



Broad College of Business

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

IBUS 393: Introduction to International Business (or BUS 491)

South Africa: Global Business in the Rainbow Nation (Education Abroad)

Spring Break 2026 Syllabus

Instructor:

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Course Information

Course Description and Overview

This program is designed to increase knowledge about South Africa's economic position on the continent and across the globe. Students will gain insight into corporate and social cultures through a combination of class instruction, company site visits, and numerous cultural events.

Engage with business leaders, learning firsthand about the successes and challenges in a post-apartheid South Africa. Tourism is also one of its largest economic industries. Students should be aware that participation involves extensive walking at a fast pace in rural/urban settings in all kinds of weather. Therefore, moderate-to-strenuous physical activity is expected at times.

Textbooks

Understanding South Africa by Carien Du Plessis & Martin Plaut (ISBN-10: 1787382044)

The Cape Town Book by Nechama Brodie (ISBN-10: 1920545980)

Optional: Africa Is Not A Country by Dipo Faloyin (ISBN-10: 0393881539) and South Africa: The History and Legacy of the Nation from European Colonization to the End of the Apartheid Era by Charles River Editors (ISBN -10: 1092506152)

Requirements and Grading Policies:

Points	Description
50	Attendance at all program events and functions is mandatory. Missing an event, except in the case of illness, will result in loss of 25% of points for the first missed event and loss of all points for the second missed event.
40	Professionalism - You are expected to represent the university in a professional manner. Appropriate dress and punctuality are considered part of professionalism. Obey local laws and behave in a manner befitting Spartans. Give your undivided attention and be courteous at all program functions and events. This is an academic program. Possible loss of all points for those that are given a warning and continue to violate professionalism standards.
50	Pre-departure paper – A 3-to-4 page paper (12 pt. font, double spaced, 1-inch margins) which discusses the four dimensions of your personal cultural profile (Trompenaars Dimensions) and addresses your knowledge of the history of South Africa (including recent news events), what you hope to learn about the business environment, and what intrigues you most about your visit to Cape Town (what are you looking forward to doing or seeing).
60	<p>Final Paper – A 4-to-5-page paper (12 pt. font, double spaced, 1-inch margins) which discusses what you learned from the cultural and business visits in Cape Town, including but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did your perceptions of South Africa change after our week-long visit? Did you learn anything about the culture, people, business environment or anything else that surprised you, please explain. 2. What are some of the challenges facing South African businesses today? In your opinion, how should businesses face these challenges? 3. Share about your favorite cultural visits or experiences (Table Mountain, Cape Point, Safari, etc.) and discuss your favorite organizational visits (BOS, SOZO, etc.). Why did you enjoy these and please share what you learned from the visits.
200	Total Points Possible

Grading Scale

Grade	Points	Percentage
4.0	188 – 200	94% to 100%
3.5	180 – 187	90% to 93%
3.0	168 – 179	84% to 89%
2.5	160 – 167	80% to 83%
2.0	148 – 159	74% to 79%
1.5	140 – 147	70% to 73%
1.0	120 – 139	60% to 69%
0.0	0 – 119	0 to 59%

Honors Option

If you are in the Honors College and want to complete an Honors Option, please contact the instructor. We will come to a solution based on your interests and plan an appropriate due date.

Course Structure

Before Departure:

Wednesday, February 4 *Introduction & Pre-departure Orientation*

6:00 – 8:30 pm in room N336 (North Business College)

This session will acquaint you with program policies and procedures before departure as well as onsite. We will also discuss cultural aspects of life in Cape Town to help make your trip safe, educational, and enjoyable.

READ (prior to class): Introduction in *Understanding South Africa (USA)* and first chapter in *The Cape Town Book (CTB)*

Assignment due before February 11: Complete pre-departure modules 1-3.

Wednesday, February 11 *European influence in South Africa*

6:00 – 8:30 pm in room N336 (North Business College)

Together we will learn how European influence has shaped the economic, political and cultural climate of South Africa.

READ (prior to class): Chapter 1 in USA and chapters 2 & 4 in CTB

Assignment due by midnight, Tuesday, February 17: Pre-departure paper

Wednesday, February 18 *Apartheid in South Africa*

6:00 – 8:30 pm in room N336 (North Business College)

What is apartheid, how did it begin & end, and how does it impact the country today... years after its demise.

READ (prior to class): Chapters 3-5 in USA and chapters 12-14 in CTB

Wednesday, February 25 *Today's business & economic environment in South Africa*

6:00 – 8:30 pm in room N336 (North Business College)

As the most industrialized country on the continent of Africa, what are the opportunities and challenges faced in business and socio-economic terms? How does South Africa work to engage in a global economy?

READ (prior to class): Chapters 6-9 in *USA* and chapters 5-8 in *CTB*

After returning home:

Wednesday, March 11 *Unpacking the experience*

6:30 – 8:00 pm in room M036 (Minskoff Pavilion)

Improve your ability to best share the value of your education abroad experience, both personally and professionally.

Assignment due by 11:59pm Friday, March 13: Post-trip reflection paper.

Cape Town:

Friday, February 27	Depart for Cape Town
Saturday, February 28	Arrive in Cape Town
Sunday, March 1	Cultural visits: Chapman's Peak Drive, Boulders Beach, Cape of Good Hope, Table Mountain
Monday, March 2	Business Visits
Tuesday, March 3	Business Visits
Wednesday, March 4	Morning cultural activity, afternoon business visit
Thursday, March 5	Business visits
Friday, March 6	Cultural activity and business visit; depart for home
Saturday, March 7	Arrive in USA