Crossing Borders: Blogging, Tweeting, and More from Abroad

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Memory of War in France
History 301: The Memory of War in Twentieth-Century France

WWI Trenches in the Somme

Omaha Beach, Normandy
History 301: Grading

- Participation: 50%
- Assignments: 25%
- Reflection Paper: 25%
Memory of War

WWI

WWII
French 301: Representations of Violence in 20th-Century French Culture

- Focus on World Wars I and II
- Examine how war and violence are understood and commemorated in:
  - Literature
  - Art
  - Music
  - Film
- Perceptions of the notions of:
  - War
  - Memory
  - Memorialization
French 301: Grading

- 40% Participation
- 40% Blogging
- 20% Reflection paper
French 301: WWI and WWII in Films

All images from imdb.com
Music

- French-language songs produced during World Wars I and II or depicting them

- Topics included:
  - Propaganda
  - The role of radio in wartime France
  - Jewish musicians in Vichy France
  - Individual singers (Edith Piaf, Maurice Chevalier, etc.)

- All material was accessed through the Internet.
Art/Media

- Propaganda posters
- Otto Dix prints
- Online videos from PBS and The Guggenheim
Apollinaire, “The Bleeding-Heart Dove and the Fountain”
Why Was Technology Important?

- Allowed us to have virtual classroom space before class started and during the trip.
- Provided ability to put course readings and links online. Students could access class content from wherever they were.
- Offered opportunity to share experiences with students’ families, with campus community, and beyond.
Preparing for the Trip

- Creation of the blog (now a permanent feature of S&T web presence)
- Twitter twaining!
- Dropbox
Miners Abroad Blog

✧ S&T blog (via WordPress) established at minersabroad.mst.edu
✧ To be used for future study abroad courses
✧ Professors maintain control over postings and comments
✧ Relatively easy for bloggers to include photographs and hyperlinks
✧ Permanent record/remembrance of students’ trip abroad
Tweeting from Abroad

Miners in France
@minersinfrance
Two Professors, 15 Students. Traveling, Teaching, Learning. Follow our adventures at minersabroad not atu minersinfrance minersabroad.mst.edu

Who to follow
- Missouri S&T COER @MST_COER
  Followed by Grad Studies at...
  Follow
- Miner Alumni @MinerAlumni
  Followed by MISSOUR S&T...
  Follow
- Scott Whitaker @scotthita
  Follow

Popular accounts - Find friends

Tweets
- Miners in France @minersinfrance - Sep 21
  Just 1 week until Celebration of Nations! Come out and learn about different cultures. Eat French crepes, too!
- Miners in France @minersinfrance - Aug 25
  Did you enjoy our posts? Do you want to Study Abroad? Go to the #studyabroad fair on Tuesday in the Havener Center from 11-2
- Miners in France @minersinfrance - Jun 13
  Travel luck was on our side! Train got us back to Paris and it was even on time! Students are headed home or on to further travels.
Dropbox
Assignments

✧ Blog
✧ Discussion boards
✧ Photo scavenger hunt in Paris
✧ Expert assignments
✧ Reflection papers
Blog

- Worth 40% of French 301 grade
- Each student responsible for four posts:
  - Reflection on course theme (representations of violence)
    - Academic
    - Assigned topics
  - Personal experiences (cultural aspects of trip)
  - Reflection post after return
Discussion Boards

- Blackboard
Photo Scavenger Hunt
Experts

One student as expert on place, event, memorial
6-8 minute presentation on site placing it in historical context
Provide background and answer questions
Reflection Papers

• 20-25% of final grade for courses
• FR 301: Reflection on literary and artistic representations of WWI and WWII.
• HIST 301: 8-10 page paper reflecting on history, memory, and war in 20\textsuperscript{th}-century France.
• Papers submitted through Blackboard one month after return from France.
Problems

- Access to internet connection
- Equipment issues
- Plagiarism
- Twitter accounts
Benefits

- Seeing the personal growth in students
- Sparks student interest in foreign cultures, history, and language
- Increase student awareness of cultural differences
- Improve students’ self-reliance and critical thinking skills
- The students bonded
The Students Speak: Courtney Cocks

“Overall this trip has been a really great experience. I feel like I have had the opportunity to experience many new things and meet new people. Airports and buses seem to be a wonderful place to talk to people and learn about where they are from. Even just hanging out with the different people from my own campus was awesome! I got to interact with people I may have never crossed paths with had it not been for this trip. I also feel like a pro at traveling now.”
The Students Speak:
Stephani Lind

“After returning home [. . .] I almost feel like a different person. This trip has changed my life and the way I view the world. I have seen how differently people live. [. . .] I learned so much from this trip and became so aware of the world around me. [. . .] I was amazed that there was so much history around me.”
The Students Speak: James (Drew) Alsop

“My outlook on the world has changed in such a short period of time. Before I went to France I had some bad opinions of French people. The reason I had these opinions is because of the accounts about the French that I have heard from others, which turned out not to be true. I met some very nice French people while in country and my opinions changed as soon as I met them. I even found out that their opinions changed about Americans as soon as they met me, too.”
The Students Speak

✦ “This study abroad program has changed my life forever. I have traveled before but never to this extent and not with this much learning.” ~ Robert Redmond

✦ “Taking a class at the university could never prepare someone for the things they might experience and feel when standing at the historical monuments in person.” ~ Stephenie Lynch
Conclusions

- Translate to other situations
  - Traditional classes
  - Service learning

- Educational Goals
  Experiential learning
  Use technology to enhance student learning
  Inspire creative thinkers & prepare for global future
  Increase meaningful interaction & promote non-traditional activities