Course Description

Blogging is become ever more popular as both a hobby and as a business venture. With new blogs being created every day, knowledge about how to stand out, how to initiate partnerships and collaborations, and how to use social media to your advantage are essential to being a blogger. Anyone can create a blog, but not everyone reaches the success that a blog has the potential to bring. During this course, students will learn the basics of travel and lifestyle blogging and gain experience writing for a blog audience.

This Supervised Independent Study (SIS) course will guide students through the basic principles of travel and lifestyle blogging, while providing the opportunity for an independent exploration of the subject.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Understand the fundamentals of travel and lifestyle blogging
2. Learn how to work with brands and network as a blogger
3. Utilize social media platforms for bloggers
4. Understand how to develop their own brand as travel bloggers
5. Implement various techniques for creating a blog community
6. Become familiar with how to optimize their blog
7. Identify resources and trends for travel and lifestyle blogging

Course Requirements

This course requires independent research, organization, and academic discipline. Students are expected to complete the required and additional readings in pace with their assignments and the course outline. Students will meet with their SIS Supervising Professor(s) regularly throughout the course for consultation and assistance. There will be an oral presentation, a midterm exam, a final exam, and five essay assignments.

Students are also required to participate in a minimum of three Forum-Nexus professional visits and three cultural visits. Students may also pursue individual visits to companies and organizations as part of their independent study.
Essay #1 (minimum length: 1,500 words)

• What is lifestyle blogging?
• How do you find your style and stand out amongst the rest?
• If you were to create a travel blog, what would it be called? What platform would you use? How would you plan for it before it launched, and after?
• Write a compelling bio for yourself as a travel and lifestyle blogger

Essay #2 (minimum length: 500 words)

• Write a blog article about an experience in Amsterdam. Provide insider tips and recommendations. Highlight top attractions.
• Write your article as if it were to appear on a travel or lifestyle website.

Essay #3 (minimum length: 500 words)

• Write a sponsored blog article about an experience in Paris, with emphasis on a specific place, organization, or thing that was “sponsored.” (You do not actually have to obtain a sponsorship)
• Write your article as if it were to appear on your personal blog as a sponsored article.

Essay #4 (minimum length: 1,000 words)

• Write a blog article about an experience in Italy. Provide detail and be descriptive.
• Write your article as if it were to appear on your personal blog.
• Create social media posts for Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, and Twitter that you would post to promote your article.

Essay #5 (minimum length: 500 words)

• Explain current trends in travel and lifestyle blogging
• How can you create a blog community and engage with them?
• How can you optimize a blog post with SEO?
• Highlight 1-2 of your favorite travel and lifestyle bloggers and explain why they are your favorite

Presentation

Deliver a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation summarizing the main findings of your independent study. Required components include:
• Summary of your goals and objectives
• Overview of travel and lifestyle blogging
• Recap of your blog articles
• Recap of your social media posts to support your blog
• Reflection on what you’ve learned through the SIS course

Required Reading

Lifestyle Blogging Basics: A How-To for Investing in Yourself, Working with Brands, and Cultivating a Community Around Your Blog
by Laura Lynn
2017

Additional Readings

Identify 2-5 additional readings (online or printed text) to complement your independent study of travel and lifestyle blogging.
Components of Final Grade

Midterm exam  20%
Final exam    20%
Essay #1      10%
Essay #2      10%
Essay #3      10%
Essay #4      10%
Essay #5      10%
Presentation  10%

Grading Scale

93-100 %   A
90-92.9 %   A-
87-89.9 %   B+
83-86.9 %   B
80-82.9 %   B-
77-79.9 %   C+
73-76.9 %   C
70-72.9 %   C-
67-69.9 %   D+
63-66.9 %   D
60-62.9 %   D-
Below 60 %  F

Course Outline

Chapter 2: Getting Started

• Decide on Your Content Buckets
• Come up with Your Blog’s Name
• Choose a Blogging Platform
• Purchase a Domain for Your Blog
• Create an Email Account
• Create a Content Calendar

Chapter 3: Investing in Yourself

• Blog Design
• High Quality Photos
• Continuing Education
• Email Marketing Service

Chapter 4: Working with Brands

• Partnerships and Collaborations
• Nurturing Relationships
• Becoming an Affiliate
• Networking as a Blogger
• Creating a Media Kit for Your Blog
• Creating a Pricing Kit for Your Blog

Chapter 5: Social Media for Bloggers

• All About Hashtags
• Instagram
Chapter 6: Creating and Cultivating a Blog Community

- Connecting on Social Media
- Rule of Reciprocity
- Get to Know Each Other in Real Life

Chapter 7: Driving Traffic to Your Blog

- Optimize Each Post
- Use Social media
- Be Consistent
- Engage with Other Bloggers
- Guest Blogging

Schedule of Classes and Visits

The detailed schedule of classes, professional visits, and suggested cultural visits for each session is available online at www.forum-nexus.com/schedules.

Academic Integrity

Ramon Llull University, Franklin University Switzerland, and the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart place a high value on the integrity, good conduct, and academic honesty of all students. Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity at all times. Any instance of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a grade of F for the course.
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
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<tr>
<td>5/15 – 6/30</td>
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<td>Pre-Program Preparation</td>
<td>2 - 3</td>
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<td>Become familiar with the syllabus, identify additional readings, begin readings and essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/2</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Essay #1 Due</td>
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<td>7/2 -7/3</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Meeting with SIS Supervising Professor(s)</td>
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<td>Paris</td>
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<td>Complete Readings</td>
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<td>7/11</td>
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<td>Essay #3 Due</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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