

GROWING GREEN FINLAND: A SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM WITH A  
SOCIOLOGICAL FOCUS

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**Title**

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with North Dakota  
State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper is an example of theory-based practice in the field of international education through program and course design. Environmental sociology will be the focus of the class readings, discussions, and course work as well as on-ground programming. This topic ties specifically to the on-ground programming in Finland. Students will take the knowledge learned in the course surrounding sustainability, wellbeing practices, and sociology and learn more about these topics through immersion and community interaction. Through specific course design, students will not only learn about environmental sociology, but will have continuous learning experiences through course work, excursions, reflection, peer-to-peer learning, and first-hand experience. This paper also outlines two of the most prominent theories often used when developing short-term study abroad programs: transformative learning and experiential learning theories. These are educational theories that lay a theoretical foundation for how learning occurs in short-term abroad programming.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TLT .....Transformative Learning Theory.

ELT .....Experiential Learning Theory.

NDSU.....North Dakota State University.

NEP .....New Ecological Paradigm.



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My career thus far has focused on all aspects of short-term study abroad programs. From my own participation as a student, to my role as a co-leader, to assisting faculty in developing their own programs, I have dedicated my career to this topic. Throughout the Sociology program I gained knowledge to understand people on a deeper level, the importance of theory to ground research, and the web of social systems that connect the world. The goal of this paper will focus on developing my own short-term summer program (2-weeks) to Finland to study sustainability and human wellbeing with a focus on environmental sociology. Finland is exemplary in both categories as sustainable practices and environmental morals are developed from birth. The importance of nature is embedded in the culture, which leads to sustainable practices around wellbeing in the forms of forest bathing, sauna use, buying local goods, building products from sustainable materials, farm-to-table style consumption, etc. This program will also be the first of its kind to focus on sustainability and wellbeing in Finland, which are two topics that have become more prominent in recent years and generations.

The goal of my paper is to demonstrate how to use two of the most prominent theoretical frameworks and best practices used by international educational professionals in program development: experiential learning theory (ELT) and transformative learning theory (TLT). Both are at the core of my program development as well as the best practices outlined by The Forum on Education Abroad, and other institutional leaders.

In the course, students will learn how environmental sociology plays a role in the Finnish culture through class readings, activities, assignments and through their interactions with the nature around them and how they use their environment in terms of wellbeing practices,

conservation, and in their daily lives. Students will explore how human-environment interactions have played a pivotal role in Finland's views on sustainability and wellbeing practices.

In this paper, you will be introduced to environmental sociology, ELT, and TLT. They each play a role in the development of the program and the core focus of the course, outline best practices, and show how they are used from program conception, pre-departure coursework, throughout on-site programming, program conclusion, and assessment.

For this paper I propose a completed program grounded in theory and best practices that will foster student growth in the area of sustainability and wellbeing in the Finnish culture, which will allow them to recognize their own practices and how they have an impact on our natural world.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Study abroad has become increasingly popular over the last decade offering, students a new way of learning through travel abroad. According to *Open Doors* (2019), one in ten U.S. undergraduates will study abroad before they graduate. In previous years, students primarily participated in long-term programs lasting from a single semester to an entire academic year, but more recently short-term programs (typically 7-14 days) have been booming (Redden, 2018). *Open Doors* (2019) found that 32.5% of students studied on a long-term program while 57.5% studied on a short-term program. North Dakota State University has also seen this trend, which has led me to develop my own program to Finland with a focused topic of sustainability and human wellbeing.

### **Introduction to Sustainability and Wellbeing in Finland**

Finland, like many of the Scandinavian countries, has pledged to focus on sustainable practices. According to the Environmental Performance Index (2020), Finland is ranked among the top 10 countries in the world in environmental performance. They scored first in areas such as air quality, sanitation and drinking water, and marine protected areas (Environmental Performance Index, 2020). Finland has taken it a step further and has developed a “Commitment to Sustainability” plan that outlines goals for 2050. These goals include sustainable practices as well as the focus of wellbeing of its citizens (Commission on Sustainable Development, 2016).

According to the Commission on Sustainable Development (2016), the 2050 plan outlines specific objectives that must be met in order for the larger goals to be achieved.

1. Equal prospects for wellbeing: guaranteed equal opportunities to health, education, and employment.

2. A participatory society for all: equal opportunities for all to have a say in public affairs that impact their lives.
3. Work in a sustainable way: measures will be taken to create jobs and improve productivity and quality of work.
4. Sustainable society and local communities: create sustainable and safe communities where jobs, housing, comprehensive services, sustainable transport systems, the use of information and communications technology, and green areas support economic, social and cultural wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of the environment.
5. A carbon-neutral society: communities will be carbon-neutral by 2050.
6. A resource-wise economy: enhance resource and material efficiency, promote circular economy, adopt sustainable business models.
7. Lifestyles respectful of the carrying capacity of nature: adapt to a resource-wise low-emission economy that brings consumption of natural resources to an environmentally stable level.
8. Decision-making respectful of nature: increase peoples' respect for biodiversity to stop habitat degradation.

To see these goals attained, Finland has developed “The Six City Strategy” to test experiential projects that would be implemented nationwide if successful (Laakso, 2017). The six cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Tampere, Oulu, and Turku were chosen as they make up 30 percent of the total population (Laasko, 2017). Each of the cities have different projects assigned to them based on need and infrastructure. My program will visit two of these cities, Helsinki and Turku, as well as the city of Porvoo and will focus on the projects that have been designated to that community.

1. Helsinki will focus on sustainable development in an urban setting which will include projects such as technology innovation, future schools, waste collection, digital health services, and energy efficient products in the home (Laasko, 2017).
2. Turku is testing projects related to sustainable energy in the form of public transportation with electric buses and ticket management systems as well as circular economy practices by converting old buildings into new businesses and housing (Laasko, 2017).
3. Porvoo has pledged to become a carbon neutral city and will include carbon neutral housing, sustainable solutions in the sectors of urban planning, energy, public transport, and commuting, a circular economy (City of Porvoo, 2019).

In future sections, I will explain why I chose these destinations and what students will learn from them. First, I will explain the theoretical frame works of Environmental sociology, ELT, and TLT.

### **Environmental Sociology**

Course readings, assignments, and lectures will focus on various topics within environmental sociology such as human impact on the environment, how the Finnish use and interact within their environment, and how these actions lead to sustainability and wellbeing practices. The focus on environmental sociology will continue with on-ground programming to align the course work with excursions, lectures, and community engagement while abroad. The use of environmental sociology within the course and abroad programming will be discussed in future sections. This section will focus on what environmental sociology is and how it will be used in the curriculum.

Environmental sociology encompasses a variety of topics and is multidisciplinary; often collaborating with geographers, biologists, climate scientists, and others which has proven to be

an asset in legitimizing the field. According to the American Sociological Association (n.d.), environmental sociology, "promotes research and professional activities that explore the relationships between social systems and the ecosphere, including interdisciplinary work that explores interactions within and between institutions, social groups, and natural and built environments," and, "includes study of the origins and impacts of technology, the social causes of environmental change, the environmental causes of social change, and the consequences of social inequalities and power relationships for socio-environmental dynamics."

Environmental sociology emerged in the 1960s as part of the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) as a result of the loss of ecosystems due to industrialization. NEP called for a balance between human and non-human nature (Catton & Dunlap 1980, Dunlap & Catton 1979, Dunlap & Van Liere 1978). The human demand on the environment was causing unsustainable consequences that were leading to ecological devastation. The increase in industrialization and consumerism during this time led to an outcry of scientists and activists alike and became the start of modern environmentalism and environmental activism (Pellow and Brehm, 2013). This course focuses on aspects of environmental sociology such as relationships between human and non-human nature, interactions between social groups and the environment, social inequalities, activism and social change, and also how Finland is restructuring to build sustainable communities. It will also pull from multiple disciplines such as history, climate studies, anthropology, geography, biology, and environmental studies. How environmental sociology is used in the course will be discussed in a future section. Next, I will explain ELT and how it is used in program development.

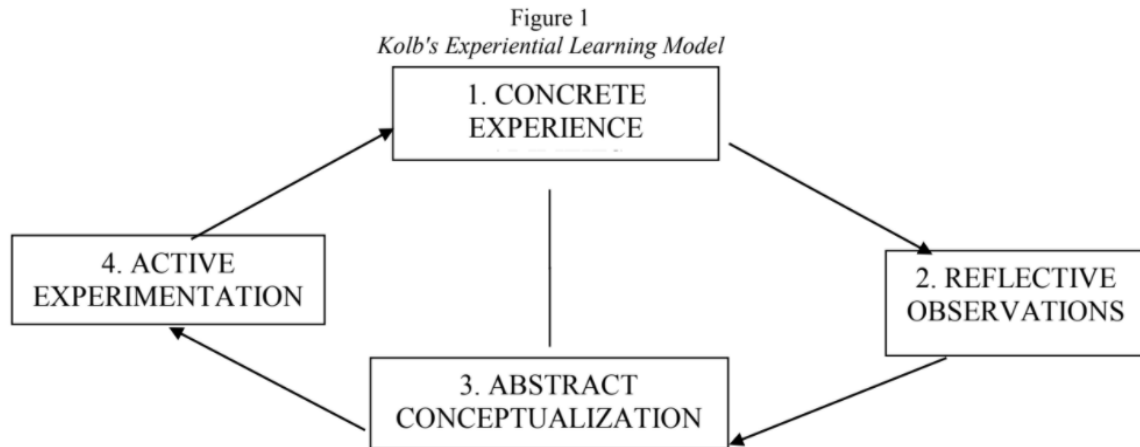
## **Experiential Learning Theory**

Study abroad offers what the field calls “experiential learning” opportunities for students. Experiential learning theory (ELT) has emerged as one of the leading theoretical frameworks for study abroad programs. ELT simply put, is learning by doing. Kolb (1984) defines it as, “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” (p. 41). It is not enough to have an experience, but it must also transform the learners’ thoughts and actions. It is through intentional pedagogical activities that foster this transformation (Kolb, 1984).

ELT was first used by Dewey (1897, 1938) and later evolved by Kolb (1984) with a focus of experience in the role of learning (Gomez-Lanier, 2017). Both shared a deep belief that learning is not linear, but a dynamic looped cyclical process where ideas are constantly modified as new things are learned and is ultimately used as a way of adapting (Gomez-Lanier, 2017). I will focus mostly on Kolb in this paper, but it is important to note where the roots of ELT started.

ELT encourages students to be aware of their own knowledge and how they create meaning. The greater learners are aware, the more likely they are to build new meaning (Braid, 2018). ELT is cyclical, in that, student learning moves on a looped continuum through the following ways: experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting (Kolb, 1984). Kolb’s (1984) model explains that, “knowledge is achieved through the transformation of experience, specifically, through the combination of grasping and transforming experiences.” (p. 41). The learner must not only understand what they already know, but also understand what they are learning and make meaning from the two. This is through Kolb’s model in which learners can begin in any of the phases, but must complete all in the cycle (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2010) (Figure 1).

Figure 1  
*Kolb's Experiential Learning Model*



*Note: Kolb's Experiential Learning Model. Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential learning. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.*

Next, I will further explain the details of Kolb's phases to begin to build the theoretical foundations of experiential learning in study abroad programs.

### **Experiential Learning Theory Phases**

The first phase of the ELT model is concrete experience. Learners will become openly involved in an experience at their own will (McCarthy, 2010). It is not something that is forced upon them, but something they opt into on their own accord. This ensures that the learner is open to learning and will approach it with an open mind and little bias. The second phase in the model is reflection, which is key in developing new learned behaviors. Learners must be able to reflect on the experiences they are having by not only observing their own behaviors, but also the behaviors of those around them. They will then apply the new learned behavior to their own practice (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2010). The third phase in the model takes the observations and reflections from the second phase and strives to conceptualize the experience. The learner will create concepts as a result of their own reflections, observations, and experiences (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2010). This is where the learning truly takes place. The final phase of the model



pertains to application, but more specifically, active experimentation. Here the learner uses their new-found theories to help them problem solve and make decisions when immersed in new situations (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2010). Next, I will discuss the second theoretical framework I will use in my program development.

### **Transformative Learning Theory**

Transformative learning theory (TLT) was first applied by Jack Mezirow (1978a) when studying women returning to postsecondary study or the workforce after a period of time out. Much of his early influence can be traced back to three major theorists of the time whom he builds off of in his own theory development: Kuhn (1962), Freire (1970), and Habermas (1971, 1894).

According to Mezirow (1991a), transformative learning is “the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about the world,” and works towards, “changing these structures . . . to make possible a more inclusive, discrimination, and integrative perspective” (p. 167). Mezirow wants learners to participate in experiences to provoke internal change. TLT offers learners the opportunity to not only understand and gain new knowledge, but to also understand how they learn in the process (Stone et al., 2017). Mezirow (1997) determines that learning will occur through four stages: (1) Elaborate our existing point of view; (2) Establish a new point of view; (3) Transform our point of view, and; (4) Become aware of the world around us and be critically reflective of our environment and actions. As I will explain further in the next sections, student learning through study abroad experiences align well with Mezirow's philosophies of learning.

## Transformative Learning Theory Phases

Mezirow like Kolb, includes ten phases in which learners will move through: (1) Experiencing a disorienting dilemma, (2) Undergoing self-examination, (3) Conducting a deep assessment of personal role assumptions and alienation created by new roles, (4) Sharing and analyzing personal discontent and similar experiences with others, (5) Exploring options for new ways of thinking, (6) Building competence and self-confidence in new roles, (7) Planning a course of action, (8) Acquiring knowledge and skills for action, (9) Trying new roles and assessing feedback, and (10) Reintegrating into society with a new perspective. The phases do not need to be moved through in any specific order, nor do all phases need to be completed in order for transformational learning to occur, though the further they progress through the phases, the deeper the learning (Kitchenham, 2008; Brock, 2010). King (1998) developed the Learning Activities Survey (LAS) as a measurement in order to understand how transformation learning has occurred (Figure 3). Through King’s (1998) LAS, learners self-select statements on the survey in which they identify. This survey, as well as qualitative research, is used by many today in the study abroad field.

Figure 2  
*King’s Learning Activities Survey*

Phase	LAS Item
Experiencing a disorienting dilemma	<i>I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act</i>
Undergoing self-examination	<i>I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act</i>
Conducting a deep assessment of personal role assumptions and alienation created by new roles	<i>As I questioned my ideas, I realized I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations</i>
Sharing and analyzing personal discontent and similar experiences with others	<i>I realized that other people also questioned their beliefs.</i>
Exploring options for new ways of thinking	<i>I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.</i>
Building competence and self-confidence in new roles	<i>I feel uncomfortable with traditional social expectations</i>
Planning a course of action	<i>I tried to figure out a way to adopt these new ways of acting.</i>
Acquiring knowledge and skills for action	<i>I gathered the information I needed to adopt these new ways of acting.</i>
Trying new roles and assessing feedback	<i>I began to think about the reactions and feedback from my new behavior.</i>
Reintegrating into society with a new perspective	<i>I took action and adopted these new ways of acting.</i>

*Note: King’s Learning Activities Survey. King, K. P. (1998). A guide to perspective transformation and learning activities: The Learning Activities Survey. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools.*

Next, I will briefly explain the program I have developed before I delve into how ELT and TLT were incorporated into the program.

### **CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL SEMINAR PROGRAM**

This program will be a 3-credit course focused on sustainable practices and human wellbeing in Finland. The class will consist of two portions that will include 8-weeks of pre-departure coursework conducted in the spring for 2-credits and will include required readings, papers, reflections, and projects. The second section is the travel portion during the summer for 1-credit, which will include on-site learning through community engagement, site visits, and cultural excursions. One of the main projects of this course will be developing a community engagement project that students will present to the class upon return. This will be discussed in later sections.

I will design this course to be flexible and inclusive to all majors. Though sustainability and wellbeing are the focal points of the program, the projects and assignments can be tailored for any major. For example, a business major may wish to focus on sustainable business practices in Finland, while an education major may wish to learn how sustainability is taught in early education. Students will have the ability to choose their path, which aids in the learning process and allows students to focus on a topic that is relevant to them. My goal is that student will take what they learn in this course and apply it to their own careers and personal lives.

The program will consist of three locations within Finland: Turku, Helsinki, and a day excursion to Porvoo (Figure 4). I chose these locations for a few reasons. First, Helsinki and Turku are both a part of the “Smart City” coalition, which means each have taken pledges to incorporate sustainable practices into their communities through legislative action and sustainable development programming (Laakso, 2017). This will allow the students to learn about sustainable practices from country leaders first hand. Secondly, they are all in southern Finland. This means less travel time, which allows more learning and immersion to take place.

Traveling too far of distances would mean more time in transit rather than students having meaningful experiences. Lastly, all locations will include ample free time for students to learn and explore on their own, which provide optimal learning and enjoyment of the program. Next, I will explain how ELT and TLT were used in program development.

Figure 3  
*Program Locations*



*Note: Finland program locations. Google Maps.*

### **Experiential Learning Theory in Practice**

ELT is one of the most used theoretical frameworks for study abroad programs and has guided study abroad professionals and faculty in developing educationally sound and culturally relevant programs that will foster student growth and transformation. Next, I will give an example of how it has been used in practice and what components programs should have in order to foster student transformation as well as how I incorporate those components into my own program.

First, it is important to note the types of experiences that would fall into the ELT category of learning as there are numerous ways that experiential learning can be incorporated into curricula. The most common examples would be work experience (Commander et al., 2012), field trips (Arcodia & Dickson, 2013), case studies (Howard & Gulawani, 2014), role playing (Ruhanen, 2005), gaming (Bowes & Johnson, 2008), service learning, and study tours (Pelco, Ball, & Lockman, 2014). The focus of this section will be on study tours as this is the type of experience I will be developing. Study tours, or more specifically, study abroad programs have shown to be effective in contributing to student personal and academic growth, but the programs must have specific components to enact change. Study abroad allows learners to participate in experiences firsthand and engage in a way that fosters understanding and appreciation for the culture they are immersed in (Allen & Young, 1997). Kolb (1984) states that learning outside the classroom moves students from passive to active learners by experiencing new cultural environments and engaging in real world issues. Next, I will explain what the program components are in order to maximize learning in short-term study abroad programs.

First, in order to maximize growth in a short period of time, programs must have well thought out learning outcomes that align with the course design and assessment. This will increase the depth of student learning that will contribute to meaningful change (Howard & Gulawani, 2014). Leaders should focus on core themes and choose a location that aligns with those themes (Howard & Gulawani, 2014; Long et al., 2017). For my program, the main theme will be studying sustainability and wellbeing comparatively between Finland and the United States. This aligns with Kolb's first phase which is concrete experience. Finland is one of the most sustainable countries in the world, which allows students to learn about sustainability firsthand in a country that embraces it (Environmental Performance Index, 2020). One of the easiest

ways to foster first-hand experiences is through site visits (Long et al., 2017). I will organize site visits with locals not only in Finland, but in the Fargo-Moorhead area prior to departure so students will easily compare and contrast sustainability within both locations. It is important that hands-on learning occurs prior to departure, throughout on-ground, as well as when they return.

Second, leaders must allow ample time for student reflection whether it be through journaling or guided group discussions (Gomez-Lanier, 2017; Prestholdt & Fletcher, 2018; Long et al., 2017). Reflection is arguably one of the most important components of study abroad programs because students must be able to reflect on the experiences by not only observing their own behaviors, but also those around them. According to Gomez-Lanier (2017), reflection journals, “encouraged students to write about, and graphically express, their views of their tour experiences and what activities or items were engaging.” (p. 133). They will then apply the new learned behavior to their own practice, which is phase two of Kolb’s framework, reflective observations. As a study abroad professional, I know how important reflection can be for a student. It allows them to make sense of their experience alongside their peers. My program will incorporate both journaling and guided group reflections. I want students to reflect privately in their journals, but also have open discussions as a group that will allow them to reflect with their classmates. It will foster growth, but also deepen the group dynamics.

Along with reflection, students engage and learn with their peers (Boud et al., 2014; Goldschmid & Goldschmid, 1976; Secomb, 2008; Whitman, 1988). During short-term study abroad, leaders and students spend most of their time together and are from an array of majors and backgrounds. Diversity allows students to learn from one another based on prior knowledge and experiences (Prestholdt & Fletcher, 2018; Long et al., 2017). My program will allow students to not only learn alongside their peers, but offer moments of teaching. Through group

discussion and projects throughout the semester, students are given the opportunity to educate their peers on a topic of their choice as it relates to sustainability. Through these formal and informal interactions, I hope to foster their growth and knowledge that they can then use in practice in future interactions. This is an example of Kolb's (1984) third phase in experiential learning, abstract conceptualization.

Finally, community interaction is an important component to foster growth in short-term study abroad programs (Prestholdt & Fletcher, 2018; Long et al., 2017, Strange & Gibson, 2017). Kolb (1984) would argue that transformation within learning happens when students have the opportunity to truly be immersed in their surroundings. Being active in local communities and learning from them will give students a new perspective on the culture they are interacting with, as well as their own learning and personal growth. The program's on-ground activities will include time spent at local businesses, learning from the locals, as well as cultural visits where students will get a glimpse into the life of the Finnish culture. This will be where learning and Kolb's fourth phase, active experimentation, will take place as it will force students to use the knowledge they have learned thus far, and put it into practice. I had a similar experience during my own study abroad program. I learned more while engaging with locals than at any other point of the program. It allows you to humanize all the information you have learned and allows you to experience and experiment with it. In the next section, I will explain how TLT will also be used in developing my own program.

### **Transformative Learning Theory in Practice**

Because of its framework and phases, TLT aligns well with study abroad research as it creates opportunities for students to experience a disorienting dilemma, and integrate reflection and debriefing, into programs much like I discussed with ELT. Students who are unfamiliar with



the foreign country they are in must step outside their comfort zone and often experience a disorienting dilemma through heightened anxiety, thus beginning the TL process. This dilemma forces students to think about what they already know and assess their values in order to adapt to their new environment. Developing and leading a program will be the catalyst for Mezirow's process. Though Finland may have some similarities to the U.S., students will still experience circumstances that will involve a disorienting dilemma in which they must look within themselves to navigate through.

Sharing and analyzing such circumstances with peers, leaders, and others around them will aid in this process. As I mentioned earlier, peer-to-peer learning and reflection is key in any study abroad experience and allows for students to explore new ways of thinking, acting, and is a form of stress relief caused by their new experiences. Therefore, I will include ample time for this process to occur through on-ground site visits, interactions with locals, and guided group discussions to debrief (Stone et al., 2017). Leaders should provide group reflection time where co-travelers can share, explore, and discuss their experiences (Hutchison & Rea, 2011). This can happen in a number of ways such as through pairs, small groups, or large group discussion (Duerden & Witt, 2010; Mezirow, 2000). Reflection time is likely to produce growth and change within the participants, which is ultimately the goal for TLT, as it gives students time to understand their experiences and plan for future action (Stone et al., 2017).

Like ELT emphasized, providing students with many opportunities to learn while doing is crucial to development. Students who study abroad are experiencing this every day during their program as well as building a new community of peers. This offers students the opportunity to test their new roles and beliefs. Trilokekar and Kukar (2011) describe how, "being an outsider in their host society and being away from home enabled more risk taking behavior, an

opportunity to experience a new or different identity” (p 1146). Chang, Chen, Huang, and Yuan (2012) assert that, “a new location and culture provide the prime opportunity to explore, try, and test an evolving identity.” This is why study abroad is important in growth and identity formation. Students will not only experience a new culture, but also have the opportunity to form their own identity. They are young minds that are experiencing a transition in their lives, as they are moving from what it means to be a high school student to what it means to be an adult in larger society. They are going through a metamorphosis, where their minds are open to change and they are finding out who they will become. My program will strive to foster this change through intentional on-site experiences which will promote student thought about who they are and what sustainability means to them. It will allow them to learn from a new culture, which may challenge their own views and knowledge. They will also have time to reflect on their experiences with their peers and the community in which they are immersed in, which also allows them to test their new knowledge. This is when change will occur, and how it will impact their future action

## **CHAPTER 4: PROGRAM PROPOSAL PROCESS.**

One of the requirements for all program leaders is the program proposal process. Each program proposal will be vetted by Study Abroad Services to ensure its academic and culturally relevant integrity. It is judged based on student experience, location relevance, academic rigor, and practical consideration such as budget, and time management. This next section will discuss what is included in the program proposal process as well as an overview of the Finland program proposal.

The global seminar process is cyclical as there is a solidified timeline in which Study Abroad Services has for leaders to follow when proposing a new program.

1. February: Call for proposals for the next academic year
2. February 1: Fall/Winter Break proposals due.
3. February-March: Marketing Materials created for Fall/January programs.
4. June 1: Program proposal for following year is due.
5. May 1: Student application deadline for Fall/January programs.
6. June-August: Marketing Materials are created for Spring/Summer programs.
7. 1st Thursday in September: Study Abroad Fair to market program.
8. November 1: Student application deadline for spring programs
9. November or February 1: Student application deadline for summer programs.

Each year, new program leaders must go through this process by opening a program proposal through the online form in Study Abroad Services' software system.

### **Requirements and Program Development**

The program proposal requirements include course information, marketing, program provider information, the itinerary, and the budget. These topics combined produce the

completed program proposal, which is then vetted by Study Abroad Services. The next section will discuss what is specifically included in each of the proposal requirements and what policies and processes exist for program development.

### **Course Information**

The general information that is collected specifies details about the course itself. First, leaders must include their and their co-leader's information so Study Abroad Services knows who will be leading the program (NDSU, n.d.). This is useful in various cases as it shows if there will be a co-leader which can be helpful on-site, but also aids in budgeting. Programs include one leader for free as long as they have a certain number of participants. Some programs do not budget for two leaders to keep the cost down for students. The leader information is also used to purchase international health insurance, which is required for all study abroad programs.

Terms and dates outline when the course will be held. NDSU offers global seminar programs throughout the year from winter break, to spring break, to summer (NDSU, n.d.). Leaders choose when they would like to hold their global seminar based on many things such as their normal course load, how financial aid can be used for participants, and time of year as it relates to their location and topic.

The practical information also includes the course title, which is often designed by the provider or the faculty leader. The course number indicates what credit will be offered for participants. Many leaders utilized the 179/279/379/479/679 course number as it has been approved by the Registration and Records Office to be used for study abroad purposes (NDSU, n.d.). Departments may also use a course that already exists, in which they need to receive departmental approval.

Along with the course name and number, the proposal also includes the number of credits as well as an outline of contact hours. To align with NDSU's credit contact hour requirements, global seminar programs must have at least 12.5 hours of faculty instruction, and at least 25 hours of additional work by students for a 3-credit course (NDSU, n.d.). Most global seminar programs are a week long, where 1-credit is used during travel, while the remaining 2-credits are used through in-person learning prior to departure and upon returning (NDSU, n.d.). Contact hours can be fulfilled while on-site through two ways: (1) Guided experiences that tie to learning goals can be equivalent to an hour of traditional classroom lecture, (2) Un-guided experiences that contribute to learning goals may be counted towards student out-of-class work (NDSU, n.d.).

Leaders may also designate a sponsoring department as well as a target audience for their program. Some programs are open to all majors, including students from the Tri-College system, while others are only open to certain majors and grade-levels. Student GPA is also determined in this section. The minimum GPA to study abroad is 2.5, though some departments may require higher (NDSU, n.d.). This section can widen as well as narrow the range of students who will participate in a program, so this section is particularly important (Swart & Spaeth, 2017).

Pre-approved courses may fulfill NDSU general education requirements as long as the leader has gone through the proper petition process through the General Education Committee. Many leaders will do this as it holds value for students to have a global seminar count towards their degree requirements (Swart & Spaeth, 2017).

Leaders must also attach a copy of their syllabus that outlines the course and includes a mapping of how the course assignments, site visits, and excursions align with the course objectives (Swart & Spaeth, 2017). This is important as it is combed through during the review

process where feedback is provided by Study Abroad Services. Should the course be lacking in any of these areas, they will be denied and the leader must re-evaluate their program.

Finally, programs must have proper approval from the different levels of administration within their departments. Leaders must gain approval from the department head and college dean in which the course is offered through. If this is not done, the program will be put on hold until the proper approvals have been made. This ensures that the leader has gotten the approval to teach a course through their department and that their administration has been made aware of this.

### **Marketing**

Quality and intentional marketing is key to a successful program. The more exciting the program sounds, the more successful it is in getting the minimum participation it needs to run. Having a target market can help focus on a specific group that would be interested in the program (Swart & Spaeth, 2017). For example, program leaders may choose to focus on targeting students within their department, or make it open to any major to attract students who are interested in that specific topic.

The proposal requires this information to design a marketing plan ahead of time that faculty and staff may use in recruitment efforts. The program overview allows for a snapshot explanation of the program in a short-bulleted list. What is the focus? What sites will be visited? The next portion asks to explain what makes this course unique. What will this program be doing that is different from others? This dives deeper into the program logistics to advertise what makes a program special. Finally, there is a portion to explain what the class is like. What will be learned? How is the class going to be conducted? What assignments and projects will be assigned? This gives students an idea of what course work will be expected of them. All three of these sections are not only helpful for the program leader to use when promoting their program,

but Study Abroad Services also uses this information to build program brochures, posters, and websites (Swart & Spaeth, 2017).

Each year Study Abroad Services has a fair that is open to program leaders and other providers to come and market their programs. Program leaders are given a booth to hand out any materials they would like, most being the brochures, to get students interested in their program. Each year, the fair sees between 200-300 students, making it one of the best ways for leaders to market their programs. Another way that has been successful is visiting classrooms to give a short presentation on the program, as well as pass along digital copies of the marketing materials for professors to post to their Blackboard site. Both have also been successful in attracting students according to the Study Abroad Services' annual program evaluations. Finally, the last way to promote a program is through emails, whether to target groups or through the Study Abroad Services Listserv email. Students have indicated that email is the best form of communication about new program opportunities according to a recent survey conducted through Study Abroad Services.

### **Program Provider and Itinerary**

Leaders are required to work with educational program providers as they have expertise in on-ground planning, outsourcing and logistics, and health and safety/emergency management processes (Swart & Spaeth, 2017). They take the burden of planning so the leader can focus on the students and teaching the materials. Leaders will often need to plan ahead when working with a provider as it can take 4-6 weeks to get a program designed. Working with educational providers allows leaders access to on-ground contacts to contribute to an educationally sound and culturally relevant program for students (Swart & Spaeth, 2017). Tailor made programs allow for leaders to see their programs come to life while not having the burden to find contacts

and arrange on-ground logistics. NDSU works with numerous providers that were vetted through Study Abroad Services as they are backed by two of the fields' accreditation agencies: The Forum on Education Abroad and NASFA: Association of International Educators.

Providers also supply leaders with the program itinerary that will be followed on-ground that outlines the entire duration of the program. This is often shared with students prior to departure. It is also important in the proposal process as Study Abroad Services examines the on-ground content to ensure that it has an academic focus and offers students a quality experience (Swart & Spaeth, 2017). The itinerary is built between the leader and the provider and generally includes on-ground orientation, cultural site visits, business visits or presentations, excursions, and any other program specific content that relates to the theme of the program. Successful programs will have minimum in-country travel, a healthy balance between downtime and excursions, allow time for students to decompress, and try to fit an exorbitant amount of activities each day (Swart & Spaeth, 2017).

### **Program Budget**

Along with planning the on-ground programming, providers also take care of all the costs associated with the program. They provide a cost-per student amount that fluctuates depending on the number of participants. Leaders walk a fine line between including all the components in their desired program and what the cost will be for students. The budget is another important aspect of the proposal process as Study Abroad Services assesses the overall cost of the program and gives the leader feedback about whether or not the program will have a chance of running. The budget sheet that is required for the proposal is meant to include all costs associated with the program, from flights, to housing, to health insurance, to personal spending. The leader must use this budget to come up with a total cost based off of the quotes they received from providers.



Once program is finalized, the cost of the program does not change and will be the amount that is advertised and billed to the students' accounts. These budgets are safe estimates as if there is an overage by the end of the program, students will receive a refund for the difference.

## CHAPTER 5: COURSE OUTLINE

The next section of the paper will outline the in-class learning portion prior to departure. This course is made up of 3 credits: 2 credits during spring semester where students will learn about sustainability, environmental sociology and human environment interaction, wellbeing, and Finnish history and culture, and 1-credit during summer that will include travel to Finland and the final project presentation. For this section, the focus will be on the 2-credits prior to travel that will lay the foundation for learning on-ground as well as health and safety.

The bulletin description outlines the course focus and what the students can expect to learn. NDSU requires a bulletin description to be included in the syllabus for that purpose.

### Bulletin Description

Sustainable practices and wellbeing are values embedded in the Finnish culture from birth and has contributed to this country being one of the world's leaders in sustainability. This course will take a sociological approach to understand how the Finnish use and act within their environment, in both nature and urban settings. Students will learn how Finland's focus on wellbeing and healthy habits have led it to be the happiest country in the world and what we can learn from their practices.

The course objectives are included in the syllabus to show the students what they will be learning, and more specifically how the course will meet the general education objectives of NDSU.

### Course Objectives

This course has been approved for the Social Behavioral Sciences (B) category in general education because students will “use scientific methods to analyze the behaviors, structures, and processes of individuals and groups.” (NDSU, n.d.). In addition, this

course has also been approved to meet the Global Perspectives category in general education because students will “focus on analysis of worldwide issues illustrating the interdependence of the world and its people.” (NDSU, n.d.). There will be eight two-hour classes scheduled prior to departure that will outline the course topics, what you will be seeing in Finland, and health and safety. There will be two classes held upon return to debrief the experience and to give final project presentations.

Students will:

- Identify and understand basic components of Finnish identity, history and culture.
- Analyze how values and contributions of Finnish societies provide contexts for individual experiences, values, ideas, artistic expressions, and identities while examining their own values, ideas, and biases.
- Demonstrate appropriate conventions and communication skills in an international setting. In particular, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of how cultural context shapes individual experiences and values.
- Analyze the interplay of self and society, particularly how social structures shape human experiences in the environment, and how humans shape social structures and the environment.
- Examine the importance of sustainability, human impact, and social wellbeing in the Finnish culture while applying environmental social theories and concepts to examine how Finland interacts with its environment.
- Apply what they have learned about sustainability, human impact, and social wellbeing into their lives, career, and final project using the logic model.

This course has an environmental sociology focus, therefore, is designed to fulfill the “Social and Behavioral Sciences (B)” category for the NDSU general education requirements, which has many other sociology course options.

The objectives of this requirement are to:

- “use scientific methods to analyze the behaviors, structures, and processes of individuals and groups.” (NDSU, n.d.).
- “apply theories or research methods to understand human events, identities, artifacts, or social structures.” (NDSU, n.d.).
- “Examine their own values, biases, and conclusions within larger social or theoretical contexts.” (NDSU, n.d.).

This course is also designed to fulfill the “Global Perspectives (G)” category for the NDSU general education requirements. Many study abroad programs are designed to fulfill this requirement due to the nature of study abroad and how it aligns with global studies and citizenship.

The objectives of this requirement are to:

- “apply theories or research methods to develop strategies and solutions that address global challenges.” (NDSU, n.d.).
- “identify potential benefits and explore the implications of global citizenship.” (NDSU, n.d.).
- “evaluate global phenomena using perspectives, attitudes and beliefs of communities with cultural backgrounds different from their own.” (NDSU, n.d.).

The purpose of designing this course to align with a general education course is because of the importance that study abroad fulfill a need for students. Return on investment is one of the

top priorities for NDSU students. A recent poll done by the NDSU Study Abroad Office showed that students want their study abroad experience to count towards a degree requirement so as to not extend their graduate date. Though fulfilling degree requirements is important to students, the content must be interesting to the students as well. Students choose programs based on location and interest level in the course and on-ground content. The next section of the paper will discuss the course content, how it aligns with the course objectives, and its focus on environmental sociology. I will discuss each class meeting, assignments, in-class activities, and readings that the students will engage in. By discussing each class in detail, you will see the connections to the objectives and the sociological focus of the course.

The course will be held for eight weeks starting at the beginning of the spring 2023 semester and conclude after the students return in May. Each class is two hours long and includes readings, in-class activities, reflective practice, videos, lectures, mindfulness activity, and assignments. Each class will begin with a mindfulness activity and reflective practice to emphasize the topic of wellness. Reflective practice also ties into transformative learning, as students will reflect on the readings and main topic of the week (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1997; McCarthy, 2010).

### **Week 1: Introduction to Environmental Sociology**

The first week will consist of an icebreaker, introduction to the course, overview of the syllabus, mindfulness activity, an in-class activity, and the reading *An Environmental Sociology for the Twenty-First Century* by Pellow and Brehm (2013). The syllabus outlines the course objectives, summary of learning outcomes, required materials, assignments, grading scale, and schedule (See Appendix 1).

An icebreaker is crucial to developing group dynamics, will help students get to know each other, and get them acquainted with the course (Cornell University, n.d.). During this icebreaker, students will introduce themselves to their partners and present their findings to the class. During this time, the pairs will write down one or two ideas they have for class norms. Class norms establish the tone of the course, explain what is expected of the students and leader, and create a safe space for anyone to share (Cornell University, n.d.)

Since one of the main focuses of the course is wellness, mindfulness activities will be at the start of each class. They will be in the form of a meditation, writing, drawing, or internal reflections. For week one, students will illustrate what they know about environmental sociology from their readings, what topics interested them, and ways in which they impacted the environment that day. Students will decide which method they would like to articulate their responses whether through art, writing, poetry, etc. This is meant to be reflective in any form the student chooses. This reflective practice will get students thinking about the main topic of the day and prepare them for discussion.

The in-class activity for week one will dive into human environment interaction. This activity will get students thinking about how much of our environment is the result of human impact. Students will work in teams of three to:

- Choose one location in Finland we will be visiting that has been modified by humans and has a significant impact on the local community or the larger country.
- Use google earth to show the class the location and explain the ways in which it has been altered and the significance of the location.
- Present their findings to the class.

This lesson plan by Bedell (2021) is designed to teach students how people impact the environment, articulate the consequences of human-environment interaction, and to understand how people interact within their environment. This activity will allow students to think about these topics from the very beginning of the course, as they are important themes that will be discussed throughout the semester. This activity will also allow students to become familiar with what they will be seeing during their travels to Finland.

The Pellow and Brehm, (2013) will be assigned prior to the first class meeting and explains what environmental sociology is, an overview of its history, its multidisciplinary field, environmental justice, political implications, social movements, and recent topic additions to the field, which will set up the remaining classes (Pellow and Brehm, 2013). It is important students learn about these topics early on so they can reflect on them throughout the semester.

### **Week 2: Finland's History and Culture**

Though sociology is the main focus of the course, students will also learn about the places they will visit while traveling. The course content will tie to what they will be learning and experiencing on-ground. Students will learn how the Finnish people interact within their environment and how that has impacted their movement toward sustainability and wellbeing practices.

Class will begin with reflective practice on the readings and first assignment. There will also be a second icebreaker activity that will allow for further group interaction. It will involve new pairs of students learning about each other through discussion and presenting what they learned to the class. A mindfulness drawing activity will allow students to reflect on their day and take their minds off of everything else to be present in class.

There are two videos that students will watch in class that delve deeper into the readings. They will learn more about the Sami people, Finnish history and culture. This will give students a visual representation of what the readings were about. I took this into account as students learn in different ways as some may be visual learners.

The readings and class discussion will focus on environmental injustice as it relates to the native Sami people in northern Finland. The Sami people have been historically marginalized, much like the indigenous people of the U. S. In recent years, the Finnish government has seized their land for forestry and to further develop renewable energy (Mahajan, 2016). Students will learn more about these tribes and environmental injustices as we will attend a lecture on-ground to learn more about this topic. The second reading for the week will discuss the ideals of modern-day Finland and the inner strength of Sisu. Sisu is a term many Finns use to describe themselves and roughly translates to having guts, grit, or perseverance (Smirova, 2018). The Finnish adopted this term after gaining independence in the 1900s after over 100 years of Russian rule (Smirova, 2018). This idea plays a significant part of Finnish culture in modern day, making it an important concept for students to understand prior to traveling. The final reading for the week is a chapter from *Culture Smart Finland* by Barrett and Leney (2021). Chapter one discusses the overview of Finnish history, politics, geography, and modern Finland. This will give students a general overview to ease them into the Finnish culture and will serve as a foundation for the remaining chapters.

The final section of class will consist of discussing the first assignment. This assignment is a reflection paper where students will discuss what they know about the topics of Finland, sustainability and wellbeing. They will reflect on their current sustainability and wellbeing practices, what they hope to learn throughout the course, and what they would like to work



towards in their sustainable journey. Reflection is a key component throughout this program as it is one of the more important components to learning (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1997; McCarthy, 2010). As part of the in-class discussion on their projects, we will use Jamboard, an online interactive whiteboard where students will write their comments on the reflective paper topics.

### **Week 3: The Nordic Model for Health, Wellbeing and Equality**

This class will begin with a mindfulness exercise to help students be present for class. Mindfulness activities will continue throughout the program, including on-ground. There will also be reflective practice where students will reflect on the readings and topics for the class. The topic for week three is the Nordic Model, which demonstrates the topics of social rights, societal innovation, and governmental impact on social change in sustainability and wellbeing for communities.

The Nordic Model is a comprehensive model adopted by the Nordic countries of Finland, Norway, Iceland, Sweden and Denmark (Iqbal and Todie, 2015). This model was developed as an alternative option to how nations manage economically and socially. The Nordic Model focuses on three main topics which allows them to be well-performing in economic and social indicators. These topics in environmental sociology can be seen in many aspects of the Nordic Model.

- Universalism is the social rights to all. Every member of those countries has equal access to education, healthcare, unemployment benefits, etc. (Iqbal and Todie, 2015).
- Individual autonomy. Social trust and cohesion means that though these countries are highly individualistic, they understand the importance of social trust in other citizens, but also their government (Iqbal and Todie, 2015).

- Innovation is the final component of the model and emphasizes the importance of redistribution innovation. Investing in sectors such as education and technology grows future innovators that will circulate back into the economy (Iqbal and Todie, 2015).

Through this reading, students will learn more about the larger society of Finland and what they aim to focus on for the future. This type of model for society is not seen in any other part of the world, which will provide them a unique perspective of how other countries operate.

The second readings for the week will be two chapters from the Barrett and Leney (2021) and will focus on Finnish values, attitudes, and everyday life. This is important because it dives deeper into their culture and ties into the Nordic Model reading. The Finnish value democracy, equality, and honesty and possess a community spirit, which will be apparent when students interact with locals (Barrett and Leney, 2021). The chapters from the *Culture Smart Finland* book are meant to prepare students for interactions on ground, so they can learn more about the people and culture they will be immersed in. Learning about the culture in which you will be traveling to is a key part of transformative and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1997; McCarthy, 2010).

Like the previous class, a visual representation of the course topic will be shown to outline the course topic. The videos for this week will include a video of the Nordic model including its benefits and pitfalls, an overview of Finland's female-led government, and an overview of the Finnish education system. All three of the videos tie into the goals of the Nordic Model and will be topics discussed in on-ground programming.

The second portion of class will involve class discussion about the topics in small groups. Small groups are a key component of this course as it builds group dynamics and collaboration. Students will work together to pull out the most important pieces, to them, from the readings and

videos. They will then use Jamboard to report their findings. We will then, as a class, discuss these topics. Reflection with peers is another component of transformative and experiential learning, therefore is an important aspect of this course (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1997; McCarthy, 2010).

#### **Week 4: The Power of Nature**

This class period is going to focus on nature and how the Finnish interact with it and perceive its benefits. Wellbeing is a focus of this course, and this class period will be dedicated to that topic. This class will begin with mindfulness meditation and reflective practices where students will examine their own wellbeing practices and how they can incorporate those practices into their lives. One of the objectives of this course is for students to examine their own practices as well as how they can take what they learn in this course and apply it to their own lives and careers. Wellbeing is often overlooked in courses, so it is my goal to incorporate it in a way that will benefit students after the program has concluded. The topic of wellbeing relates back to the environmental sociology because the Finnish use nature and the environment around them in their wellbeing practices. They understand the importance of preserving their environment in order to continue their wellbeing practices.

The reading for this week is by Hakoköngäs and Puhakka (2021) and discusses the relationship between nature and happiness in Finnish adolescents. Nature and outdoor activities have traditionally played a role in Finnish culture and connection with nature has shown to promote wellbeing habits in children, adolescents, and adults (e.g., Peräinen, 2006; e.g., Roberts et al., 2020; Tillmann et al., 2018; Twohig-Bennett & Jones, 2018). Based on previous research, “interacting with nature boosts people’s self-esteem and their mood (Kuo & Sullivan, 2001), reduces feelings of anger (Moore et al., 2007), and improves the general psychological well-

being with positive impacts on emotions and behavior (Kaplan, 2001).” One of the components for our on-ground programming is spending as much time outside in nature as possible whether it be in rural or urban settings. We will also examine how the Finnish interact in these settings to better understand their views on their environment. This will give students the opportunity to increase their own wellbeing while experiencing Finland’s nature. The goal is for them to see how people act within their natural environment to help them with their final project for the course, which is developing their own community engagement project on the topics of sustainability or wellbeing.

The other reading for the class is chapter six in the Barrett and Leney (2021) book, which will discuss what Finns do in their free time such as connecting with nature, foraging, sports, etc. This chapter connects to the primary readings and emphasizes the Finnish culture and values surrounding their free time. The purpose of this reading is to reiterate the Finnish culture as it will be something the students will see and interact with. I want to provide them with substantial background information so they can learn at a deeper level when they are in-country. Like prior readings, half the class will be dedicated to small group discussions and Jamboard large group discussions to reflect on the material as a group.

The second portion of class will focus on the final project for the class. Students will have four weeks of background information to use for a project proposal presentation. During class, students will give a brief presentation (2-3 minutes) on their community engagement project proposal to explain what their project will focus on (sustainability, wellbeing, or both), where it is designed to take place (Fargo metro, hometown, or other), and a brief description of the project. Students will work on this project throughout the semester and give a final presentation at the end, as well as turn in a final paper.

## **Week 5: Smart Cities: The Future of Sustainability**

This week's focus will be on Finland's Smart Cities. Smart Cities are the, "development of smart solutions and implementation of experimental projects intending to tackle challenges related to urban environment," within Finland. This strategy consists of six cities, Helsinki, Turku, Oulu, Espoo, Vantaa, and Tampere. Throughout the country these cities are dedicated to developing innovative solutions that could eventually be replicated in other cities across the country (Laasko, 2017; Commission on Sustainable Development, 2016). I designed this course to visit two of the six cities, Helsinki and Turku, to learn more about the projects that are being implemented. Helsinki has focused its efforts on the neighborhood of Kalasatama, and has developed ideas such as a carbon neutral zoo, digital health services, future education with the latest technology, and more (Laasko, 2017; Commission on Sustainable Development, 2016). Turku is a small city, but also one of the oldest in Finland. They focused their efforts on sustainable transportation and have suggested ideas such as becoming carbon neutral by 2040, increasing sustainable public transportation, and developing a circular economy (Laasko, 2017; Commission on Sustainable Development, 2016). This again, relates to the societal shift in the importance of the environment. Environmental sociology includes understanding the ways in which society connects to their environments and how that impacts many facets of life. The mind shifts to put environmental needs at the forefront has been a large contributor to country's public policy in Finland and the other Scandinavian countries.

The last city that will be visited is Porvoo and although they are not one of the six strategy cities, they have also developed a sustainability plan and has suggested ideas such as becoming a carbon neutral city, developing a circular economy, and encouraging citizens to make environmentally friendly choices in their everyday lives (City of Porvoo, 2019). In their

second reading, students will read the full brief of the plans the City of Porvoo has suggested to help them better understand ideas that the U. S. could implement. These readings will also help with their final project in developing their own community project.

The last reading is a full breakdown of Finland's sustainability goals set in place by their government to be achieved by 2050. According to the Commission on Sustainable Development (2016), the 2050 plan outlines specific objectives that must be met in order for the larger goals to be achieved.

1. Equal prospects for wellbeing: guaranteed equal opportunities to health, Education, and employment.
2. A participatory society for all: equal opportunities for all to have a say in public affairs that impact their lives.
3. Work in a sustainable way: measures will be taken to create jobs and improve productivity and quality of work.
4. Sustainable society and local communities: create sustainable and safe communities where jobs, housing, comprehensive services, sustainable transport systems, the use of information and communications technology, and green areas support economic, social and cultural wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of the environment.
5. A carbon-neutral society: communities will be carbon-neutral by 2050.
6. A resource-wise economy: enhance resource and material efficiency, promote circular economy, adopt sustainable business models.
7. Lifestyles respectful of the carrying capacity of nature: adapt to a resource-wise low-emission economy that brings consumption of natural resources to an environmentally stable level.

8. Decision-making respectful of nature: increase peoples' respect for biodiversity to stop habitat degradation.

These readings will also provide students with the background information that will be helpful for the in-class activity. Finland has numerous ecolabels and certifications that they partner with. In small groups, students will choose one label or certification to research and present to the class and explain ways in which the U. S. could adopt some of the sustainable solutions that Finland has suggested. This emphasizes the country's commitment to building a sustainable future for their communities. Most of class will be dedicated to this in-class project to diversify class meetings.

### **Week 6: Slow Movements in Finland**

The topic for this class will be slow movements in Finland. Slow movements began out of Italy, the originators of the slow food movement, and has grown to other avenues such as fashion, travel, education, and more (Stump, 2019). This movement promotes a cultural shift for society to slow down (The World Institute of Slowness, 2018). On the average day, Americans spend nearly 290 minutes on paid work, while Finland only spends about 230 minutes. For leisure time, the U.S. only dedicates 286 minutes per day where Finland dedicates 330 (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). Slow movements have become increasingly popular in Finland in the form of education, fashion, travel, and urban development and have played a pivotal role in their tourism (VisitFinland, 2021). Though there are no required readings for the week, there will be other in-class activities such as the weekly reflective practice and mindfulness exercises and a small group presentation. Students will work in groups to research some of these slow movements, give a brief overview of the movement,

and how they have impacted Finnish society. While in Finland, we will explore some of these movements further to tie the readings to the on-ground programming.

The final part of class will be briefly discussing the second assignment for the semester. Each student will research and present on one of the site visits during the travel portion of the program in Finland. Students design a travel brochure that includes a brief historical and cultural overview of the site, and present a short description of it to the class. Students will also present this information prior to visiting each site on-ground as well.

These two activities were designed to provoke interest in the unique nature of the slow movements across the globe, while also engaging students in the culture further. The brochure assignment was designed to get students introduced and excited about the sites they will be visiting on ground.

### **Week 7: Environmental Movements and Community Engagement**

One of the main aspects of environmental sociology in recent decades is social environmental movements (Pellow and Brehm, 2013). The focus on this class will dive into environmental movements in general, as well as recent movements in Finland specifically. Environmental movements seek to prevent the destruction and exploitation of the natural world by means of political and social intervention and began in the late 1960s (Rucht, 1999). These grassroots movements lead to drastic changes in how western societies view the topics of environmentalism. The development of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Clean Water Act of 1972, and Clean Air Act of 1970 all shifted the ways in which the U.S. handled environmental issues into modern day (Otsuka, 2019).

Students will first start with a reflective practice and mindfulness exercise before delving into the class discussion and activities. Students will read two articles on the history of



environmentalism to give them a background on this important topic that is prevalent today. The first article by Berndtson (2019) explains the events that lead to modern day conservation such as the treatment of indigenous peoples, establishment of public lands, and the threats to modern environmentalism. This article serves as the background to the second article by Otsuka (2019), which delves into environmental movements in modern society.

The second portion of class will discuss the logic model (Wholey, 1983) which hypothesizes cause and effects that lead to desired outcomes. There are many variations of the logic model today, but most include (Frechtling, 2015; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998; LeCroy, 2018; McLaughlin & Jordan, 2015):

- Inputs: resources needed for the program
- Activities: what needs to be done to meet the goals of the program
- Outputs: What is produced from the activities
- Outcomes/Impacts: What are the results of your program and what is their impact

Students will use the logic model to develop a community engagement project for their final project. The readings for the week on the logic model explain the dimensions of it in depth to provide background information to aid in their final project as well as how it is used to create change in communities. As a class activity, students will work in small teams to brainstorm how the logic model can be applied to fictional scenarios they are given. The scenarios will focus on Finland, as they will be learning about some of the current programs implemented there through on-ground experiences. This activity will give students the opportunity to learn and apply the logic model, which will help them with their final projects.

## **Week 8: Interaction in the Host Culture and Pre-Departure Orientation**

The final in-person class will focus on travel planning, health and safety, and cultural competency. Students will begin class with a mindfulness activity and reflective practice on the readings and their third class assignment. There will also be a virtual presentation with the local guide who will travel with the class throughout the on-ground experience. This presentation will teach students about cultural norms, health and safety, and planned activities. Community interaction is an important component to foster growth in short-term study abroad programs (Prestholdt & Fletcher, 2018; Long et al., 2017, Strange & Gibson, 2017). As part of this crucial component, students will design their own cultural awareness and respective traveler plan which they will implement on-ground

The second portion of class will involve a presentation about traveling planning, packing, health and safety, and an outline of the itinerary so students know what to expect on-ground. For this, students will use the class readings and other resources to develop a plan that focuses on cultural sensitivity while traveling. They will need to articulate the Finnish culture and identity in order to write this plan. As a group, we will go over each students' ideas and collectively make a plan that the group will adhere to prior to travel.

To help with this project, the class reading for the week is *The View from the Veranda: Understanding Today's Colonial Student* by Anthony Ogden (2007). This article emphasizes the importance of understanding privilege, colonialism, and how to minimize your impact when traveling (Ogden, 2015). This has become an increasingly important topic in the study abroad field as the topic of global citizenship has been analyzed (Sharpe, 2015; Jorgenson & Shultz, 2012). In the Ogden (2015) reading, students will understand what it means to be a colonial student. Students today have been molded in a consumerist society where processes have been

streamlined for ease. When students go abroad, they expect to have these efficiencies translated to their programs demanding all the amenities of home (Ogden, 2015). As education abroad professionals, we strive for students to have a transformative experience. We hope that students “step off the veranda” to truly immerse themselves in the culture effectively without causing harm to their communities (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2010).

## **CHAPTER 6: ON-GROUND PROGRAMMING AND FINAL PROJECT**

The final section of this paper will outline the on-ground programming and the final class periods which include program debriefing and community engagement project presentations. The on-ground programming is ten days including two travel days and eight days where students will experience Finnish culture, wellness, and sustainability and tie the course content to on-ground experiences. Students will continue with daily reflective practices and well as group reflective practices to further their learning about the new experiences they are having. Reflective practice is one of the pillars in both experiential and transformative learning, so it will continue to be included in on-ground programming (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1994).

### **Traveling to Finland**

The first day is traveling from Fargo to Helsinki, which will be an overnight flight. The group will travel together with the option to diverge from the group travel plans on the flight back to the U.S. The provider we are working with, Education First, takes care of all the arrangements and on-ground logistics. There will be a local guide with the group for the entirety of the program to teach the students about the local culture and excursions we will be doing, as well as for an added layer of support for health and safety matters. Once the group lands in Helsinki, the tour director will meet the group at the airport and will transfer us to Turku for the first four days of the program.

### **Days in Turku, Finland**

The first full day in Turku includes a sightseeing tour of the city. Prior to the tour, students will participate in “the drop-off” activity (Batchelder, 1993). The drop-off is designed for small groups to explore a new area to acquire an understanding of the history and culture of that area (Maloney & Ashbury, 2018). This activity is important for fostering learning, growth,

and the skills necessary for meaningful interactions across cultures (Maloney & Ashbury, 2018). As you may recall, one of the first steps to fostering learning is through students participating in new situations (Mezirow, 1997; Kolb, 1984). Through the drop-off activity, students will work in small groups to find their way to a designated meeting spot. Students will be given instructions on how to get to the meeting place in a scavenger hunt-like manner. This will force students to learn about their surroundings as well as how to use public transportation, currency, and ask locals for directions. Students will end at the designated location, which will also be the start of the guided walking tour. This activity is designed to not only get students acclimated to one of the cities they will be in for the next three days, but also help them gain confidence in traveling on their own and interacting with the local culture, which is one of the aspects of experiential learning (Prestholdt & Fletcher, 2018; Long et al., 2017, Strange & Gibson, 2017).

The second day in Turku will focus on the slow food movement, what that means in the Finnish culture, and how it is implemented in Finland. The Slow Food Movement originated in Italy in the late 1980s with the growth of fast food, and is dedicated to preventing the disappearance of local food traditions (Notaras, 2014). Students will visit a local farm near Turku and learn about sustainable farming practices from a local farming family. Students will harvest foods, learn about the process, and understand what farm to table cooking means. I chose this activity as it aligns with the themes of sustainability, as students will learn about farming practices; wellbeing, because of the focus on eating local native foods; and environmental sociology, because students will learn about human interactions within the farming environment.

The third day in Turku is reserved for free time. Students can explore the city on their own and focus on their interests. One of the assignments students will complete before departure is planning for their two free days. This gives students the chance to plan out what they would

like to see and the steps they will take to accomplish this. International education researchers have found that unstructured free time during study abroad programming gives students opportunities to connect with the host culture and leads to attitude changes in how students feel about themselves as well as how they perceive the host country and its citizens (McCabe, 1994; Meyer-Lee & Warfield, 2006; Nyaupane, Teye & Paris, 2008). From Previous surveys collected by the NDSU Study Abroad Services, we have seen that more students wish they had more time to explore on their own and less constant structured activity. Because of this, I intentionally built-in free time in all three program locations. This will also be the last day students have to explore Turku before transferring back to Helsinki for the remainder of the program.

### **Days in Helsinki, Finland**

The first day in Helsinki will start with a visit to Nuuksio National Park where students will learn about the Finland National Park system with a guided excursion from a local park ranger. Students will have the day to experience the park, learn more about the important role nature plays in Finnish culture, and have free time to explore all the park has to offer. This excursion is designed to align with the wellbeing focus of the course, showing students the power nature has on our overall wellbeing, and environmental sociology as students will learn more about how the park was developed from the societal desire to make nature accessible to all (National Parks Finland, n.d.). Students will also have a special reflective practice experience through a forest bathing and reflection activity. This excursion is also designed to foster learning and growth in an entertaining way. Many of the excursions I have designed are where students will be learning without realizing it. I want my program to be educational, while also including excursions that are enjoyable for students.

The second day in Helsinki, or the first full day there, will be much like the first day in Turku. Students will again participate in “The Drop-off” activity where they will explore the city of Helsinki before delving into the guided city tour. Students will have done this once before in the smaller city of Turku, which will give them more confidence to do it in the metro capital city. The guided tour will include popular destinations within Helsinki, such as their local market where students can purchase local goods; Temppeliaukio Church, where they will learn about Finnish architecture; and the Parliament building, where students will learn about the local government system where 47 percent of its members are women (Parliament of Finland, n.d.). Students will then have the remainder of the day free to explore on their own. This free-time will also have been from the “planning your free time” assignment that student will have completed before traveling abroad. This again aligns with experiential learning. Student learning grows the more they interact with the local culture (Prestholdt & Fletcher, 2018; Long et al., 2017, Strange & Gibson, 2017).

The third day will focus on the well-being aspect of the course as well as the environmental sociology aspect. Students will participate in a traditional sauna experience, which has a deep tradition in the Finnish culture. The sauna has existed in many cultures but has intertwined itself in the Finnish culture. There is said to be over two million saunas across the country from small rural towns to big metropolitan cities (this is Finland, n.d.). Because of the sauna’s deep cultural roots and integral part of society, this was an activity that was important for me to include. Students will learn about the importance of saunas in the Finnish culture, but also the healing benefits it possesses in Finnish wellbeing practices.

The second part of the day is dedicated to learning about the diversity of Finland, specifically the indigenous Sami tribe of Northern Finland. Students will attend a lecture at the

University of Helsinki, where they will learn about the customs and traditions of the Sami people. The Sami people have been historically marginalized, much like the ingenious people of the U.S. In recent years, the Finnish government has seized their land for forestry and to further develop renewable energy (Mahajan, 2016). Learning about indigenous populations in Finland will further foster learning about the local culture in which they are immersed. This lecture aligns with the environmental sociology aspect of the course as students will be learning about marginalization and the environmental impacts it has on these tribes.

The final part of the day will be spent on a river cruise where students will see the highlights of Finland from the water. Students spent the day immersed in the city, but it's equally important to view it from a wider lens. This is also a relaxing end to a busy day. I want to make time for students to relax and process since there were some sensitive topics covered. The river cruise will give students time to learn more about the city, or to just take in the views. The next day will be a full day with an excursion to Porvoo.

The fourth day will be spent in Porvoo, Finland where students will learn more about the sustainability aspect of Finland. Students will meet with a local expert to learn about sustainable development and how it has factored into city planning. Porvoo developed a sustainability plan and has suggested ideas such as becoming a carbon neutral city, developing a circular economy, and encouraging citizens to make environmentally friendly choices in their everyday lives (City of Porvoo, 2019). What they learn on this day will help them with their final community development project. Porvoo is not only on the path to sustainability, but it is also one of the most visited cities near Helsinki (City of Porvoo, 2019). Students will have time to explore on their own for half of the day, before traveling back to Helsinki. I again, wanted to give students time to explore things they are interested in. They will again be referring to the "planning your



free time” assignment they completed before travel so they have ideas of how they would like to spend their half day in Porvoo.

The final full day of the program will be spent learning about the Smart City initiative and Helsinki’s plans on sustainability. Helsinki has focused its efforts on the neighborhood of Kalasatama, and has developed ideas such as a carbon neutral zoo, digital health services, future education with the latest technology and without classrooms, etc. (Laasko, 2017; Commission on Sustainable Development, 2016). Students will learn about these efforts from a local expert as well as have time to explore the neighborhood on their own. What they learn today will help with their final project as well as align with the overall sustainability focus of the program. Students will also learn about the different entities it takes to implement the Smart City initiative. Local government, community members, and stakeholders play a role in the success of this initiative, which students will learn from local experts.

The second half of the day will be spent in nature with a wellbeing focus. Students will participate in a beginner’s foraging walk where they will learn to identify local wild foods and uses while also learning about preservation efforts. Finland abides by the “Everyman’s Right” act which gives everyone the freedom to roam the countryside no matter who owns or occupies the land. This must be done without damaging the environment or disturbing others (The Finnish Ministry of the Environment, n.d.). This means that anyone can walk, ski, cycle, camp, forage, etc. freely on public or private land as long as it doesn’t disturb nature or others. It has been said that “Everyman’s Right” has contributed to the continued close relationship that Finns have with their environment as it enables everyone to enjoy the natural heritage of the country (Kari, 2016). Students will experience the “Everyman’s Right” philosophies through this excursion while also learning about this topic in general. These philosophies are one of the cornerstones of the human-

environment interactions within Finland, which is a focus of this course. Since this is the final day in Finland, the next day will consist of travel back to the U.S. where students will participate in two final class periods to present their final projects and debrief the program as a group.

### **Final Project and Debriefing**

The last portion of this course is dedicated to debriefing the program as well as completing the final project of the course. Student will use the logic model (Wholey, 1983) to develop a community engagement project that delves deeper into any of the topics covered in the course. There are many variations of the logic model today, but most include (Frechtling, 2015; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998; LeCroy, 2018; McLaughlin & Jordan, 2015):

- Inputs: resources needed for the program
- Activities: what needs to be done to meet the goals of the program
- Outputs: What is produced from the activities
- Outcomes/Impacts: What are the results of your program and what is their impact

Students will choose a topic they are interested in that was discussed in the course, and develop a community project that would hypothetically be implemented into a community of their choosing. One of the main aspects of environmental sociology in recent decades is social environmental movements (Pellow and Brehm, 2013). Environmental movements seek to prevent the destruction and exploitation of the natural world by means of political and social intervention and began in the late 1960s (Rucht, 1999). These grassroots movements lead to drastic changes in how western societies view the topics of environmentalism. This is a topic that ties into the environmental sociology focus of the course. I chose this as the final project as it was already discussed in class prior to traveling to Finland, but students also gained insight as to how Finland has implemented program focused on sustainability and wellbeing practices into its

communities. Students will have experienced these programs first hand, which will give them ideas for their own projects. The final part of the course will be over the course of two class periods as students will present their project idea to the class and submit their final paper.

The final paper will:

- Include an outline of the proposed project listing the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.
- Explain why the student chose to focus on this topic.
- How it aligns with environmental sociology, sustainability, or wellbeing practices.

Students will be allotted five to ten minutes to briefly explain the program and why they chose to focus on that specific topic. Students will also be allotted time to ask questions of their peers, which will lead to learning of that material in a peer-to-peer format. As mentioned earlier in the paper, peer-to-peer learning is a component of transformative and experiential learning, therefore is an important aspect of this course (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1997; McCarthy, 2010).

The final project is only one component of the two class sessions. Debriefing the experiences is also an important aspect of final class sessions. Reflection time is likely to produce growth and change within the participants, as it gives students time to understand their experiences and plan for future action (Stone et al., 2017). One of the final class sessions will be dedicated to mindfulness and reflection as a group. Students will have then completed the entire course with the goal of learning more about sustainability and wellbeing practices, but more importantly, how to learn by doing. Something I hope they will take with them in all aspects of their lives.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This paper is an example of how to develop a short-term study abroad program with theoretical focus of experiential and transformative learning theories, and how to design a course with a focus on environmental sociology, wellbeing practices, and sustainability.

Environmental sociology, "promotes research and professional activities that explore the relationships between social systems and the ecosphere, including interdisciplinary work that explores interactions within and between institutions, social groups, and natural and built environments," and, "includes study of the origins and impacts of technology, the social causes of environmental change, the environmental causes of social change, and the consequences of social inequalities and power relationships for socio-environmental dynamics." (American Sociological Association, n.d).

The objectives of this courses are to provide students with a transformative learning experience while learning about topics in environmental sociology as they relate to wellbeing and sustainability practices in Finland. By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze behaviors, structures, and processes of individuals and groups; analyze the interplay of self and society and how social structures shape human experiences, and how humans shape social structures and their environment; examine the importance of sustainability, human impact, and social wellbeing in the Finnish culture while applying environmental social theories and concepts to examine how Finland interacts with its environment; and apply what they have learned about sustainability, human impact, and social wellbeing into their lives and career.

Students will learn about environmental sociology topics during the pre-departure section of the course through class readings, discussions, projects, activities, and reflective practice. Students will explore topics such as what environmental sociology, its inception, societal and

governmental impact in local communities, how people interact within their environment, as well as environmental advocacy and inequality. These topics are at the foundation of environmental sociology and the core objectives of this course.

ELT is one of the most used theoretical frameworks for study abroad programs and has guided study abroad professionals and faculty in developing educationally sound and culturally relevant programs that will foster student growth and transformation. ELT encourages students to be aware of their own knowledge and how they create meaning. The greater learners are aware, the more likely they are to build new meaning (Braid, 2018). ELT is cyclical, in that, student learning moves on a looped continuum through the following ways: experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting (Kolb, 1984). TLT offers learners the opportunity to not only understand and gain new knowledge, but to also understand how they learn in the process (Stone et al., 2017).

Together, they provide a foundation for course and program design, that includes learning in the classroom and on-ground. The goal of my paper is to demonstrate how to use two of the most prominent theoretical frameworks and best practices used by international educational professionals in program development: experiential learning theory (ELT) and transformative learning theory (TLT), and well as provide a course focus grounded in environmental sociology, sustainability and wellbeing practices to design class devoted to those topics. This paper gives other international education professionals as well as faculty members an example of what components are important to incorporate into their own programs to provide students with a rich study abroad experience.

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## APPENDIX: COURSE SYLLABUS

### Growing Green: Exploring Finland's Sustainable Culture

Instructor: Tasha Cary-Waselk  
Email: natasha.cary@ndsu.edu  
Phone: 701.231.5818  
Office: MU 116  
Office Hours: TBD

UNIV 379, 3-credits  
Preq: None  
Term: Spring & Summer 2023  
Class Meeting Time: TBD  
Classroom: TBD

#### Bulletin Description

Sustainable practices and wellbeing are values embedded in the Finnish culture from birth and has contributed to this country being one of the world's leaders in sustainability. This course will take a sociological approach to understand how the Finnish use and act within their environment, in both nature and urban settings. Students will learn how Finland's focus on wellbeing and healthy habits have lead it to be the happiest country in the world and what we can learn from their practices.

#### Course Objectives

This course has been approved for the Social Behavioral Sciences (B) category in general education because students will "use scientific methods to analyze the behaviors, structures, and processes of individuals and groups." In addition, this course has also been approved to meet the Global Perspectives category in general education because students will "focus on analysis of worldwide issues illustrating the interdependence of the world and its people." There will be eight two-hour classes scheduled prior to departure that will outline the course topics, what you will be seeing in Finland, and health and safety. There will be two classes held upon return to debrief the experience and to give final project presentations.

Students will:

- Identify and understand basic components of Finnish identity, history and culture.
- Analyze how values and contributions of Finnish societies provide contexts for individual experiences, values, ideas, artistic expressions, and identities while examining their own values, ideas, and biases.
- Demonstrate appropriate conventions and communication skills in an international setting. In particular, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of how cultural context shapes individual experiences and values.
- Analyze the interplay of self and society, particularly how social structures shape human experiences in the environment, and how humans shape social structures and the environment.
- Examine the importance of sustainability, human impact, and social wellbeing in the Finnish culture while applying environmental social theories and concepts to examine how Finland interacts with its environment.
- Apply what they have learned about sustainability, human impact, and social wellbeing into their lives, career, and final project using the logic model.

#### Required Resources

Laptop or Tablet (if you do not have access to one, please let me know so I can make arrangements)

Journal/notebook (bonus if it is sustainably made!)

Select Chapters: Culture Smart Finland! The essential Guide to Customs & Culture, by Terttu Leney and Elena Barrett.



Article Readings: Students will read various articles throughout the semester, which will be provided by the instructor in Blackboard.

Sustainability Note: Since one of the focuses of the course is sustainability, I will not provide any printed materials or resources. Instead, you will find the syllabus, course readings and e-book in BlackBoard. You will need to be sure to bring an electronic device each class period to access these materials. You are encouraged to have a sustainable focus throughout the program and to choose sustainable options when available.

### Assignments/In-class Activities

*Pre-departure Assignments*: This course will consist of three assignments that will be due prior to travel. These assignments will contribute to deeper learning of the Finnish identity, culture, and what you will be experiencing on-ground.

1. **Reflection Paper (10 points)**. For this paper, you will write about what you know about Finland, wellbeing, and sustainability. What are your current wellbeing and sustainable practices? What to you hope to learn about or what would you like to work towards in your sustainable journey? What organizations, resources, businesses, etc. do you know of in the F-M area? Be prepared to discuss this in class. (2-3 pages)
2. **Site Visit Brochure (10 points)**. Each of you present on one of the site visits we will be doing on-ground. You will work in teams of two and will choose a site visit we will be seeing, a brief historical and cultural overview, develop a travel brochure, and give a short presentation on ground before we visit. Get as creative as you would like with your brochure. The more creative the better!
3. **Cultural awareness and respectful traveler plan (10 points)**. Being a respectful traveler is important and preparing yourself is key. We will have many opportunities to interact with locals and understanding the local culture prior to travel will prepare you for respectful immersion. You will use what we have learned from our readings to develop a plan to be a culturally sensitive and respectful traveler. Using the readings we have done throughout the semester and your own research, you will develop a respectful traveler plan that you will implement while we are abroad. For this, you must be able to articulate Finnish culture and identity. As a class, we will discuss each travel plan and identify group norms for our on-ground experience. (2-3 pages)
4. **Free Time Research (5 points)**. You will have free time to explore on your own in Turku, Helsinki, and Porvoo. Research what you would like to do and make a plan on how you can structure your time, transportation, food, costs, etc. This will help you be prepared for your free time. (1-2 pages in your notebook)

*Reflective Practice (1 point each, 20 points total)*: Throughout the pre-departure course, you will have weekly in-class reflections. Before we start each class, you will have prompts that will relate to the topic for that day and you will also write about how you are feeling about the course and upcoming travel. These will be graded on completion, not content. I want you to be honest and write what you are feeling. I will not be reading your journals, but I will be grading if you have them completed. We will continue to have reflective practice while in Finland.

*Community Social Engagement Project and Presentations (30 points)*: This project will be the focus of the semester. You will choose a topic in sustainability or wellbeing that you are interested in learning more about. You will develop a community engagement project surrounding your selected topic. You will use the logic model to develop said program. The program can be anything you want, whether it pertains to the F-M area, NDSU, or your hometown. You will give a 5 minute presentation on the project prior to travel, write up an outline of your project using the logic model, and give a final presentation on what you learned and what your program will be. (Program proposal presentation – 5 min, Final presentation – 10 min, Research paper 5-7 pages)

*In-class Activities and Participation (10 points):* Throughout the semester, there will be numerous in-class activities that will relate to the topic of that class. You will work on your own or in small groups on activities such as understanding human-environment interaction, ecolabels, environmental suggestion pitch, and more. This course is heavily dependent on class interaction and discussion. You will be responsible to show up to class having read the required readings and ready to have intellectual conversations with your classmates. I want to you think deeply about the readings to determine how this relates to the overall theme of the class as well as how this has changed your mindset on sustainability and wellbeing.

#### On-Site Assignments

*Program Participation (10 points):* You will be expected to participate on all program activities, group debriefing sessions, site/cultural visits, drop-off activities, and homestay events. You will also be expected to be on time and respectful of the local communities we will be interacting. We will be doing/seeing some very exciting things and participation is key to a successful group dynamic and experience.

#### Grading Criteria and Scale

Reflection Paper	10 points	A =	> 90%
Site Visit Brochure	10 points	B =	80 to < 90%
Cultural Awareness Travel Plan	10 points	C =	70 to < 80%
Reflective Practice	20 points	D =	60 to < 70%
Free Time Research	5 points	F =	< 60%
In-Class Participation	10 points		
On Location Participation	10 points		
Final Project/Presentation	25 points		
	100 points		

#### Attendance Statement

According to [NDSU Policy 333 \(www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf\)](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf), attendance in classes is expected.

Veterans and student service members with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible and are encouraged to provide Activation Orders.

#### Americans with Disabilities Act for Students with Special Needs

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the [Disability Services Office \(www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices\)](http://www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices) as soon as possible.

#### Academic Honesty Statement

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. [NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct](#) applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the [Office of Registration and Records](#). Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at [www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty](http://www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty).

Course Schedule

Date	Course Topic	Class Activities	Assignments Due	Readings
Week 1	Intro to course/ Environmental <u>Sociology</u>	Introductions, icebreaker, course overview, course norms, Mindfulness activity, HEI activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class Reflective Journal 1</li> </ul>	- <i>An Environmental Sociology for the Twenty-First Century</i>
Week 2	Finland History/Culture	Icebreaker, group discussion on readings and jam board first paper, lecture, Mindfulness activity, videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assignment 1: What do you know about Finland, Wellbeing, and Sustainability?</li> <li>In-class Reflective Journal 2</li> </ul>	- <i>The Sami: A Disappearing Indigenous Minority in Scandinavia</i> - <i>Sisu: The Finnish Art of Inner Strength</i> - <i>Culture Smart Ch. 1</i>
Week 3	The Nordic Model: Wellbeing, Health, and Equality	Group discussion on readings, lecture/videos, Mindfulness activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class Reflective Journal 3</li> </ul>	- <i>The Nordic Model: existence, emergence &amp; sustainability</i> - <i>Culture Smart Ch. 2 &amp; 5</i>
Week 4	The Power of Nature	Group discussion on readings, lecture, Mindfulness activity, video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project proposal presentation</li> <li>Reflective Journal 4</li> </ul>	- <i>Happiness in Nature?</i> - <i>Culture Smart Ch. 6 pg. 127-130</i>
Week 5	Smart Cities: the future of sustainability	Group discussion on readings, lecture/videos, Mindfulness activity, ecolabel/ sustainable suggestion activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class Reflective Journal 5</li> </ul>	- <i>Smart Cities in Finland</i> - <i>The Finland we want by 2050: Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development</i> - <i>Climate Programme of the City of Porvoo for 2019–2030</i>
Week 6	Slow Movements in Finland	slow movement group research/presentation activity, video/lecture, Mindfulness activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflective Journal 6</li> <li>Assignment 2: Create brochure for on-ground excursion presentation</li> </ul>	
Week 7	Social Environmental Movements and Logic Model for Community Engagement Overview	Group discussion on readings, lecture, activity, group environmental movement activity, Mindfulness activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class Reflective Journal 7</li> </ul>	- <i>The long and Winding Road: Charting the Course of American Conservation</i> - <i>The Evolution Of Environmental Movements</i> - <i>Logic Model Readings</i>
Week 8	Interacting in host community/cultural differences, Pre-departure	Guest Lecture, Group discussion on readings, lecture, group travel norms activity, video, Mindfulness activity, Health and safety, packing, travel, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assignment 3: Cultural Awareness and Respectful traveler plan</li> <li>In-class Reflective Journal 8</li> </ul>	- <i>View from the Veranda</i>
Week 9-10	Travel to Finland – Assignment 4: Research free time activities for Turku and Helsinki			
Week 11	Debrief/Final presentations			
Week 12	Final presentations			