

POL 2097 INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

TIPS FOR THE TRIP

Spring Semester 2025
University Honors Program
The School of Public and International Affairs
University of Cincinnati

Instructor: Dr. Ivan Dinev Ivanov
Class meets: Wednesdays, 4:00-6:50 pm
Location: TBD
Study abroad component: May 3-11, 2025
(see attached brochure for detailed itinerary)
Location: The Hague and Brussels
Course's webpage:
<http://homepages.uc.edu/~ivanovid/abroaduhp.htm>

Instructor's contact info:
Office Hours (Spring 2025):
Mon & Wed
TBD
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First, regarding the group outreach projects:

As indicated on the syllabus, students who participate in the study abroad program will need to complete a creative group outreach project. A group of 5-7 students will work together on the same time to prepare a 10 min creative visual presentation (e.g. using PowerPoint, Video or other format) which highlights three main aspects of their experience: (1) a presentation of a specific institutional policy; (2) a brief discussion how this program has enriched their scholarly knowledge on the topic and; (3) why and how the program is valuable to the UC community. For samples of previous year's projects see:

<http://homepages.uc.edu/~ivanovid/abroaduhp.htm>

Second, regarding the research papers:

During the trip, students should feel free to engage in discussions with our presenters in The Hague and Brussels about the topics on which they are writing their research papers. Participating actively in the discussions is also an opportunity for students to collect primary data for their projects and also show that they are genuinely interested on the topic(s) at hand. Remember, there is no guarantee that the speaker selected for that day will be best prepared but they provide at least some background information, students should feel free to incorporate in their final paper. Note that ICTY and ICC schedules are posted online about a week before the actual visit; you can check their websites for court schedules. Once we arrive, they will tell us if we will be able to attend a court hearing or not:

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/> (go to Court Calendar section on the page)

Also, remember that for students who participate in the study abroad program, the final project is due May 31, 2025. Let me know if you have any problem completing the project. In the meantime, you will be assigned an "In progress" grade unless otherwise specified.

Third, regarding packing and preparations for the trip:

Make sure you pack light -- for 10 days you don't need more than 1 checked bag and 1 carry on item -- a purse or backpack. Take confirmable wheeled suitcases that you can carry at airports, train & metro stations and on the bus. Note that the weather in The Hague in Brussels is generally cooler this time of the year than in Cincinnati (although we have had hot waves in the past). It is likely that it will be raining at least two-three days so make sure to pack umbrellas or raincoats/ rain jackets. If you plan to use electric devices make sure to purchase adapters from Target or other locations. Continental Europe uses 220V electricity. You can bring your cell phones but I will discourage you from using roaming services unless you have international plans with flat minutes and gigabytes of data. Please, contact your cell phone provider beforehand and make sure that they will not charge you excessive fees. Feel free to bring tablets and/ or laptops at your preference. The hotels and restaurants or cafes will most likely have WiFi network (mostly free) so you will be able to use Internet services there. You can use whatsapp or viber apps or skype/ facetime, etc to place phone calls to the US.

Fourth, regarding the dress code during the visits:

When visiting various int'l institutions that the dress code is business or business casual -- includes suits, khaki pants, slacks, and skirts, as well as short-sleeved polo shirts, jeans could be okay in combination with jackets and shirts, tie is optional. Bring comfortable clothes and shoes (no high heels!!!). Remember that our group will go through security every time we visit any of these institutions and you will need to **bring your passport with you every time** to verify your identity before you get access to these institutions. If you don't have your passport with you, you will not be allowed to enter the premise and attend the event. Also, note that at ICTY and ICC you will not be allowed to bring digital devices (phones, computers, etc.) in the courtrooms -- only a pen and a notepad (as well as your passport). Each of the two courts will have lockers for your convenience (ICTY lockers are really small so you need to plan ahead).

Fifth, regarding the free day(s) on the schedule:

As you have noticed we will have free days on weekends or Sundays (check the tentative schedule for details). During these days, you can choose to stay in the city where the group is (i.e. The Hague or Brussels) and do some sightseeing there. I will also prepare a list and a plan for stuff to do in town. You can also use the time to travel to other places and cities around The Hague and Brussels. For the weekend in The Hague, I would recommend to go to Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht or another location within 3 hours train ride. In this case, you will be departing from and returning to Den Haag HS train station. In any case, you need to plan carefully and be back at our hotel in The Hague no later than 8 pm in the evening the same day. Make sure to notify us if there are any delays. For the weekend in Brussels, I would recommend Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp or Liege or another location within 3 hours train ride. In this case, you will be departing from and returning to either Brussels Midi or Brussels Central train stations. The same rule applies in Brussels -- you need to plan carefully and be back at our hotel in Brussels no later than 8 pm in the evening the same day. We recommend you to travel in group and watch out for each other. Plan accordingly! For detailed train schedules visit:

<https://www.b-europe.com/EN>

<https://www.belgiantrain.be/en/travel-info/current/current-departure-times>

Sixth, regarding safety and security when travelling:

First, when on the road, please remember that pickpocketing is a common problem in Europe (esp. in places where there is high concentration of tourists like Grand Place or train station – Brussels Central, Den Haag HS, etc.). You should be careful, put your wallet or purse within reach (e.g. front pockets) and should also consider bringing a money belt with you and make sure that you are in control of your wallet or purse. Be careful!

Second, terms and of our study abroad program can change based on the situation with COVID-19. At this point (August 2022) our anticipation is that the new COVID-19 strains will not prevent us from travelling abroad and experiencing unanticipated closures associated with public health. We encourage UC students to closely follow COVID-19 rules and procedures as outlined by the University of Cincinnati, the State of Ohio and the US Center for Disease Control, as well as the rules and procedures of the host country (i.e., Belgium and the Netherlands), as well as the overall EU rules and procedures. Please, understand that host rules in Belgium and the Netherlands apply, or UC rules if the university rules are stricter than the host country rules. Students will be updated about rules and procedures upon UC International’s recommendations. By and large, students are expected to be vaccinated and boosted at the time of travel unless expectation has been granted by the University of Cincinnati, also they would be expected to wear masks when and if necessary during flight time, meetings and other events involving multiple individuals. Medical exceptions can be allowed only if proper documentation is provided in advance. Students are recommended to bring face masks and COVID-19 tests, and would be required to quarantine as necessary. If students have concerns about these requirements and expectations, they should discuss this issue with the instructor, UHP and UC international. Also, here is a list of UC and federal COVID-19 resources:

- [Public Health Vaccination Resources, Dashboard and Updates](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources for UC Students](#)
- [UC COVID-19 Testing Resources](#)
- [CDC Vaccine Guidance](#)
- [Information about CDC Masking Guidelines](#)

Third, regarding other possible threats (incl. terrorist attack on the streets). While we cannot predict if any such event will occur or when it will happen, we can assure all program participants and their parents that we take security very seriously. Our program is working closely with UC International and the State Department to determine whether it is safe for our group to travel. When in Brussels (and in The Hague) we have taken measures to minimize the risk by organizing bus tours (rather than walking tours), etc. We also encourage our students to stay vigilant and let us and the European (i.e., Belgian and Dutch) authorities if they see any suspicious activities.

Lastly, we will provide passes for local transportation once we arrive at our destinations (The Hague and Brussels). I will also prepare for you a package with relevant info which will be distributed beforehand. Finally, we want you to remember that this program is for educational purposes, but we also want you to enjoy the study abroad tour.