

June 2009

To: International Business Concentration/Major Students, Present and Future
From: Professor Tom Roehl, IBUS Concentration/Major Faculty Advisor
Re: Advice for Students in the IBUS Concentration

Compared to other concentrations, international business probably takes a lot more planning and coordination of your courses, so you need to think carefully about the sequencing of classes and the combinations of classes that would work for you. You will always want to schedule courses that are infrequently offered and those that are prerequisites as early as possible to preserve flexibility. Since core courses are prerequisites for many other courses, you should try to finish your core courses as early in the program as possible, especially if you think you have an interest in this area and may want to take another course or two or even a double concentration (see below).

For some historical reasons, we cannot say that we have an IBUS major, only a concentration. Thus, you will often hear me say concentration/major. It is the equivalent of a major in many other universities, but we call it a concentration, as do most schools that have a long liberal arts tradition.

International business is located in the Department of Management. All administrative inquiries should be done through the Department of Management. The Department of Management is located in Room 351 Parks Hall. Jacie DeLauruelle is the Department Manager, and her phone is 650-2902.

Faculty Members

Tom Roehl, Professor of International Business
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Other Professors with International Interests in the Business School
(They sometimes teach the international courses listed. You might also think about taking general courses from these professors because they will bring things international into the courses they teach)

Professor	Department	Courses Taught
Steve Globerman	Economics	MBA Core
Dan Hagen	Economics	ECON462 (International Trade)
Paul Storer	Economics	ECON365 (Canadian Economy)
Chuck Antholt	Economics	ECON388/389 (Pacific Rim/EU Economy) ECON343 (Population, Growth and Agriculture)
Ozan Sula	Economics	ECON 360 (Intro to International Economics)
Peter Harder	Economics	ECON385 (Comparative Economic Systems)
Wendy Wilhelm	Marketing	None Currently
Farrokh Safavi	Marketing	MKTG486 (International Marketing)

Lee McLain	Finance	FIN442 (International Financial Management)
Peter Haug	Operations Mgmt.	None Currently
Stella Hua	Operations Mgmt.	OPS 466 Supply Chain Management
Ron Singleton	Accounting	ACCTY451 (International Accounting)
Matthew Liao-troth	Management	MGMT474 (International Negotiation)

The Courses in the International Business Concentration/Major

When you look at the list of courses for the IBUS Concentration/Major, it might not be clear why the courses are grouped the way they are. We have tried to come up with a set of 'objectives' to show how the various parts fit together. For the time being, these are unofficial guidance rather than university policy, but we still think they will help students grasp what the IBUS concentration/major is all about.

Objective: Give each student a strong grounding in the institutional and cultural foundations that are important for making international business decisions. With this foundation, students are then able to take a variety of courses that apply functional area knowledge to international situations.

Course: IBUS 370 Introduction to International Business

You should take this course early in the program, but preferably after ECON309, since Professor Roehl, who teaches the class, has training in economics.

Objective: To give students a solid grounding in economic and/or social science principles and economic systems. The knowledge of economic theories applied to things international, and the knowledge of different economic systems, are both useful in understanding why business firms choose the strategies they do for international business, and why firms in different markets need different organizational and contractual systems to be successful.

Most of the courses taught in CBE are taught with a focus on the firm, and on the business system that surrounds the firm. It is useful for students to be exposed to different views of the international business environment. Students take two courses that provide a non-business perspective on the factors that influence the business firm and its environment. Study abroad satisfies one course. Courses in the social sciences will qualify, as may a course in the society, politics or history taken in study abroad programs.

Courses: (Choose Two from the Following)

ECON 463	International Finance (Usually WP)
ECON 462	International Trade
ECON 388/89	Economics of the EU/Pacific Rim
ECON 343	Population, Environment and World Agriculture
ECON 360	Introduction to International Economics
ECON 385	Comparative Economic Systems
ECON 365	Canadian Economy (Sometimes WP)
ECON 397	May be International, Depending on the Topic (e.g. 2009-10 Institutions)
INTL305	Study Abroad in a WWU Approved Program
EGEO312	Economic Geography (no need to take the prerequisite of EGEO 201 here) (This is the conventional way to meet this objective; also GUR Soc Sci) (EGEOG 201 Prerequisite is waived for IBUS Students)
GEOG323	South Asia (prerequisite EGEO201 or permission)
EGEOG324	East Asia (prerequisite EGEO201 or EAST 201 or EAST202)
PLSC302	Western Europe (prerequisite PLSC101 or PLSC291)
PLSC307	East Asia (PLSC101 or PLSC291 or instructor approval)
PLSC372	International Political Economy (prerequisite PLSC291) GUR credit
ANTH338	Economic Anthropology (prerequisite ANTH201)
ANTH362	Peoples of Asia (prerequisite ANTH201)
ANTH365	Peoples of Latin America (prerequisite ANTH201)

Note: Students may present alternative courses at the 300 level or above that would satisfy the above objective for approval by the IBUS advisor.

Objective: To give students one course that applies functional area principles to international business topics. These courses are not usually taught by professors of international business, but by professors with an interest in international issues who are trained in and primarily interested in focused functional disciplines. This contrast of approaches assures that the student is exposed to a variety of views of international business.

Courses:

MKTG 486	International Marketing
FIN 442	International Finance (usually WP)
ACCT 451	International Accounting
IBUS 474	Topics in IB: (theme varies) (sometimes WI)
IBUS 473	International Trade Operations (Project Course with Firms)
MGMT 481	Managing Cultural Diversity
OPS 466	Supply Chain Management

See the document on GUR's on the Management Department Web Site for GUR advice, but in short, always take courses with international themes in your GUR's.

Objective: To provide an opportunity for students to deepen their international business knowledge with additional specialty courses **or** to add a set of functional area courses to their international emphasis.

Courses: Two Courses Under Advisement

One must be international in or outside CBE; the other can be any course in CBE.

International Courses: The list of courses in the IBUS concentration/major list indicates some CBE classes that you can consider. You can include in this a 300 level course outside the business school if you have the prerequisites. Students often count one 300 level language course as part of this type of 'under guidance' program. You should think about how the various international courses fit together. Don't just pile up international courses for the sake of volume!

Non-International Courses In CBE: You are required to take one course in CBE on any topic s your last course in the IBUS program. I recommend that you chose two courses in a functional discipline to give you a strong grounding in another area to go with your IBUS program, and include the international course in your area (if available) as a third course in a functional discipline. Think carefully about how these courses will fit together so that they will help you in your job search. You may want to talk to a professor in the functional area you are interested in, and get her or his advice. Remember that we suggest that you use the university level upper division free electives, if you already have the seventy credits outside College of Business and Economics that you need to graduate, to add even more than two functional area courses to this list.

Objective: To provide an opportunity to integrate the various international business principles at or near the end of the program in a capstone course that focuses on strategic issues for the firm in international business.

Course:

IBUS 470 International Business Management

Some Notes on Scheduling

Many of the international courses are only offered once a year. Check the international class schedule on this IBUS web site and/or Class Finder to schedule the courses you want in a timely manner.

Prerequisite Courses to Take Early On

ECON309: This basic course in the economics of the firm and markets gives important knowledge you will need for many international business courses, you should take it as quickly as possible.

IBUS 370: This is the beginning international business course. At present it is offered each quarter to give you scheduling flexibility. You need to take this as soon as you have finished the Foundation courses. It is best to take it after ECON 309, or at least take ECON 309 concurrently. You can reserve a space in this class by contacting the professor teaching the class ahead of the registration period.

The Core course in the functional area you are interested in, e.g., FIN 341 for those interested in finance. Taking these courses early on will help with the inevitable scheduling difficulties you will face with the IBUS concentration/major.

Internships, Study Abroad and Language Requirement

This requirement is in addition to the other requirements for the international business concentration.

Study Abroad

If you study abroad, you will automatically get 4 credits of INTL305 counted in the IBUS program, in the 'economics and social science' set of courses. It is possible to use the 'Required Course Under Advisement' (any international-related course) for one course credit for your study abroad. Some study abroad programs also offer courses in international aspects of the functional areas, and with pre-clearance, we can sometimes give credit for those. **IMPORTANT:** If you want credit, please bring back a lot of documentation, including syllabi, tests and papers. The individual departments will have to approve these courses for WWU credit. Some departments require you to check with the department chair before leaving; others only want to see the documents after you return.

Many students want to maximize the credits they can get from study abroad. I have and will continue to recommend against this 'shortcut.' Students with IBUS concentrations are always going to have a difficult time to get the attention of recruiters. Even after you get the job, you will be competing against people who have taken very strong, albeit narrow, functional training. Even though we know this is shortsighted, a senior manager may be tempted to give the international opportunity to someone who has good functional training if she/he has any doubt that the international businessperson has the skills to handle the job. Thus, it is very dangerous to try to find ways to substantially reduce the number of traditional business classes that are required for your degree. If you do not have solid training, you risk losing some of the opportunities that your international concentration is going to offer to you.

It is sometimes possible to use foreign study courses on your transcript as part of the upper division elective courses for your degree (Remember that you have seven of these classes), as opposed to elective courses within your IBUS concentration/major. Plan ahead so that you have courses left to use. This really makes your transcript look strong, since the upper division electives will now show that you are strengthening your IBUS skills, not just taking courses. If you take functional area classes abroad, it is a good idea to check with the appropriate department chair for advice BEFORE leaving for the study abroad.

We now have made the process of getting approval for courses taken a broad a bit easier through the establishment of 337 courses in Economics, Management and International Business. These courses, titled Economics/Management/International Business Studies Abroad require that you take a course with the appropriate content and department designation at the 300 level and present evidence of the grade achieved. Since with these courses you do not have to have a perfect match with a WWU course, the chances of approval as an elective in these three areas has substantially increased, making both the process of getting credit easier and increasing the chances of getting credit from study abroad.

A final comment on getting 'credit' for study abroad. Many student gripe that they can't get 'full' credit for study abroad. All students in the past few years have gotten at least two courses credit, and the majority have gotten three courses, often including one in language. But if you take only courses that will transfer, you may not be taking full advantage of the learning opportunities during your stay abroad. A

course in history or culture that does not count might be much more valuable to you in your career than taking an accounting course that could be taken at home in Bellingham.

You can feel free to contact Professor Roehl on study abroad issues, but the International Programs and exchanges office also has good information.

Internships

The College of Business does not currently help students find international internships. Remember that the IBUS 473 class gives opportunities to work as a team with local companies on international business issues. Whenever opportunities arise, I will notify students through our email system of these chances for internships, but we can't at this point guarantee availability. If you want to get four units of academic credit for the internship, the Department of Management requires you to sign up for an Independent Study MGMT490 course, and write a paper which describes, on a week to week basis, what you have learned and how it relates to what you have learned in class. You must also present a portfolio about your experience at the end of the term. . The substantial requirements are available on Professor Kristi Tyran's web site, currently <http://www.cbe.wvu.edu/kristityran/MGMT%20490/MGMT490SylSummer09.htm>. If you only want one credit, mainly so that the internship shows up on your transcript, you can sign up for one credit in Professor Roehl's section. This requires the following: a) a letter of invitation from an employer indicating the international content of the internship; b) letter from the employer indicating successful completion of the internship; and c) a several page report telling what you did and what you learned on the internship. The department will not give credit for an internship until you have senior status and you must apply ahead of time to the department BEFORE starting the internship.

Language Study

The language requirement is through second year of college work. Language study beyond this level is strongly encouraged. If you take a 300 level class, either at Western or during your study abroad, four credits can be counted as your 'course under advisement' as a Western international course in the IBUS Concentration. Note that it is possible to double count this course as part of a language major or minor.

The Writing and Communications Proficiency Requirements

IBUS 470 currently satisfies the communications proficiency and the writing proficiency requirement for all IBUS concentration/majors, so you need not be concerned about that graduation requirement.

Taking a Set of Courses in a Functional Area (to include Double Concentrations)

Note: The following is my advice, and is not a requirement for the IBUS Concentration.

In watching the careers of successful international business students, it is quite clear that getting that first job is more difficult in international business than in most other concentrations. Many might even say you are better off with a functional area concentration like Operations Management, and a set of basic courses in international business. Some say that the functional expertise gets you the job, and then IBUS gets you the promotion. I think both approaches can lead to successful careers. If you choose the international business concentration/major, it is useful to have a second package of skills to combine with international business. For some, this will be a minor or major in another area of study at Western. This could be within the business school like accounting or something outside like foreign languages or area studies.

There is another alternative, however, for those taking an international business concentration. We have set up the program with sufficient flexibility that a student can typically select two of the three courses from a particular functional area like marketing, and count them toward the IBUS concentration/major. One would be the international course, and the student would select one other course from the functional area as the student's 'elective course.' Taking one additional course as an 'extra' would allow the student to develop a set of three courses in a functional area. Even if you choose only two, it is still better. This is additional work, I know, but having this set of three courses will give recruiters a higher degree of comfort in forwarding a resume. I urge as many of you as possible to take this one additional course to strengthen your credentials. Remember that this advice requires even more complex schedule juggling. So be sure to take the required courses early.

There is another way that most of you can use to get this functional expertise without staying longer at Western. You will also have to have some upper division electives in addition to your concentration/major courses to graduate (unless you have taken more courses than necessary before deciding on a major). You can use those courses to build a functional expertise. This is the recommended alternative if you have not already used up your electives for graduation.

Note: You are not supposed to have more than 50% of your courses in business-economics related subjects. This is a rule we are required to follow for business school accreditation. You will need to count up your credits to see if this is a problem. To count, exclude the following, since even though they are business-economics courses, we don't count them as business for this accreditation rule: DSCI205; DIS305; Econ206; ECON207; ECON309; MATH157; GEOG 312. In almost all cases this should give you the flexibility to take the functional courses as graduation electives.

Many of my students do not really know what functional area they might be interested in. If you are in this position, you need to set priorities on the 'Core' courses. By eliminating several of the areas that you are pretty sure you are not interested in, you can set priorities for yourself in the sequencing of the core courses. Take core courses in areas that might interest you first.

Double Concentration

Students can now take a double concentration in IBUS plus any of the other business administration areas (Marketing; Operations; Finance; MIS). The catch is that you cannot double count any of the seven courses for the concentration. For the reasons stated above, some students choose to stay the extra two terms to complete this combination. If you choose this option, you must fill out a separate application form available in the Management Department in addition to applying for the second concentration.

Frequently Asked Questions

I often get some rather specific questions about the IBUS concentration. I have tried to assemble a list of the issues, and some of the current answers I have received about each of the issues.

As a foreign student, do I need to take another foreign language besides English and my own language?

Foreign students are judged to have completed the language requirement by speaking English and the student's native language. Foreign students are still encouraged to take courses in other languages or consider a foreign study experience, but it will not be a requirement for graduation with an IBUS concentration. American students who lived abroad or are bi-cultural and can demonstrate bilingual backgrounds are also exempt from taking additional foreign language courses.

Why is there no international business minor?

At this point, the business school does not provide for a minor in international business, either for CBE students in functional areas or for non-CBE students. We recognize that students from outside the business school would like to have some training in international business as part of the program, and we will try to accommodate demand subject to class spaces. Students can take IBUS 370, the introductory course in international business, as long as they have had ECON 206, the introductory course in microeconomics. Having taken that course, other international business courses are then available on a space available basis as long as other prerequisites are met.

How do I get access to a class when the computer does not let me in and I think I have a case for access?

All special permissions for IBUS courses will require the approval of the Department of Management. This applies whether the class is full or whether the student does not meet a requirement to take the class. This system requires careful advance planning on your part, since you have to submit an electronic request form to the department office VERY EARLY ON. The deadline is usually right after computer registration closes. The Department of Management takes this deadline very seriously, so please respect the rules. Check with the department web site as soon as you are closed out of a class, and submit the form they provide. Explain clearly why you need to have the course this term. I don't control access.