School of Business Administration, University of Miami
BUS 625: Brazilian Business Environment (Global Immersion Elective)

Spring 2016

Travel Dates: February 29th to March 10th, 2016

Professor: Tallys Yunes
E-mail: tallys@miami.edu
Office: Kosar/Epstein KE405
Phone: (305) 284-5107

Course Introduction
Brazil, the fifth largest country in the world in terms of area and population, is by far Latin America’s largest and most diversified economy. It has abundant natural resources, political stability, highly creative entrepreneurs, and a large and growing middle class, which is young and urban. For these reasons, Brazil is one of the most promising economies going forward. At the same time, however, the country faces chronic deficiencies in infrastructure and regulation that jeopardize its immense growth potential. This course offers an intensive, first-hand survey of Brazil’s current business environment at this critical juncture in the country’s history. Through classroom discussions, business visits, and cultural immersion experiences, students will better appreciate the opportunities and challenges of doing business in Brazil.

The business visits in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are designed to provide students with broad exposure to Brazilian businesses. In line with the great diversification of the Brazilian economy, the visits cover a broad range of economic sectors, as well as firms of different size, age, and degree of import/export orientation. We visit both Brazilian firms and local subsidiaries of multinationals.

Course Objectives
Global Immersion Electives form an integral part of the MBA academic curriculum and are designed to develop the three critical components of what experts call “global savvy.” Specifically, it is the combination of personal characteristics, knowledge, and skills that business leaders of the future will need in order to succeed in the global business arena. Along these lines, the objective of the course is to provide students with:

- Deeper knowledge of the business environment in Brazil, acquired through first-hand exposure to the economic and cultural dimensions of doing business in Brazil.
- Greater self-awareness on the personal traits that have been associated with success in the global business environment.
- Practice along with critical skills students need to exhibit as global managers and leaders.
**Learning Outcomes**
Upon completing this course, students should:

- Understand the culture, social norms, and business practices of the industries covered in the program, which will enhance the student’s ability to manage in a global dynamic business environment.
- Appreciate the business, economic, political, social, and cultural climates within Brazil, thereby broadening the student’s global perspectives.
- Gain knowledge of new and unfamiliar circumstances through an experiential and conceptual understanding of the complexities of conducting business in a globalized, rapidly changing environment.
- Develop integrative and critical thinking skills to solve problems relevant to global business.
- Develop competency in working more effectively in teams through the completion of a group project relating to Brazil in a business context.
- Develop cultural and ethical awareness in an international context through the trip component.

**Course Requirements**

- Attend, and come prepared for, the mandatory pre-trip meetings (see below).

- Complete the pre-trip assignments below. These are group tasks. Students will form groups of 3 or 4. Each group must have at least one member that read Rohter’s book and at least one member that read Reid’s book.
  - **Before date 1**: All students will read one of two books: *“Brazil on the Rise: The Story of a Country Transformed”* by Larry Rohter, or *“Brazil: The Troubled Rise of a Global Power”* by Michael Reid.
  - **First assignment: due date 1**. Each group will be assigned a set of chapters from Rohter’s and Reid’s books. The group will present the key takeaways from the reading material, and lead class discussion on them. The group will also prepare a 1- or 2-page summary report to be distributed to all students. Participation in the discussion of all chapters is required and graded.
  - **Second assignment: due date 2**. Each group will be assigned a set of articles and/or book chapters covering different aspects of Brazilian history, culture, and recent economic trends. The group will present the key takeaways from the reading material, and lead class discussion on them. The group will also prepare a 1- or 2-page report to be distributed to all students.
  - **Third assignment: due date 3**. Each group will be assigned a distinct economic sector in Brazil (financial, retailing, tourism, real estate, etc.). The group will do all the required research on this sector and will present their findings in class. Special attention should be paid to the latest developments and/or news pertinent to that sector. The group will prepare a 1- or 2-page summary report to be distributed to all students.
• Attend all business and cultural visits in Brazil during the trip. Students are expected to be attentive and inquisitive at all visits. Participation is required and graded.

• Students are strongly recommended to keep a detailed personal journal during the trip. Your journal will help you collect and distill your thoughts and feelings about the trip. The journal could include what stands out to you, feels new to you, excites you, or challenges you. The journal will serve as raw material for your post-trip Reflection Assignment, described below.

• Complete the post-trip assignments:
  o Attend mandatory post-trip meeting on date 4? from ?:?? to ?:?? in room ?.
  o Prepare a Reflection Assignment. This assignment is due at the post-trip meeting. Each student will individually prepare a 3- to 5-page report on any topic(s) related to the business side of the trip. It must dig deeply into your experience in Brazil, and critically examine your own learning through the class. We will have an open discussion about the group’s experience during the meeting. All students are expected to participate actively and share their thoughts.

Required Readings
• Brazil on the Rise: The Story of a Country Transformed, by Larry Rohter.
  OR
• Brazil: The Troubled Rise of a Global Power, by Michael Reid.
• Articles and book chapters to be distributed.

Course Evaluation and Grading
Course participation is essential to the learning objectives of this class, and will comprise nearly half of your grade. Participation is much more than attendance. Students are expected to actively participate in classroom discussion and engage in thoughtful conversation during business trips. Our business hosts take the time to meet with us because they enjoying interacting with students and learning from your perspectives. Your contributions are critical to fostering an engaging environment that benefits all students.

Grading: Pre-trip group presentations and reports: 40%
Participation during business and cultural visits: 25%
Reflection assignment: 20%
Participation in classroom discussions: 15%

Program Costs
The program fee covers:
• Domestic airfare; ground transportation; 4-star hotel accommodations (double occupancy); some meals; business and cultural visits; bilingual tour guide.

The program fee does not cover:
• International airfare; visa fees; individual travel insurance; some meals; gratuities to guides/drivers; personal expenses.
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First Assignment

• Students will form groups of 3 or 4. Each group must have at least one member that read Rohter’s book and at least one member that read Reid’s book.
  o Michael Reid: “Brazil: The Troubled Rise of a Global Power”

• Each group will be assigned one of the topics from Rohter’s and Reid’s books listed below. Choices are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Each group should e-mail the instructor the list of topics below sorted according to their preference. Groups will receive a response e-mail informing them of their assigned topic.

• The group will present the key takeaways from the reading material, and lead class discussion on them (see course syllabus for due date and location). Participation in the discussion of all topics is required and graded. The presenting group will also prepare a 1- or 2-page summary report to be distributed to all students. The report is due one week after the presentation.

TOPICS

1) Brazil’s socio-economic origins
   a. Rohter chapters 1 and 2
   b. Reid chapters 2 and 3

2) Class and race in Brazil
   a. Rohter chapter 3
   b. Reid chapter 9

3) Brazilian business and economics
   a. Rohter chapters 6, 7, and 8
   b. Reid chapters 10 and 11

4) Brazil’s international leadership ambitions
   a. Rohter chapter 9
   b. Reid chapter 12

5) Political governance in Brazil
   a. Rohter chapter 10
   b. Reid chapter 13 and 14
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**Second Assignment**

- Students will form groups of 3 or 4.

- Each group will be assigned one of the topics listed below. The associated reading material is on Blackboard. Choices are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Each group should e-mail the instructor the list of topics below sorted according to their preference. Groups will receive a response e-mail informing them of their assigned topic.

- The group will present the key takeaways from the reading material. The presentation will not attempt to summarize all the information in the material, but rather focus on what the group found most informative/interesting (see course syllabus for due date and location). Participation during class discussion is required and graded. The presenting group will prepare a 1- or 2-page summary report to be distributed to all students. The report is due one week after the presentation.

**TOPICS**


2) **Brazil Unbound: How investors see Brazil and Brazil sees the world.** HSBC and Economist Intelligence Unit. 2010.


5) **Brazil: Special Report.** The Economist. September 2013.
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Third Assignment

• Each group will research, on their own, a distinct sector of the Brazilian economy among the ones listed below. In addition to learning about the basic characteristics of a sector, special attention should be paid to the latest developments and/or news pertinent to that sector. Choices are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Each group should e-mail the instructor the list of sectors below sorted according to their preference. Groups will receive a response e-mail informing them of their assigned sector.

• The group will present key takeaways from the material they manage to find about their assigned sector. The presentation should not attempt to simply summarize the reading material, but rather focus on what the group found most interesting and informative. Plan to present for 10 minutes, using whatever media you prefer. See course syllabus for meeting date and location.

SECTORS OF THE BRAZILIAN ECONOMY TO CHOOSE FROM:

1. Agricultural sector.
2. Energy/Natural Resources sector.
3. Financial sector.
6. Real Estate sector.
7. Services/Tourism sector.
8. Manufacturing/Other Industrial sector.
9. Another (major) sector of your choice.