

FSE Graduate Experience Course Syllabus

Class information:

Session dates (Duration): Every Wednesday, 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm. All classes will be online.

Instructor information:

Course Instructor: Halie Cousineau, Ya Hu

Office location: Student Services Building, International Students and Scholars Office

E-mail: hjcousin@asu.edu, Ya.Hu.1@asu.edu

Phone number: N/A

Office hours:

Time: By appointment only

Location: Student Services Building, International Students and Scholars Office

Course Description:

This course is designed to help incoming international graduate students in the Fulton Schools of Engineering successfully transition to the U.S. academic environment at ASU. The course provides essential guidance on navigating the U.S. educational system and learning about the ASU classroom experience, understanding cultural differences, and accessing ASU's academic and research resources. It aims to support students' academic, professional, and personal growth by equipping them with tools for success in the classroom and beyond. Participants will also have the opportunity to engage with the ASU community, connect with peers, and explore career advancement opportunities.

Successful Students

- Turn in assignments on time
- Attend faculty open/office hours
- Refer to the academic calendar
- Keep all notes, assignments, and work produced for this course
- Read and understand this syllabus
- Regularly check ASU email and Canvas and respond as needed
- Read Announcements

Course Learning outcomes

Through their participation in this course, students will:

- Apply critical thinking skills to various personal, academic, and professional problems;
- Build leadership skills to benefit academic journey at ASU and beyond;
- Articulate challenges faced with cultural and academic adjustment to ASU and the U.S.;
- Develop skills identified by [NACE](#) as being important for career readiness;
- Demonstrate the curiosity to become a lifelong learner for personal, academic and professional growth.

Course Structure

The course employs dynamic online activities, collaborative learning and discussions, and homework assignments.

Upon completion, students will receive a Certificate of Cultural Adjustment and students with full completion will be awarded an all-expenses-paid trip to an exciting destination in Arizona!

Materials

- A planner or personal calendar
- Required readings are provided on Canvas
- Access to GSuite Applications using your ASU login/account
- Downloaded version of Microsoft PowerPoint (free)
- An activated ASU email account
- Web browser (Chrome preferred)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (free)
- Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable)

Course content delivery

This is an online course but also involves some in-person elements. Course assignments may include attending events, engaging in hands-on activities, and building meaningful connections.

Communication

To build an environment that is comfortable for all, it is crucial that everyone in our class:

- Display respect for all members of the class – including the instructor and students
- Pay attention to and participate in all interactive student partner/instructor sessions and activities; and
- Observe the rules of appropriate in-class and online behavior. The instructor defines this term and includes keeping course discussions and communication with other students (or the instructor) focused on the assigned topics.
- Maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. In addition, they must avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude course members. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the things that can dramatically impact the course

environment. Your final grade may be reduced each time you engage in the types of negative behaviors indicated above

Your ASU e-mail account is an official means of communication among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon e-mail in a timely fashion. Students are responsible for missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned e-mail regularly. All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU e-mail account or posted as an announcement on Canvas. Please make sure to check your ASU e-mail and Canvas regularly and keep an eye out for important announcements and updates related to the course.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Students' experience in this course is highly dependent on attending class sessions virtually or in-person.

Just like at your job, you will want to notify instructors before the class meets if you will be absent, arriving late, or leaving early. **Missing any classes/assignments will result in not receiving your certificate and not being able to join the complimentary local trip.**

To explain an absence if you miss class, you must:

- E-mail me within 24 hours and be honest.
- Provide your reason and include an examination/assessment of your priorities. Any reason will be accepted unless an in-class project, presentation, or other unique situation exists.

If absent or late, talk with your classmates and obtain any missed information, assignments, and handouts. If additional help is needed, you are encouraged to attend my office hours and chat.

If you have a significant life issue such as an extended illness, family issue, injury, etc., you are encouraged to contact Student Advocacy in the Dean of Students Office:
DeanofStudents@asu.edu.

If you stop coming to class, you will be removed from the class.

Students who need to be absent from class due to the observance of a religious holiday (ACD 304- 04) or to participate in university-sanctioned activities (ACD 304-02) should work with their faculty member as far in advance of the holiday/obligation as possible. Students should notify faculty at the beginning of the semester about the need to be absent from class due to religious observances. This absence may apply toward a student's two allowable absences.

Students should plan ahead, make necessary schedule changes, and communicate with faculty per policy.

Students who participate in line-of-duty activities (ACD 304-11) shall be provided make-up assignments, examinations, or other graded coursework missed because of required work performed in the line-of-duty, without penalty.

Students with flex attendance accommodations from the Disability Resource Center should discuss their options with their faculty members. Flex attendance does not waive students from the attendance policy for this course.

Work Submission

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be submitted electronically in the specified format via Canvas. E-mail submissions will not be accepted. In the event of a Canvas failure, you may e-mail your work to "stop the clock," but you must submit it via Canvas as soon as possible. Corrupt files and blank files will not count as a submission. Please open files once submitted to ensure they are correct and working. Assignment due dates follow Arizona Standard Time. Note: Arizona does not observe daylight saving time.

Late or Missed Assignments

Turn in all assignments by the due date in Canvas. Plan for last-minute emergencies, including computer issues. A student can receive a 1-time exception for a single assignment to turn it in up to 48 hours late for full credit. To earn credit for your late assignment, you must submit it within 48 hours of the due date/time AND message me with the name of the assignment for which you are using your late pass.

Discussion

We will be discussing sensitive and controversial issues. Our class discussions should be lively and challenging. I want everyone to feel safe in the discussion, even when we disagree; that means we conduct the discussion civilly and respectfully. As a group, we will not tolerate perceived attacks or disrespect. While I support free speech, you are not immune from the consequences of speech. Disrespect towards anyone in the classroom will result in a loss of points, dismissal from the classroom with an absence recorded, and/or a possible withdrawal from the course.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grade Scale

There will be a certificate of completion and a complimentary Arizona local trip for students who attended all classes, completed all assignments, and completed the final reflection/survey.

Syllabus Disclaimer

Read and understand this entire syllabus. Students are responsible for knowing the information in this syllabus whether they have read it or not. A course syllabus is an educational contract between the instructor and students. I will make every effort to avoid changing the course schedule. Still, the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified promptly of any syllabus changes via e-mail or in Canvas.

University Policies

Please review the relevant university policies and resources for this course.

Refer to Canvas for specific instructions regarding all course assignments.

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1: Immigration and Cultural Adjustment

Adjusting to a new culture can be both exciting and challenging. This module is designed to help ease your transition and make your experience as a graduate student in the U.S. smoother and more enjoyable. You will learn about navigating cultural differences, adjusting to academic expectations, managing daily life and finances, and getting involved in student clubs and organizations. Please keep in mind that all guidance provided is general in nature—the United States is a large and diverse country, and cultural norms can vary significantly by region, community, or individual background. Think of this module as a helpful starting point to support your journey as you adapt to graduate life at ASU.

Class details:

- **Week 1 (Aug. 27th) : Cultural Adjustment & Social Involvement**
 - Understand immigration regulations & policies
 - Meet Global Peer Mentors (GPMs) and representatives from various clubs and organizations at ASU, and learn how to connect with them, get involved on campus, and adjust to life in the U.S.- knowing community/ social resources
- **Week 2 (Sept. 3) : Adjusting to Academics, Life, and Finances**
 - Hear from international faculty, and senior students as they share insights on academic expectations, navigating daily life in the U.S.
 - Getting basic knowledge of creating bank account, applying for credit card, managing finance, investment, and avoiding scams

Unit 2: Academics

This unit is designed to support your transition into the U.S. academic system and set you up for success at ASU. You'll learn how to access academic advising, explore essential tools like MyASU and iPos, Canvas, and discover key academic and research resources including programs like MORE and TA/ RA/ GSA roles. We'll also cover the concept of academic integrity, including what it means in the U.S. academic context and the consequences of violating it. The aim of this module is to help you make the most of your academic experience at ASU.

Class details:

- **Week 3 (Sept. 10) : Academic Advising at ASU**

- Understand Academic Advisors roles and how they can help
- iPOS
- Maintain good academic standing status

Hear from an Academic Advisor and learn about how academic advising works at ASU and how to plan your coursework, track degree progress, and get support throughout your graduate journey.

- **Week 4 (Sept. 17): College Resources**

- Hear from representatives of the Graduate College as they introduce key resources available to graduate students, including the Graduate Student Handbook, funding and fellowship opportunities, weekly events, and travel grants.
- Learn about SURF and MORE programs that grad students can join to get stipend and research experience with faculty.
- Learn about scholarships/fellowships that are available for grad students.

- **Week 5: (Sept. 24) : Academic Integrity and Responsible use of AI**

- Hear from faculty about how to use AI tools ethically and effectively in your coursework while maintaining academic integrity.
- Academic Integrity Officer will be sharing violations cases, investigation process and the impact on your academic records.

Unit 3: Getting Involved and Becoming a Leader/Leadership & Entrepreneurship

This unit encourages you to explore leadership, innovation, and personal development opportunities both within and beyond the classroom. Hear from alumni in leadership roles and learn about the skills that helped them succeed. You'll also be introduced to entrepreneurial thinking and the resources ASU offers to support students interested in creating impact through innovation. Whether you're looking to lead a student organization, launch a startup, or simply build confidence in your abilities, this unit will provide valuable insights and inspiration to help you take the next step.

Class details:

- **Week 6: (Oct. 1) : No class**
Attend “Success at ASU” events to explore resources to help you thrive at ASU.
- **Week 7- (Oct. 8) : Pathways to Leadership**
 - Hear from an experienced alum currently in a leadership role and alum who was a club leader at ASU as they share their journey, key skills that contributed to their success, and how you can grow as a leader during your time at ASU.
 - Learn resources, programs, and certificates that can help you build your leadership skills.
- **Week 8 (Oct. 15) : No class**
Good luck with your midterms!
- **Week 9 (Oct. 22) : Entrepreneurship and Innovation at ASU**
 - Join faculty from Thunderbird School of Global Management or the Technological Entrepreneurship and Management for a session on entrepreneurial thinking and innovation.
 - Current students who have their own business will be sharing their journey of starting a business here in the U.S.
 - Learn about entrepreneurship/innovation resources for college students.
 - Learn about immigration regulations for student entrepreneurs.

Unit 4: Career

This unit is designed to help you explore career pathways, understand job search strategies, and learn how to make the most of ASU's career development resources. You'll connect with international alumni who have successfully navigated their career journeys and gain insights into internships, full-time opportunities, and career services. You'll also learn the key details about CPT and OPT, including eligibility, timelines, and best practices for planning your career as an international student.

Class details:

- **Week 10 (Oct. 29) : Career Exploration Night with Alumni**
Engage with international alumni working in various industries. Hear about their career paths, lessons learned, and tips for leveraging your time at ASU to prepare for job and internship opportunities.
- **Week 11 (Nov. 5) : CPT and OPT: Work Authorization for International Students**
Learn about Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT) from immigration advisors at ISSC. Understand application procedures, timelines, and how to plan for internships and post-graduation work in the U.S.

Unit 5: Personal Health

As an international engineering student, your academic journey is exciting and challenging. While striving for academic success, it is equally important to prioritize your mental and physical well-being. This module is designed to help you recognize the importance of self-care and provide strategies for maintaining a healthy balance between your academic and personal life. You'll explore strategies for managing stress, learn about counseling and health services, and discover resources like fitness programs, health insurance, and campus safety tools.

- **Week 12 (Nov. 12): Managing Stress and Mental Health During Finals**

Learn how to manage your mental health during finals week and other high-stress periods. This session will cover coping strategies, campus mental health resources, and wellness services available through ASU Counseling Services and the Sun Devil Fitness and Wellness Center (SDFC).

- **Week 13 (Nov. 19) De-Stress with Therapy Dogs (Optional)**

Take a break and unwind with therapy dogs, food, and friends. This optional session is a chance to relax, recharge, and celebrate the end of the semester.

Additional Event

End-of-Class Celebration – Nov 22, 2025

Join us for a fun and relaxing end-of-class celebration on Saturday, November 22 to celebrate the end of the semester. This is a great opportunity to connect with classmates, reflect on your journey, and enjoy some well-deserved time off. More details will be shared in class.

End of class celebration will be announced on September 1, 2025. Past celebrations include a trip to Jerome and Sedona.