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INTRnational: A transitions course for new international students

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INTR 100: Transitions to College

- INTR 100 is a one-credit class “Transitioning to College” course offered to first-year students.
 - Often part of a learning community course
 - INTRnational was not tied to a learning community because we didn’t want to isolate international students
- Piloted in Fall of 08 as part of college’s enhanced commitment to Diversity & Internationalization
 - Vision, Mission, Learning Goals
 - New positions
 - New Center
 - Orientation

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Course Goals

- To understand and apply the college-wide learning goals, particularly those focused on collaboration and teamwork, writing and communication skills, and global consciousness.
- To become familiar with Westminster's resources, opportunities, and activities.
- To develop a sense of place and explore some of the diverse and international aspects of Salt Lake City.
- To understand and address transition issues that international students face adjusting to life in a new country and in a different educational setting.
- **We also hoped that some projects would help new students make friends across the campus.**

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Profile of the Class

- Pilot class offered in Fall 2008 with 9 students; offered again in Fall 2009 with 21 students.
- Fall 2008:
 - 9 students
 - 3 matriculated, 6 exchange students
 - China, Northern Ireland, Latvia, Russia
- Fall 2009:
 - 21 students
 - 20 matriculated, 1 exchange student
 - Austria, China, Costa Rica, Estonia, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Northern Ireland, Norway, Mexico, Sweden, United States (lived abroad her whole life), Vietnam

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Course Projects

- Explorations Project
- Project Comm 310 INTRNational
- Reflections (Diversity series, etc.)



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Explorations Project

Goals:

- Explore some of the diverse and international aspects of Salt Lake City
- Meet other first-year students from the U.S.

Logistics:

- Match 2 international students from INTR class with 2-4 U.S. students from another class

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The Assignment

- Visit 6 places during the semester (2 in September, 2 in October, 2 in November) and write a two-page reflection on each place visited.
 - **Salt Lake City Library** (210 East 400 South). Check out the inside, and take a walk to the top following the pathway on the outside of the building.
 - **Gilgal Gardens** (749 East 500 South). A little hard to find...looks like a gate in the midst of houses, but it's really unexpected and interesting!
 - **One World Cafe** (41 South 300 East). At this restaurant you pay whatever you think is appropriate. Be prepared to enjoy a great meal in an interesting environment.
 - **Coffee shops**, international markets, sporting events, tourist spots

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Reflection Papers

- Where did you go? Whom did you go with? How did you get there?
- Why did you pick this place? What was your experience like?
- What did you notice and feel there? What did you like or dislike and why?
- How was the experience of going with others – how was the communication and interaction? Do you think those who went with you had similar or different responses? Why? Would you recommend this place to anyone else? Why or why not?

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Project Comm310INTRnational

- Work with students from COMM 310 Professional Writing to develop a “survival guide” for international students who are new to Westminster College and Salt Lake City
 - INTR students: employers, experts
 - COMM students: employees, professional writers

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Project COMM310 Reflection Papers

- What was the purpose of the meeting? Who attended? What did you do?
- What worked well?
- What was confusing or difficult about the meeting?
- What do you need help with?

As you answer these questions consider intercultural communication, your comfort in your role, and your efforts to work as a team/collaborate.

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Final Portfolio Project

- Reflection
 - Classes
 - People
 - Tips for next year's new international students



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Did you actually learn anything in this

class?

- I learned how to adjust to a new environment better and how to make use of the precious resources on campus.
- I learned the unique way of learning. It is combination of everything. I learned from communication, trips, lectures, discussions, reading and writing assignments, how to solve problems and also the kindness and optimistic attitudes of the professors.
- I do learn many aspects of American College life when I hanged out with others. It's fun.
- I learned more about American culture.
- I think I learned a lot about how to study at the US College and be successful in it. And I also learned more about the city doing the exploration projects.
- Learned to accept my offers that came my way.
- Surely I did. In this class I enjoyed a relaxing atmosphere in class and got a opportunity to express myself. I learned a lot of from guest speakers and the discussion with classmates as well. I knew a lot about how to get along with people from different backgrounds and how to adapt to a new

Lessons Learned

- **Logistics**
 - Enrollment
 - Explorations teams
- **Reflection v. summaries**
- **Assignments**
- **Staff & Faculty Collaborations**



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Applying to your institution?

- Would any similar strategies work in your institution?
- What are some related projects/strategies you offer at your institution?
- How might we all improve?

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Thank You!



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