International Field Study Seminar in Switzerland
Switzerland Mountain Agriculture: CFAN 3503 (3 credits)
May 17 – May 31, 2015
TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

This course explores agricultural systems, methods, and traditions in mountainous regions of Switzerland. We will begin the program at the Agricultural College of Plantahof in Landquart, Graubünden Canton. You will visit a diverse array of operations, including dairy farms, orchards, vineyards and vegetable production sites in valleys and mountains. You will have the opportunity to learn first-hand from farmers, policy makers, and other professionals about how the unique history and landscape of Switzerland has influenced modern day agriculture, food production, and natural resource management. Additionally, you will explore the vital and inseparable role that culture and tradition have played in shaping values, practices, and day-to-day life in Switzerland. During this first half of the program, you will experience Swiss life first-hand through a weekend with a host family. During the second half of the program, we will travel to the Emmental region of Switzerland, known for the Swiss style of cheese with the large holes. We will stay in Langnau in Bern Canton. During this half of the program, you will learn more about Swiss history, recreation, and natural resources. You will also learn about regional differences in farming and visit a few unique dairy production facilities. We are very active on this program and participate in numerous site visits and activities each day within the two different regions in which we are based.

Throughout the program, you will have the opportunity to see agricultural operations that are organic and non-organic, as well as those that differ in size and scale, in management technique and ownership, in use of technology, and in level of environmental sustainability. I will encourage you early on to identify your particular interest (e.g. dairy production, organics, business management, sustainability) and find opportunities to integrate this interest into the questions that you ask at our site visits, your reflective writing assignments, and class projects. Cultural exploration will also be a vital facet of this program. Reflective activities and group discussions throughout the program will assist you in exploring how facets of culture influence our understanding and conceptions of agriculture—both in the context of Switzerland and your home country.

Instructors

Emily Ehlinger, M.A.                                      Hans-Peter Brandenburger
CFANS Office for Diversity and Inclusion                 Agroverde
190 Coffey Hall                                          Bergdietikon, Switzerland
eehling@umn.edu

Course Objectives and Outcomes

This program addresses the following University of Minnesota Learning Outcomes:

- Can identify, define, and solve problems – Through pre-departure sessions and activities abroad, students will look at issues related to both Swiss and U.S. agricultural systems and practices.

Swiss Mountain Agriculture, May 2014
• **Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry** - Students will gain a greater understanding of Swiss agricultural activities through speaking directly with farmers, researchers, students, professionals, and policy makers who share expertise and interest in agricultural issues.

• **Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies** – Students will have the opportunity to learn about and reflect on cultural differences within Switzerland and more broadly across Europe. We will also use the Intercultural Development Inventory as a tool for building intercultural competency.

This program addresses the following University of Minnesota Development Outcomes:

• **Responsibility and Accountability**: Students will be expected to maintain a high level of responsibility and accountability throughout the various visits and activities in this program.

• **Tolerance of Ambiguity** – Students will be exposed to a variety of perspectives, practices, and issues related to agriculture, food production and natural resource management. Students will be asked to explore the complexity of these perspectives without identifying right and wrong.

• **Appreciation of Differences** – Among the many other experiences this program provides, students will participate in a long weekend stay with a Swiss family. Cultural differences will be explored in-depth during this program. Students are asked to identify the ways in which difference adds to our ability to gain a deeper understanding of the course content.

• **Self Awareness** – Through reflective writing and activities, students will learn about themselves and their own cultures while experiencing cultural difference abroad.

### Evaluation Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure Biography</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>April 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>April 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure Topic Summary Presentation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>April 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Writing:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure reflection</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>May 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-country journaling, including homestay reflection</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-return reflection</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>June 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Assignment</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>June 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-return Survey</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>June 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-return IDI</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>June 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Points:** 260

*Please note that late assignments will receive a deduction of 10%.*
Grading Standards
93-100% = A
90-92% = A-
87-89% = B+
83-86% = B
80-82% = B-
77-79% = C+
73-76% = C
70-72% C-
67-69% = D+
63-66% = D
62% or less = F

Student Pre-Departure Orientation & Preparation
Each student will be required to attend a two hour session which will be held in early April, followed by a half-day orientation in late April. These meetings will give you an overview of the program, a preview of the logistics, and provide you with a greater understanding of course assignments and expectations.

Required Readings
All required readings will be posted to the course moodle course page. You receive further information about these readings at our first pre-departure orientation.


ASSIGNMENTS

Below you will find a very brief description for each of the assignments. Note that complete instruction sheets and rubrics will be posted to our moodle course page.

**Pre-departure Biography**

10 points
Prepare a half-page biography of yourself and email it to eehling@umn.edu. The bio will be given to Hans-Peter so he can match you with a host family and so your host family can know a little bit about you before you arrive. Include items such as: your hometown, family background, major at the U of M, things you enjoy about college, organizations in which you participate, and work or internships you have done.

**Pre-departure and post-program Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)**

10 points X 2 assessments = 20 points total
A significant component of this course focuses on building intercultural competence and learning about cultural difference. We will use the IDI as a tool to navigate cultural experiences in Switzerland while also reflecting on our own culture.

**Pre-departure Topic Summary**

40 points
You will be asked to put together a 6-8 minute presentation on a topic of interest to you related to the course. It could be a topic related to agricultural practices, veterinary practices, sustainable farming, cultural practices, etc. Please be sure to choose a topic that will allow you to research how the issue is approached in the United States as well as Switzerland. I encourage you to pair up with another student for this project but you can also choose to work individually. A 1-2 page summary of your topic should also accompany your presentation. You will present at this topic at our second pre-departure session. You will be asked to send your one page summary to me at eehling@umn.edu at least one day in advance of our session. We will compile the topics into a handout for the whole group.

**Participation**

50 points total (roughly 5 points per day)
Students are expected to actively participate each day of the course. This includes asking questions of our speakers and tour guides, sharing during reflection discussions, being respectful and on-time. If you are late, points will be deducted from your grade. **Attendance at each class session is mandatory without exception.**

**Reflective Writing and Journal Assignments**

*Pre-reflection Paper (20 points)*
You will be asked to write a reflection on your cultural preparation for the course, including thoughts about the intercultural development presentation at the pre-departure orientation session. Specifically, you will be asked to write about where you think you are at on the IDI as well
as some of your expectations for our trip. Further details will be provided at our pre-departure session. 2-3 pages in length, 12pt. font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins.

**In-Country Journaling (30 points)**
You will be expected to keep a daily journal of your experiences. Part of your entry will probably be about your day, the other part will address one question from the journaling questions handout that I will give you prior to departure. These questions will ask you to compare and contrast your observations with what you know from home. How do you think and feel about these observations? Throughout the trip we will have debriefing conversations to talk as a class about what was learned that day and discuss reflection journal questions. Consider the broader topic of Swiss mountain agriculture and agro-tourism in your journal writing. We will have a particular reflective assignment after the homestay. Note that I will be collecting these journals before we depart home so please keep up with your journaling. Please do not include anything that you would be uncomfortable with me reading.

**Post Reflection Paper (20 points)**
You will be asked to write a final reflection in response to your pre-reflection assignment and journal entry responses. You will be asked to include thoughts on your intercultural development as well as the expectations and opinions that you had coming into the program. 2-3 pages in length, 12pt. font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins.

**Final Assignment**
60 points
Your final assignment will be on a topic of your choice based on something you learned while in Switzerland and could relate to the topic which you initially presented on at our first pre-departure session. This paper or video is expected to be a meaningful and substantial product of your learning experience. A short but thoughtful, organized and error-free product is superior to a longer product that lacks quality. The topic must be relevant to Swiss and American agriculture, agribusiness and/or agrotourism, sustainability, etc.; and include insight on Swiss and American cultural practices and understanding. You could focus on a particular problem, method/practice, tradition, or investigate multiple connected topics.

**Paper:**
Please use the following format for your final report. The report must be between 5-7 pages (not including cover page, visuals such photos or diagrams, and reference page. Expected format: 1 inch margins, double spaced, Times New Roman and 12 point font.

Guidelines for content:

**Introduction**
- State the idea and objective you selected to investigate or learn more about during the course.
• You may want to include definitions, theories or significant ideas critical to the whole paper.
• Why is this topic important?

Background information and topic research
• Support your idea/objective with information on your topic(s) in a logical set of paragraphs and/or sections.
• For each paragraph use a topic sentence and supporting points and details.

Reflection
• How have your ideas or thoughts about your topic changed as a result of your trip to Switzerland? What aspects of your experience looking at your topic met your expectations, what aspects challenged or surprised you?

Conclusion
• Summarize the idea/objective
• Give your findings or conclusions, what did you learn through this experience?

References

Video/Digital Story:
Creativity is essential in the video option. Like the presentation, who is your audience? How will you capture their attention and make the content interesting? What value will they take away from your presentation?

Expected format: Format is a little more flexible. You select the video program of your choice but it should be viewable by most media programs. The expectation is that this video will be the equivalent amount of work as 5-7 page paper. The video should be 8-10 minutes in length. You can choose to include video footage, voiceover, text, photo stills, music - all of the above. Creativity is encouraged!!

If you choose to do the digital story/video, you will need to answer the same questions and address the same prompts outlined for the paper:

Introduction
• State the idea and objective you selected to investigate or learn more about during the course.
• Why is this topic important? Why should the audience care?

Background information
• Include any relevant definitions, historical information, theories, or significant ideas critical to the video as a whole.

Topic research
• Support your idea/objective with information on your topic(s) in a way that will make sense to your viewers

Reflection
• To what extent have your ideas or thoughts about your topic changed as a result of your trip to Switzerland? What aspects of your experience looking at your topic met your expectations, what aspects challenged or surprised you?

Conclusion
• Summarize the idea/objective
• Give your findings or conclusions, what did you learn through this experience?

References

Examples of similar quality level videos can be found at:  
http://www.cehd.umn.edu/pstl/water/stories/  Watch the Spring 2010 video of CFANS student Stephanie Herbst “White Earth, Blue Water” as an example.

Post-return Survey
10 Points
You will be asked to complete a course evaluation upon our return.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION ABROAD

During our time abroad we will be exploring various practices related to agriculture, food production, natural resource management, and cultural differences as well as similarities. Students will be expected to be active participants in discussions and activities and will also be expected to be respectful of differing opinions, perspectives, and practices – of individuals in our host-country, fellow students, and the instructors. We will create a safer space for discussion and dialogue. **We will look at diverse perspectives as value added and respect will be a key component of this seminar.**

Additionally, the instructors of this program will also make every effort to address individual student needs to ensure access for all. Please speak to the instructors as soon as possible if you have any concerns or accessibility needs – this could include concerns related to disabilities, mental health, sexuality, gender identity, or any other issue. Additional resources for students with disabilities, students who identify as LGBT, and/or multicultural can be found by visiting the following link but additional resources and support can be provided by the instructor:  
http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/students/identity.php

Accommodations and Accessibility

Again, I am happy to work with any student who has needs or concerns related to disability accommodations or accessibility. Additionally, the Disability Resource Center (DRC) collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact the DRC at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website at http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu. Please do let me know right away if you are experiencing any mental health concerns.

Sexual Harassment

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf

Sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated on this program and should be reported to me immediately.

OTHER POLICIES

Student Conduct Code:
The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community. As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:


Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom:
Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference: