

MOB 7526
MBA International Elective Course, Spring 2020
Doing Business in Brazil
Preliminary Syllabus

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Course Description

Brazil is a beautiful mess. Over the last 35 years, the country emerged from a military dictatorship, to a troubled hyper-inflation economy, to a stabilized, rapidly growing economy, to a steep decline. The one constant in all these years, is a generous, friendly people, continued corruption at all levels of government and a truly, spectacular tourist destination. We will experience all of this during our 8 days in country. This course examines entrepreneurial opportunity by visiting a number of companies across 3 cities of Brazil. We will start in São Paulo, where Brazil’s most important financial market and industrial concentration is located. We will make our way to Rio de Janeiro, the old capital of the country and its second largest city, with a stop in Paraty, a colonial town that was the port for shipping old to Portugal. We will also take time to enjoy a futbol (soccer) match (the national religion), take a boat ride along the shipping route, see the Christo (iconic statue in Rio) and enjoy the beach.

Course Structure

The course will be led by Zach Zacharakis, professor of entrepreneurship who has been active in a number of executive education programs in Latin America, as well as leading this course 14 previous times. All of the pre-departure sessions will be online. Our pre-departure session will cover basic logistics and can be joined via WebEx. During our pre-departure session (**February 27 from 5:30-6:30PM -- online**), we will provide information about what to expect and how to behave during our stay in Brazil examine key aspects of the country and answer any questions or concerns that students have.

The second part of the course will consist of eight days of a combination of company visits and panels by Brazilian entrepreneurs, government officials and other stakeholders in the business ecosystem. Below is a preliminary schedule for the March trip (subject to change as it is sometimes hard to get Brazilians to commit too far in advance).

Tentative Brazil Schedule March 2020

	Sat March 14	Sun March 15	Mon March 16	Tue March 17	Wed March 18	Thu March 19	Fri March 20	Sat March 21
morning	Arrive Sao Paulo Airport (Bus to Hotel)		Santander Consulting Experience	Brazil Government in Crisis: How does Brazil move beyond corruption?	Lifestyle Entrepreneurship	Travel to Rio	Esporte Interativo: New Venture to Acquired	Free Day with some Optional Activities Christo. Surfing. Beaching
lunch	Lunch at Horse Races (optional)	Barbacoa Brazilian BBQ (optional – program welcome meal)						
afternoon		Futbol Game (Optional)	Santander Consulting Experience	Embraer: Understanding Manufacturing in Brazil (tentative)	Entrepreneur-Ship	Glauco: Tourism Entrepreneurship	Miratus: Social Entrepreneurship	Bus to Rio Airport
evening	Local Bars (Optional)			Travel to Parati	free	free	Rio Scenarium Nightclub (Optional)	

Learning Objectives

There are many learning objectives for this course but they can be broadly grouped as either “conceptual” or “experiential.”

The course will have attained its objectives for concepts if you complete the course with the following:

- An enhanced ability to analyze comprehensively the integrated and dynamic components of the global environment of business.
- An understanding of the main political, economic, social, and technological drivers of the performance of a particular country’s business firms, both locally-owned and foreign-owned.
- An understanding of how geography, location and history affects firms’ proclivity towards innovation, entrepreneurship and strategy.
- A better understanding of international strategy.

Concerning the “experiential” objectives, upon completing the course you should:

- Demonstrate a general knowledge of the political and economic forces that impact businesses in Brazil within the Latin American context.

- Understand the impact of globalization and regional integration on the economic and business environment of Brazil.
- Understand some dimensions of the historical, cultural and geographic makeup of Brazil.

Course Expectations

To get the most out of a course you must actively participate in the learning process. In this course, learning will take place through a group assignment, active participation during online sessions and visits, keeping a journal during the trip and a final group paper three weeks after we return.

You will also have to keep a journal during the trip to record class notes and impressions from company visits and other activities. You will turn the journal in and it will be graded.

Don't expect to be able to work on any other courses or assignments during the time in Brazil. Activities are planned for the entire day. During evenings and free time we will usually take the opportunity to do some sightseeing and to sample Brazilian food. Because of concern about security and mobility in large, complex cities and in a language most of us don't speak, we will be very restrictive about allowing students to wander on their own during free time.

Upon return to Babson, you will prepare your final paper.

The grading of the course will, therefore, be based on the following:

Pre-departure Presentation	10%
In-country Participation and Professionalism:	20%
Journal	20%
Final Report	40%

Participation and Professionalism

Professionalism is especially important in a course of this nature. Keep in mind that you are always representing Babson and, to a lesser extent, your country of origin. Some key issues to take into consideration:

- Be prepared for your company visits. Ask probing questions, act enthusiastic.
- Dress in business-casual attire for company visits (for men, nice slacks and a button shirt; women casual business attire, but keep in mind that some visits to factories will require close-toed shoes up to the ankle).
- Brazil is a country of hedonistic nightlife. Going out at night, however, can be dangerous on your own and impact your daytime preparedness, so it's best to leave outings to group-wide activities.
- No late arrivals. No joining in the middle of the course and no leaving early unless you have prior written approval from the instructor (Prof. Zach).

Journal

I will provide you with journal prompts to take notes and track your thoughts during our various Brazil visits. The journal will pose some questions for you to consider. Think about these questions and implications for entrepreneurship. Also, what other insights do you have? Journal entries that go beyond the original prompt will be rewarded. I'll review your journals but the purpose is for you to keep it and refer to it for years to come. While you can use this journal to record your notes, please also put your insights at the end of each section. Thoughtful analysis leads to higher grades. Your insights are the part that I'll evaluate for your journal grade.

Pre-departure Research Assignment

In the past, we have been fortunate to have a consulting hack-a-thon with Santander Brazil. We hope to do something similar this year. Groups of 3 or 4 Babson MBAs will be proposing solutions to challenges faced by a business unit (BU) within Santander Brazil. We will be introduced to those business units prior to our in-country engagement (likely January 20). In preparation, each group will do the following (think of this as a capstone project):

1. Competitive analysis of the BU's ecosystem. I've attached a workbook that I use in my new venture creation class, but you can also use some other frameworks you've learned in other classes, like PEST, SWOT and Porter's 5 Forces. Note, you'll want to include a macro evaluation of the Brazilian context. The country has encountered tremendous disruption in the last few years. Disruption creates not only threats, but opportunities. What are the major factors that might impact your BU?
2. Benchmarking to a "best practices company" here within the U.S. You may use any framework you think works best. I've found the business model canvas is often a good platform (see attached), but feel free to use what you think works best.
3. Preliminary interview with your Santander contact. This should occur by February 15 and be based on your initial analysis above. Please schedule a skype or f2f appointment with me to go over your semi-structured interview guide.
4. By Monday March 5th, please post a 10 minute, 10 slides maximum Breeze presentation of your initial analysis. The rest of the class will view your presentation and post some questions and suggestions for the team. While each team will be evaluating a different BU, you'll likely gain valuable insight from each other's analysis that will help you once the March 16th engagement occurs.
5. March 16 is the in-country engagement at Santander.
6. By April 12, each team will prepare a final report to be delivered to Santander. The report will offer solutions to the various challenges faced by the BU. It likely will include much of the pre-work that you created.

Final Report

As noted above, this likely will be a debrief of the consulting project.