers should be approximately 1200-1500 words (about 5 pages), 12 point font, double spaced with a separate page for references (APA style; not counted toward page limit). Note that this is to be each student’s own work product although it can be based on collective inputs.

This will be due by our second pre trip meeting (April 12th).

3. **Post-trip addendum** (*Individual; 5% of grade*). As a result of our Residency many students develop a more complete or complex view of the business environment of the countries that we visit. As a result, it is likely that your views regarding the leadership challenges identified in your pre-trip position paper will have changed. Accordingly, this assignment requires that you review your paper and then provide an update regarding your thinking. This “post script” should be no longer than 2 pages with an emphasis on what changed your mind and the experiences or learning that caused this. Alternatively if you came away from your travels even more convinced of your initial position, you must provide some clear reasons/evidence for your convictions.

This will be due by June 5th.

4. **Site Visit Brief** (*Group assignment; 10% of grade*). We plan to visit a set of companies in The Czech Republic and Poland during the residency and attend business presentations. Each student team will be assigned one of the companies involved and will be responsible for preparing a company background brief that will be distributed to the rest of the class prior to the trip. The background brief should augment any materials provided by the tour operator. This could include relevant information about the company’s history, products & services, financial standing, organizational and management structure, reputation, innovation and technology, and local and international presence. Briefs on global companies should focus on details about local operations in the Czech Republic or Poland. (Limited to 1000 words.)

Leveraging the site visit brief. Specific teams will be expected to take the “lead” and speak to some key company attributes as we embark for the site. Although engaged participation by all students is expected, members of this team will have the responsibility of (i) thanking speakers on behalf of the class and giving token gifts of appreciation (ii) being extra-prepared with a set of possible questions that will enhance our groups’ understanding of the site visit and, importantly, taking the lead in the Q&A, etc.

This will be due by our third pre-trip meeting (May 4th).

III. **Participation** (*Individual, 10% of grade*).

1. **Pre-trip meetings**. Students will be evaluated on their preparation for and involvement in class discussions and exercises. The pre and post trip meetings will be heavily discussion-based, and considering the few classroom meetings scheduled lack of participation will take away from the learning potential of the entire class. Participation will be evaluated primarily on the quality of contributions. Students are expected to prep for class by reading required course materials and constructing questions based on the
cases and then contribute to discussions. Guidelines for participation evaluation are provided at the end of this document.

2. **Residency Trip Participation.** The value of the residency is greatly affected by the quality of student participation. Effective participation requires being prepared for the specific countries and companies. It also requires reflection about globalization and its business impact. The course readings and executive summaries will help you prepare.

3. **Personal Log.** There is a lot of information to absorb in a very short time during the residency. The lessons learned need to be captured. To minimize memory overload and keep the experience manageable, each of you should maintain a daily log. More specific guidance regarding the potential content of this log will be provided. Because we will be on the road, this log can be prepared in bullet form and may be stored electronically or be handwritten. In any event you should post them on Blackboard.

   This will be due no later than June 5th.

**IV. Recap of deliverables**

Team based
- Business Initiative report (40%)
  - Virginia Company Summary
  - Proposal
  - Presentation
- Doing Business Summary (15%)
- Site Visit Brief (10%)

Individual
- Pre-trip position paper (20%)
- Post-trip addendum (5%)
- Participation (10%)
  - Pre-meeting
  - On-site
  - Log

**Grading Policy**

**Attendance**

It is expected that all students will attend each pre and post residency meeting, as well as all company visits and on-site activities during the residency. Absence from any of these meetings/visits/activities will have a negative impact on course grade. Students are expected to be on time for transportation

**Grading Scale:**

**Grade Percentage**

- A greater than or equal to 93%
- A- greater than or equal to 90% but less than 93%
- B+ greater than or equal to 87% but less than 90%
- B greater than or equal to 83% but less than 87%
B- greater than or equal to 80% but less than 83%

C+ greater than or equal to 75% but less than 80%

C greater than or equal to 70% but less than 75%

D greater than or equal to 60% but less than 70%

F less than 60%

**Honor Code**

Students are expected to follow the GMU honor code as presented in University publications.

**Learning Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474, at the beginning of the semester. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.
Important Dates/Assignments:

1. **Pre-residency meeting #1**: Friday March 22, 2013 from 6:30-10 pm. Initial meeting:
   a. Introductions
   b. Course review
   c. Case study-European Union in the 21 Century
   d. Discussion of readings
   e. WorldStrides speaker (planned)
   f. Team formation

2. **Pre-residency meeting #2**: Friday, April 12, 2013 from 6:30-10 pm.
   a. Trip logistics
   b. Case study- AMD Dresden
   c. Discussion of readings
   d. Virginia company identified
   e. Doing Business Executive Summary due
   f. Pre-trip position paper due
   g. Speaker (planned)

3. **Pre-residency meeting #3**: Friday, May 3, 2013 from 6:30-10pm.
   a. Logistics review
   b. Virginia Business Summary Due
   c. Discussion of Readings
   d. Site visit Background Brief due
   e. Speaker (planned)

4. **Due date for Team proposal, Post-trip addendum, personal log (June 5th)**
5. **Post-residency meeting**: Saturday, June 8, 2013 from 9:30 until 2 PM.
   a. Presentation of proposal
   b. Residency debriefing
   c. Sharing of personal goals for development.