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SMO 680: Leading at the Frontiers of Business

Our Mission

- ***businesses:*** Improve long term performance and market opportunities
- ***communities:*** Build livelihoods and increase stability and impact through subsidiarity
- ***partners:*** Build a common language, enable cross-sector engagement and deliver actionable results
- ***students:*** Allow real world problem solving in uncertain environments providing both an opportunity for impact and an enduring global mindset

Course Requirements:

1. **In Class (Phase 1)**
2. **In Teams**
3. **In-Country (Phase 2)**
4. **Deliverables (Phase 3)**

In Class:

Philosophy: Phase 1 is based on the philosophy that complex problems must be approached from multiple angles, and that these must be considered in the unique context of each country. In this phase we tackle the complex challenges driving each project by considering how different theories and perspectives might inform the particulars of each context. In class sessions will cover economics, philosophy, political science, law, peace studies and business perspectives. Students will bring their independent research about the in country contexts and the projects to bear upon these theories. Even before class, you will be expected to build a knowledge base regarding your country and the project that you will be undertaking. You may consider reading the history of the country, biographies of individuals who lived or worked in those areas. You may also want to consider building expertise in areas of health, agriculture, mining or any other topic that relates directly to the project assigned.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Discussion Leaders	Team Deliverables	Individual Deliverables
Jan 20	Introduction to Leading at the Frontiers of Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul Collier: The Bottom Billion (Part 1 and 2) ^# Lederach, The Moral Imagination (Chapter 1 and 2) # Getting it Right Introduction # 	Karolina and Suzy	Partner Profile*+	Reflection 1
Feb 10	Aid and Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dambisa Moyo, Dead Aid # Jeff Sachs, The End of Poverty (All read chapter 1, 3, 4, 12 and 13; Choose one case study from middle chapters) # Getting it Right Chapter 1 # 	Kat and Michelle	Country Profile*+	
March 10	Profile: OSex and the Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings to be chosen by Philippines team Getting it Right Chapter 2 and 3 # 	Tim and Tiffany	Map of global best practices*+	
March 31	Profile: Prisoner Rehabilitation and Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings to be chosen by Ghana team Getting it Right Chapter 4 and 5 # 	Bruce and Ashley	Partner Opportunity Hypotheses*+	
April 7	Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yin, Qualitative Research from start to finish (Emphasis on part 2) # 	Orsi and Jamie	Data collection strategy and Itinerary*+	
April 28	Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Other, Ryszard Kapuscinski (must be purchased) Getting it Right Chapter 6 # 	Graham and Mackenzie	Pre Country-Presentation*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Evaluation Reflection 2+

April 29- May 13	Philippines In Country		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Paper+ (pre-departure) • In country findings * (post return) 	Reflection 3+ (on the plane home)
May 11- May 27	Ghana In Country		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Paper+ (pre-departure) • In country findings * (post return) 	Reflection 3+ (on the plane home)
July, 7	In Country Briefing	Compassion Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In country findings* • Work plan for final deliverable* + 	
July, 21	Moving Forward			Final Deliverables+

*Presentation to classmates
+Written report to be submitted
Full text in dropbox
^ Audio book on my account

In Teams

Outside of class you will spend a great deal of time working with your project teams. You will be responsible for:

- Setting up meetings every 2 weeks with your partners in country, recording those meetings and keeping a detailed agenda and minutes of each conversation
- Conducting pre-research, downloading and organizing the sources of all information in a systematic manner retrievable by all group members and subsequent Frontiers Teams
- Reaching out to SMEs within the University, Edmonton, Canada and the Global Community, documenting their contact information, if possible recording conversations, keeping a detailed agenda and minutes of all conversations and thanking them with a hand written thank you card
- Spending time together – working and outside of work. Get to know one another. Break bread. Travel is hard. Travel in these contexts can be excruciating when the people who surround you

are strangers. Know each other’s spouses names, allergies, strengths and weaknesses. Develop a plan on how to bring out the best in each other and mask the “buts” (you are great...but).

Team Logistics

Given the enormous amount of work required to pull off a program of this magnitude, teams will be responsible for a large proportion of the administration. We employ a divide and conquer method where students choose a role and are responsible for a subset of the work.

Role Descriptions

Role	Description	Responsibilities	This is the role for you if you are....
Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)	Single point person for the client and me to interact with the team. Expect many text messages from me at random times.	Management and coordination of all communication between the team and partner country staff and faculty, including organizing bi-weekly meetings with clients and weekly check-ins with me.	organized, assertive, detail oriented, well-connected, good follow through, respond to emails quickly and excel at coordination
Chief of Logistics (CLO)	Single point person for all travel and itinerary related items.	Assist me with logistics including all transportation, (including transportation to the airports), flights, hotels, visas, embassy notification, immunization and any other logistics.	the type of person who likes to get work out of the way but also won’t stress if there are known unknowns
Chief of Giving And Thanking (CGnT)	In many cultures gift giving is an important cultural tradition. At Frontiers the Chiefs of Giving and Thanking ensures that each person we meet receives a personalized thank you note and a small token that represents the U of A. Don’t be fooled. This is arguably the most important role.	Collect donated gifts and purchasing gifts for all in-country interactions, arrange for transportation of these items and coordinate their giving so that they are delivered at the time of the interviews with any SME. Order personalized thank you notes and ensure their delivery.	You are the type of person who would never show up to a dinner party without a token, who never forgets a birthday and who will keep the values of gift giving central despite the chaos of any moment

Chief of Social Media (CSO)	Person in charge of making sure that the work that we are doing is getting local, national and even global attention.	Not just tweeting, Facebooking, blogging, instagramming and photographing. You will be the liaison with the media within the ASOB and attempt to gain press outside of the University.	if you are the type of person who has sent at least one tweet while reading this syllabus or pack more camera lenses than shirts when you travel.
Chief of Knowledge Management (CKNOW)	Person in charge of making sure that we have a system in place to organize the vast amount of information that we gather through the research process. Our data is useless unless we can trace it back to its original source.	Develop and communicate a system to organize the work product, research, meeting minutes, recordings, photographs and any other materials that accumulate.	If you are the type of person whose itunes library and google drive could be navigated by any stranger.

Incomplete List of Role Deliverables by Class Session

Date	CAO	CLO	CKNOW	CGnT	CSOC
Pre Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send biographies of team with pictures to clients (make them fun and funny but also professional) Finalize MOU and SOW with Emily and client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create spreadsheet with all team member information (emergency contact, passport, blood type etc) Coordinate meeting with Emily and risk management 	Develop Google Drive infrastructure, templates/procedures for agendas, meeting notes, contacts and data management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin soliciting donations from around campus for gifts. 	Access existing accounts, create a media release strategy including frequency of social media posts, retweet goals, following news in country and around topic,

		ent office (through Jayne)			
Jan 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up bi-weekly call with partner, manage agenda and minutes • Set up weekly check in with me on project progress • Version control of deliverables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit initial flight planning • Research all visa requirements for team members • Vaccination requirements and procurement • Alert team to changing conditions in country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create annotated bibliography of books read by teammates • Continuously ensure that sources are being captured and filed • Reach out to subject matter experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize picture for thank you notes • Order Thank You Notes 	Execute media strategy
Feb 10	Continuously manage partner, deliverables and me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with CAO re. transportation, translator and in country lodging • Book international flights with Jayne Ference through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously ensure that sources are being captured and filed • Reach out to subject matter experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Gifts • Ensure delivery of thank you notes to SMEs 	Execute media strategy

		<p>Jollytime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alert team to changing conditions in country 			
March 10	Continuously manage partner, deliverables and me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan middle weekend adventure Investigate internal country transportation Alert team to changing conditions in country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously ensure that sources are being captured and filed Reach out to subject matter experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More Gifts Ensure delivery of thank you notes to SMEs 	Execute media strategy
March 31	Ensure feedback on hypotheses from partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all team members have appropriate documentation Alert team to changing conditions in country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-course report on knowledge management (number of articles, pages, interviews, hours of recordings, SMEs) Continuously ensure that sources are being captured and filed Reach out to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even More Gifts (trust me there are never enough) Ensure delivery of thank you notes to SMEs Ensure diversity of gifts for different stakeholders 	Execute media strategy

			subject matter experts		
April 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with CLO to finalize agenda Ensure partner presentation in country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register team members with embassy Alert team to changing conditions in country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously ensure that sources are being captured and filed Reach out to subject matter experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gap analysis and inventory of gifts Thank you notes to all those who donated gifts Collect money from teams to purchase gifts (if necessary) 	Execute media strategy
April 21	Ensure White Paper is delivered to partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop emergency response plan Alert team to changing conditions in country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously ensure that sources are being captured and filed Reach out to subject matter experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize and pack gifts Plan according to itinerary 	Execute media strategy
In Country	Version control of in country presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase sim cards Organize money exchange Daily check in with 	Ensure that all field notes are typed and backed up	Ensure that each person we meet with receives a thank you note and an appropriate gift	Coordinate daily blogging, back up photographs and execute media strategy

		ASOB stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor changing conditions in country 			
July, 7	Continuously manage partner, deliverables and me	Follow up on billing and receipts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously ensure that sources are being captured and filed • Reach out to subject matter experts 	Inventory and store unused gifts for subsequent teams	Assess media strategy effectiveness
July, 21	Manage final deliverable		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final report on knowledge management (number of articles, pages, interviews, hours of recordings, SMEs) 	Large detailed thank you notes to Dean Doucet, TLEF fund, partner executives, MBA office and SMO department chair	Develop a transition document

In-Country

Philosophy: The projects we tackle in this course are complex and multifaceted, they concern real lives and their full nature cannot be understood by reading a book. The second phase is based on the philosophy that in order to truly understand the challenges facing a particular context, we must first walk with and learn from those we hope to serve.

The second phase takes place during two weeks in May. Although much research can be accumulated early, the time in country provides the most opportunities for fact-finding and research. The concept is for a total immersion into a complex situation, at the end of which the Business Frontiers team will present a tentative recommendation.

During the first day our in-country partners will go over safety and security procedures, the full itinerary, and the project overall. The first week's itinerary will include meetings and interviews that focus on the overview of the project, and of business in that country. This can include meeting with business, religious, political and academic leaders, and in a typical day, students may be able to interview up to 5 different people. In the past, it has been helpful to have the team travel further in-field in its data-gathering during the first week. It is important to build a schedule with some flexibility for the joint partner- Business Frontiers team to make adjustments, as needed. It is possible that the team will be split to cover more interviews. It is recommended that you find a cultural or leisure activity unrelated to the project to undertake while in-country.

During last day, the team will come together to present initial findings to our partners. This will be scheduled with time for group questions and discussion and followed by a private meeting with the country representative or project leader to gain their feedback and discuss post-trip expectations and deliverables.

It should be noted that although the problems are defined and researched by the team in phase 1, these problem statements frequently change as the problem is further examined and understood. These changes could be a shift in focus from one area of the organization to another, a narrowing of the scope of the project, or even finding that the problem statement needs to change entirely. In addition to maintaining flexibility on the ground with respect to projects, it is also important to note that the pace of life in many of the countries that we visit may be different than a typical American business environment. As a result, students and faculty should expect to be flexible with respect to the timing of responses to requests from our partners. For example, in a number of countries, interview schedules were not fully solidified in advance, but rather are planned at the beginning of each day, because the context would not have supported such advance planning. In other cases, travel to distant places may require students to spend a significant portion of each day in traffic being transported to sites. Adjusting gracefully to these unknown unknowns is a natural part of the Business Frontiers in-country experience.

Deliverables

Philosophy: The third phase is based on the philosophy that there are no quick solutions to the challenges our partners face, and that we must take time to both individually and collectively reflect on the lessons learned, on how we can drive value for our partners and on how we might give back to those who enabled us to have this opportunity.

Phase 3 has three parts. The first is the completion of the project. This typically consists of both in-class and outside of class activities. Class time will be devoted to collective problem solving with respect to the projects. Outside of class, continued contact with our partners will include periodic conference calls to communicate progress and gain additional feedback before formulating final recommendations, a memo detailing the problem statement, in-country findings, analysis, and final recommendations to be delivered within 4-6 weeks of the team departure date and a final conference call with our partners to review final recommendations and answer any questions about the memo.

The second part of this phase of the course involves giving back to all those who invested time and energy into the Business Frontiers course. This may include presenting the projects around campus, improving the course for the next Business Frontiers, writing case studies and properly thanking all of our supporters.

The third part of this phase involves reflection. The experience in-country is one that is likely to leave a lasting impression. This is a unique experience that often takes a great deal of time for its full impact to be realized. It is during this third stage that students and faculty have the opportunity to individually and communally digest the experience. The third and fourth reflection papers, as well as class discussions that revisit earlier questions will aid in this reflection.

Team Deliverables

Deliverable Name	Description
Partner Profile*+	Deliverable will be a power point presentation on the partner organization with whom we serve (including but not limited to their global and local presence, their signature programs, key granting sources, strategic goals, competitors and past programming where appropriate). This presentation should demonstrate to me that you have done sufficient research to manage the client relationship in my absence.
Country Profile*+	Deliverable will be a power point presentation and a word document on the country context (including but not limited to the historical, cultural, political, economic, legal, and colonial backgrounds where appropriate). This presentation should demonstrate to me that you can relate the project context to the unique context in which we will be working. The word document will form a portion of your white paper.
Map of global best practices*+	Deliverable will be a power point presentation and a word document mapping the global best practices addressing your project context, including a gap analysis between best practices and the in country conditions, past failed interventions, measurement /evaluation, and funding sources. The word document will form a portion of your white paper.
Partner Opportunity Hypotheses*+	Deliverable will be a power point presentation and an issue tree detailing your in country hypotheses. The expectation is that you will have shared these and received feedback from your in country partners before presenting to the class.
Data collection strategy and Itinerary*+	Deliverable will be a power point presentation and a word document detailing your goals for data collection in country. Ideally this will include a list of subject matter experts, a flexible itinerary and a plan for middle weekend. The expectation is that you will have shared these and received feedback from your in country partners before presenting to the class.
Pre Country-Presentation*	Deliverable will be a power point presentation bringing together your work to this point, refining your hypotheses and data collection strategies.
White Paper+	Deliverable will be a comprehensive overview of the research conducted for use by partner and subsequent Frontiers teams.

In country findings*	Deliverable will be a presentation to the local partner organization in order to get feedback on the preliminary observations through on the ground work. This should be co-produced with the partner and presented to the larger community of the partner staff and leadership before departing country.
Work plan for final deliverable*+	Deliverables will be 1) a presentation to the other team of in country findings and 2) a power point presentation and a word document detailing work plan for deliverable completion.

Individual Deliverables

Deliverable	Description
Reflection 1	What should the role of business be in addressing Grand Challenges? How have your experiences influenced your perspective and expectations of this course?
Reflection 2	Pre country reflection – what are you excited about? What are your fears? Expectations?
Reflection 3	Post country visit reflection – what surprised, challenged, excited you? What were the key experiences that you take with you?
Reflection 4	Personal reflection on the Frontiers journey