

Portfolio Intercultural Awareness (PIA)

Self-guided

Duration:	Phase 1 (“Expectations”): Aug. 7 – 28, 2021 Phase 2 (“Experiences”): Aug. 28 – Dec. 3, 2021 Phase 3 (“Evaluation”): Dec. 3 – 24, 2021
Workload Hours:	30 per FU-BEST course taken Phase 1 (“Expectations”): ca. 9 hrs. Phase 2 (“Experiences”): ca. 12 hrs. Phase 3 (“Evaluation”): ca. 9 hrs.
Tool:	Blog, Wiki, or Padlet (tbd)
Contact:	fubest@fu-berlin.de
ECTS Credits:	<i>integrated into the 6 ECTS per FU-BEST course</i>

Description

As part of their study experience at FU-BEST, every student will compile their own “Portfolio Intercultural Awareness” (PIA). PIA is a self-guided reflection module designed to enhance the study experience with respect to its intercultural dimension; it is integrated into each FU-BEST course (and its overall ECTS credits). Students will reflect upon their perceptions of the international study experience at FU-BEST, their encounters with people from different cultural backgrounds, and their own concepts of themselves in relation to others. They will be introduced to theoretical concepts of cultural framing, stereotyping, and global citizenship, and apply them to their own experiences as an “I” and as an “other” in various environments. In exercises designed to heighten their intercultural awareness, they will be able to put their individual experience into context and apply their analytical skills towards a better understanding of and approach to human interaction and communication.

PIA is divided into three phases:

- ❖ “Expectations” (3 weeks before the start of the semester)
- ❖ “Experiences” (13 weeks parallel to the semester)
- ❖ “Evaluation” (3 weeks after the end of the semester)

In each of these phases, there are three types of learning outcomes:

- Students will acquire knowledge about topics related to intercultural awareness
- Students will gain experience in dealing with these topics
- Students will improve reflective and productive academic and personal skills

Each student’s PIA is a conversation that they have with themselves, anticipating, reporting, and reminiscing about their FU-BEST experience, but also their study and growth experience at a temporarily different academic home in general. It will help them learn about themselves and the way they can enter into meaningful and eye-opening respectful interaction with other human beings from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Every week, students will receive readings, reflective assignments, and practical exercise prompts. Tasks will include research activities, interviews, short essays, reflective exercises, news analysis, and more. This syllabus will not list the assignments and exercises in advance to ensure that students do not “prepare” for them and thus bias their results in advance. Instead, the specific learning outcomes per phase are listed below. The readings, assignments, and exercises will be made available to students on our learning platform Blackboard per week.

Learning Objectives

Before the semester, PIA will help students to:

- Understand the different forms of “culture” and the complexity and shortcomings of the concept
- Learn about stereotyping
- Acknowledge the added value of a reflected learning process
- Articulate their expectations regarding the study experience, both positive and negative ones
- Assess their knowledge about German culture and history
- Reflect upon possible personal biases/stereotypes/ignorance
- Formulate goals for their study experience
- Practice cultural observation and factual description

During the semester, PIA will help students to:

- Differentiate between “culture” and “personality” as formative factors
- Get to know other cultures and get to know others’ perception of the student’s own culture
- Recognize their own perspective as one among many others
- Get to know other teaching/learning cultures
- Practice unbiased interview techniques

After the semester, PIA will help students to:

- Understand the concept of “global citizenship”
- Assess their study experience
- Reflect upon their personal development connected to the study experience
- Embed their study experience into their CV
- Practice writing informational texts and conveying their experience to others in oral presentations

Student Prerequisites

In addition to the prerequisites mentioned in the specific syllabus of each FU-BEST course, students should compile their PIA with an open mind, curiosity, and creativity. It will not be graded or reviewed in total, but there will be feedback and discussion opportunities over the course of the semester. It is essential for students to understand that PIA will enhance their individual study experience by making it more conscious, reflected, and productive. Therefore, the serious engagement with the provided literature and the completion of all required assignments and exercises is not only a prerequisite for receiving the full number of credits per course, but also serves each student’s personal intercultural awareness and their growth as a global, open-minded citizen.

General Requirements

This Portfolio is a self-guided module and a conversation with oneself. While we provide helpful prompts and deadlines, students need to be able to entertain that conversation and to follow up on their own experience on a regular, self-critical, and engaged basis. Since they will go back and forth between entries made at different points in the study experience, a certain diligence and clarity while adding to PIA will be helpful.

Technical Requirements

Stable Internet connection.

Fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones is not recommended).

Recommended operating systems: Windows 7 or higher or MacOS 10.13 or higher.

Students may compile their PIA as a Wiki, a Blog, or a Padlet, depending on personal technical and layout preferences. Templates and access will be provided by FU-BEST.

Course Requirements

“Expectations”: Selected readings, 4 assignments, and 2 exercises

“Experiences”: Selected readings, 8 assignments, and 2 exercises

“Evaluation”: Selected readings, 4 assignments, and 1 exercise

Some specific assignments and exercises are required; for the remaining ones students will choose from a list provided each week.

Students who attend more than one course will complete more assignments.

Literature

Provided online.

Readings include:

Tracy Rundstrom Williams: Learning Through a PRISM: Facilitating Student Intercultural Learning Abroad, 2018.

Madeleine F. Green: "Global Citizenship: What Are We Talking About and Why Does It Matter?", in: *Trends & Insights for International Education Leaders*, January 2012.

Brooks Peterson: Cultural Intelligence: A Guide to Working with People from Other Cultures, 2004.
