

**GLOBAL STUDIES MAJOR
CULTURAL IMMERSION CONTRACT**

*Before study/work/volunteering abroad to fulfill the requirement of the Global Studies Major,
items marked with an asterisk (*) must be completed and submitted to the Global Studies Coordinator.*

*Student's Name _____

*Foreign Language: _____

Courses taken:

Semester:

Total Credits _____ (must take at least 6 semester credits in one foreign language before going abroad)

***Complete all Core Courses plus at least three (3) more Global Studies courses (fulfilling either the Thematic or Regional concentrations) before study/work/volunteering abroad:**

_____ **GLB 1010** *Introduction to Global Studies* _____ **GEO 2020** *World Regions and Cultures*

_____ **ANT 1010** *Intro to Cultural Anthropology* _____ **HIS 1112** *World History II*

_____ **ECO 1040** *Global Economic Issues* _____ **POS 1030** *Comparative Government*

* Other GLB Courses taken: (1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Course grades earned must be C or better

In order to ensure your experience is in a setting of cultural immersion (see attached Guidelines):

*Enroll in **GLB 3810** *Cultural Immersion Experience* _____ number of credits _____ (0-2 cr.)

*Location abroad: _____

*Name of program/institution: _____

*Dates and total duration (must be approximately 15 weeks minimum): _____

*Plan for Cultural Immersion (must be genuine effort to engage with the society and culture of host country):

(attach longer description if needed)

*Approved by Cultural Immersion Mentor _____
signature *date* *email address*

*Approved by GLB Advisor _____
signature *date*

*Student Signature _____

*Global Studies Coordinator signature _____

Guidelines for Cultural Immersion Experience: Study/Work/Volunteer Abroad

Students must fill out in consultation with their CI (Cultural Immersion) Mentor, sign, and fulfill a Cultural Immersion Contract that adheres to the following guidelines:

1. *Duration:* The stay should be of 15 weeks duration; however, for special programs, a student may be able to go for two shorter stays at the same location as long as the total duration of living abroad is approximately 15 weeks.
2. *Immersion:* The student must make a genuine effort 1) to engage with the society and culture of her/his host country and 2) to learn valuable insights into the lives and cultures of people in that society that will allow them to act knowledgeably and effectively as participants in that country and others.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR BECOMING “CULTURALLY IMMERSED”

🌐 Ideally, the student will be (or become while there) sufficiently conversant with at least one of the languages commonly spoken there to allow him/her to interact meaningfully with the people in the host country. Two common avenues for that proficiency are prior language study here in the United States and formal language study in the host country.

🏠 Living in the home of a local citizen will offer many experiences and insights not available to those who live in residence halls or apartments with fellow Americans.

🎓 Studying at a local school/university/college with others in the host country, as opposed to studying in a US-based program of only American participants, is often a great way to get to know college-aged people abroad.

Even if you choose a program with only American participants, you can still find ways of interacting meaningfully with people in the host country:

🌐 Joining groups, classes, and other activities that host-country “locals” also participate in can be immensely informative about the host country’s society and culture, as well as fun. Some examples might be:

- Participating in a local arts or musical group
→ Imagine yourself taking painting classes in Paris, flower-arranging in Tokyo, tango in Argentina, drumming in Dakar, ushering at a London theatre, playing in a Mexican band....
- Joining a local culinary or community-supported agricultural group or co-op
→ Imagine yourself in cooking classes in Hong Kong or New Delhi, working a vineyard in Italy or olive grove in Greece, making cheese in Switzerland, baking bread at a Cape Town food co-op....
- Joining a local outing club or athletic association
→ Imagine yourself skiing in Korea, hiking the Alps, cycling in Vietnam, camping in Russia....
- Volunteering with a local environmental, housing, social issues, etc., organization
→ Imagine yourself helping clean up a riverbank in Shanghai, assisting at a free clinic in Ghana, working with local women to build a rape crisis counseling center in Sydney, or at a Habitat for Humanity site in Auckland, or teaching English to children in Nicaragua....
- Joining a church or meditation group for regular participation in a local spiritual community
→ Imagine yourself doing yoga in an ashram, singing in a German choir, practicing Zen in Kyoto...

3. *Planning:* The Global Studies Program and Castleton’s Study Abroad Office, together with the Student Services office, work together to help students plan the best possible experience. Students work one-on-one with their GLB faculty advisor and their Cultural Immersion (CI) Mentor—ideally a Castleton faculty or staff member with experience or expertise in the culture of the student’s host country—to plan (at least one semester in advance, preferably six months to a year in advance) their time abroad and carry out their cultural immersion activities. Together the students, faculty, and CI mentor complete the Cultural Immersion Contract and make arrangements for their cultural immersion experience, set criteria for meeting the requirement in the context of their experience and for their weekly communication about that experience. If enrolling for credit in a foreign university or college, the student must submit to Student Services a Castleton form for prior approval of transfer credit. The student will enroll in GLB 3XXX *Cultural Immersion Experience* for the semester when he/she will be abroad. The CI Mentor will be the instructor of record for that student and submit the grade (P/F) for the course. The CI Mentor can continue to build in accountability as the student communicates his/her experience

abroad, such as requiring the student to do a follow-up interview on a relevant topic with someone that he or she has met.

4. *Finance*: The student is responsible for arranging funding for the semester abroad, but the student's Cultural Immersion mentor and the Study Abroad office will help students find and make arrangements for their cultural immersion experiences. The Castleton Financial Aid office will also help to make the trip affordable for students, as their circumstances require. This may include helping to arrange for students to study at a foreign college or university where they can get Castleton credits and apply regular financial aid to defray costs. The GLB Program also provides information about how to find external financial support where needed.

5. *Accountability/Evidence*: Students demonstrate success in cultural immersion in two primary ways:

(1) weekly communications (emails, blogs, or other written reports of at least 250 words each week) to the student's Cultural Immersion (CI) Mentor. The CI Mentor will respond weekly with appropriate feedback and suggestions for enhancing the student's experience abroad in order to meet the cultural immersion requirement, and will submit the student's grade for GLB 3XXX based on these communications. Verification in the form of a letter or other documentation from a local authority at the site of the student's cultural immersion is required.

(2) a project detailing examples of and reflecting on the student's integration into the host country's culture, to be completed and presented to peers and GLB faculty during the subsequent capstone seminar. The project will include a 3-5-page essay describing personal insights into the culture, language, and society gained while living abroad.

GLB 3810: Cultural Immersion Experience

Study, work, intern, or volunteer abroad for 15 weeks in an approved cultural immersion experience. Not mere tourism, this requires students to make genuine efforts to engage with the society and culture of their host country. Students work closely with a Cultural Immersion Mentor to plan, carry out, and reflect on their activities abroad to gain meaningful insights that allow them to act knowledgeably and effectively as participants in that country and others. The student is responsible for arranging funding for the semester abroad.

Prerequisites: Complete the 6 core GLB courses; 6 credits or equivalent in foreign language; 9 credits in the GLB thematic and/or regional concentrations; and a Cultural Immersion Contract (obtained from the Global Studies Coordinator).