INTERNATIONAL COURSE MODULE PROGRAM

All student participants must be current Arts & Science (St. George) undergraduate students in good standing and be enrolled in an academic program and course listed at the time the proposed activity takes place. Note: In an effort to ensure that as many students as possible can participate in Faculty-funded international opportunities, priority for participation in these opportunities will be given to students who have not previously received funding from Arts and Science for an international experience.

PART I – Applicant + course information

Name of applicant: Matthew Light
Department/Unit: Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies (CRIMSL)
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Course title(s) and number(s) (only students from courses listed may participate): CRI 427HS (Organized Crime and Corruption)
Total number of students enrolled: enrollment capped at 25
Maximum number of students proposed to participate in ICM: 10
Location of proposed ICM: Mexico City, Mexico
Proposed travel dates: February break, 2019

PART II – International course module details

1) Brief description of the module

We request three-year funding to repeat the successful CRIMSL ICM conducted in February 2017. The 2019-21 ICM will be broadly similar to the 2017 trip, focusing on organized crime and corruption in Mexico. However, we will make the ICM more participatory and engaging by expanding students' interactions with their Mexican peers.

I developed CRI 427 as the first CRIMSL undergraduate class on organized crime and corruption, covering a range of theoretical problems, including how organized crime groups develop; how they interact with state institutions; and how to combat them while respecting the rule of law and civil rights. Contemporary Mexico illustrates all these questions. In recent years, the Mexican government has been fighting a “criminal insurgency” of drug-trafficking “cartels” that have overrun some parts of the country and corrupted public officials. In response, the Mexican armed forces have conducted a highly militarized anti-mafia campaign aided by the United States. This “narco-insurgency” is the most extreme mafia-related conflict in the world today.

To explore these issues, in 2017, I led ten students from CRI 427 on the first CRIMSL ICM to Mexico, in which, students studied the Mexican narco-insurgency, and possible solutions to it, in the safe environment of Mexico City. The ICM was developed with Professor Monica Serrano of the Colegio de Mexico (“Colmex”), one of the leading experts on Mexico’s security problems; and assisted by a doctoral
student, Valentin Pereda, originally from Mexico City. The ICM featured unique activities, including presentations by Professor Serrano and other leading scholars, and meetings with Mexican officials and civil society activists, and Canadian diplomats. We also went on an orientation walk around downtown Mexico City and visited the Anthropological Museum and Teotihuacan pyramids, major pre-Colombian monuments.

In addition, a group of Professor Serrano’s Colmex students (selected for English proficiency) attended several ICM activities. Meeting their Mexican peers turned out to be the highlight of the trip for our students, and the Toronto and Colmex students developed a friendly relationship, which has continued since the ICM. Professor Serrano and I were delighted by this outcome. She and I will continue our collaboration in the 2019-21 ICM, now joined by her Canadian colleague, Professor Jean Francois Prud’homme, head of the Department of International Studies at Colmex. We all agree that the student-to-student component should be strengthened in future ICMs. As a corollary, the lecture component will be reduced. This change is desirable in itself, as we felt there was too much passive listening in the 2017 ICM. In the 2019-21 ICMs, two days formerly allocated to lectures will be dedicated to cooperative small-group projects, in which a few Mexican and Canadian students will meet on their own to discuss issues of corruption and informality in Mexican and Canadian society, and will then prepare a small report for the group. The projects will involve observations around Mexico City, allowing the Toronto students to experience the metropolis beyond tourist sights and offices. This change will make the ICM more experiential. (I address safety issues below.) To enhance the cultural dimension of the ICM, and ensure the group maintains cohesion during the break-out days, I will add a concert or other cultural event on Day 5 or 6.

2) What are the learning objectives of this module?
- Students will gain a holistic perspective on Mexico’s cartel violence, understanding it not just as a security problem, but also a political, economic, and social one.
- By examining the relations between the state and mafias, students will acquire a more developed understanding of formal and informal authority in modern societies.
- Students will learn what factors influence the success or failure of official anti-mafia policies, and in particular the difficulties of conducting anti-mafia policy in a human rights-respecting manner.
- Through examination of the military campaign against the cartels, students will also consider the role of international partners (in this case the US and Canada) in combatting crime in developing societies, an issue that is receiving increasing attention among academic criminologists.
- Through the cultural activities (excursions to the museum and pyramids and the orientation walk, and perhaps also a concert) the ICM also introduces students to Mexico’s rich Spanish and aboriginal cultural inheritance.
- The mini-projects with Mexican students will enable Toronto students to learn about the interests and concerns of their Mexican counterparts at first hand, and will thus add a deeper and more personal component to the ICM.

3) If participation by less than the total number of students in the course is proposed:

a) What procedures and criteria will be used to select ICM participants?
In September, I will solicit applications from the 25 students expected in the course. Applicants will complete a survey explaining their interest in the ICM, previous ICM or other foreign travel experiences (with preference for students who have not had such opportunities in the past), and their GPA (supported by a transcript). I will then select the final group in consultation with the Toronto/Mexico student coordinator based on these criteria, with priority for fourth-year students and consideration to gender balance among participants. This procedure worked well in 2017, and we do not plan major changes.

b) Describe how non-ICM participants will contribute to the ICM.
The course will include a unit on “mafia insurgencies,” with readings on the Mexican case, to be completed before the ICM. Non-ICM students will complete the required readings and attend the related lecture. They will contribute to the ICM through the class discussion, which will help focus participants’ ideas and questions as they prepare for their trip to Mexico.

4) How does the ICM enhance students’ (both ICM participants and non-participants) classroom learning for the course in which it is embedded?
ICM participants explore the themes of the course in depth, while engaging with the political and social problems of a neighbouring society that is closely connected to Canada. In addition, the ICM will allow students to grasp more fully the social and political embeddedness of crime, and its relation to systemic problems of economic and political development, in keeping with the multidisciplinary social science nature of our undergraduate criminology program. Non-ICM participants will hear a class presentation from the ICM group (see Question 5 below), which will add to their understanding of the Mexico-related readings that they have also completed. We also hope to record at least some ICM events and make them available to non-ICM students. In addition, non-ICM students can also participate in the dissemination activities outlined below in Question 6.

5) How will the ICM be incorporated into the course evaluation and marking scheme? Please describe the assignments and marking scheme for the ICM.
Students in CRI 427 write two substantial (eight- to ten-page) analytical papers based on course readings. ICM and non-ICM students will receive the same set of broad topics for the first such assignment. For the second paper, ICM participants will receive a separate set of topics, addressing Mexico’s narco-insurgency. ICM students’ papers will draw on both the course readings and their experiences during the ICM. Participants will also attend all ICM events and take careful notes, which they will submit for verification of participation. I will recruit volunteers to take photographs for the dissemination materials discussed in Question 6 below. As noted in Question 2 above, ICM students and Mexican peers will present a report on their research projects to the whole ICM group on the last or next-to-last day of the ICM. Returned ICM students will also give a presentation to the class as a whole following their return from Mexico City, and this presentation will be factored into their course participation marks; see questions 4 and 6. As in 2017, we will assign a separate course number to the ICM group, facilitating communication with ICM participants.

6) How will participants share their experience with the wider Arts & Science community?
Based on notes and photographs from Mexico City, returned ICM participants will write an article on the ICM for the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies website and newsletter, and the Woodsworth College Program Office website. The Program Office will also send this article to all undergraduate criminology students and post it to the criminology program’s Facebook page, as well as to the “U of T news for students” and “U of T news” websites. ICM students will also present a poster at the FAS research forum. In addition, the Program Office will organize a lunch-hour “Let’s talk” session in which returned ICM participants share their experiences with any interested students, to inform them about the ICM program. I may ask undergraduate criminology students association CRIMSA and FAS staff to help organize this event. Our 2017 ICM was also covered on the U of T website.

7) What are the preliminary plans for meeting UofT Safety Abroad guidelines?
In addition to the university’s required security seminar, I will also conduct specialized preparation for safety issues in this ICM based on my experiences with security issues in the city. Please note that I have recently (2014 and 2017) been to Mexico City myself, and found it relatively safe for international visitors. There has been almost no organized crime-related violence in the city, and street crime in areas frequented by foreign visitors is at acceptable levels. (Global Affairs Canada considers Mexico City comparable in safety to many other sites in developing countries also visited by ICM groups.) In addition, I have designed the ICM itself with security in mind. Thus, my plan calls for group rather than individual activities; see itinerary below. Students will travel to and from these activities together.
Moreover, both the student coordinator and I will also stay in the same hotel as the ICM group. We will also attend all group activities, as well as the excursions to the Anthropological Museum, the pyramids, and the concert. I have an intermediate proficiency in Spanish, and so can communicate on behalf of the students in emergencies. I will also give students my cell phone number and ask for their numbers as well.

We experienced no safety issues in the 2017 ICM, and I see no reason for concern in 2019-21 ICMs. Although, as noted above, our students will be breaking up into small groups with Mexican students for the mini-projects on Days 5 and 6, Mexican students will accompany them, and they will be in telephone contact with me. In consultation with Professors Serrano and Prud’homme, I will approve all small-group projects in advance for safety.

8) If you are applying for additional funding for planning and logistics, describe how these funds would be used.
I request honoraria for two coordinators, Monica Serrano ($2000) and one student coordinator ($1000, plus airfare, hotel, and meals).
• In Mexico, before the ICM, Professor Serrano will organize the substantive events with Mexican government agencies and NGOs (and of course her own lecture). It is only through Professor Serrano’s high-level contacts that we can arrange these unique meetings—thus creating a far more enriching ICM. She will also attend these substantive events.
• In Toronto, I will recruit a Spanish-speaking Ph.D. student, preferably with experience in Mexico City, to assist with trip planning and logistics. She or he will also book rooms in an appropriate mid-range hotel. In Mexico City, as noted, she or he will stay in the hotel with the students; will meet us at the airport when we arrive and accompany us to the airport when we depart; will accompany us on all activities; will organize local transit; will provide simultaneous Spanish-English interpretation; and will be our first contact for any security or medical problems that may come up.

Given the vital role these collaborators play in the ICM, and their significant time commitment, the requested honoraria are reasonable. Professor Serrano is a senior scholar, and her honorarium does not really compensate her fully for her time. (I have asked for $2000 for this purpose, $500 more than in 2017.) Although the second coordinator is a student, the requested honorarium reflects this person’s extensive responsibilities and time commitment before and during the ICM.

9) If funding is requested for multiple years, how will the success of the module be measured?
After the 2019 ICM is completed, we will work with FAS to develop a survey of participants to obtain feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the module. We will also follow up with Professors Serrano and Prud’homme, their students, and the Mexican speakers for their assessment. In CRIMSL’s 2018 external review, students strongly requested more experiential learning, and the 2017 ICM was oversubscribed. Therefore, we believe there is strong demand for this program. Over the 2019-21 ICM funding period, we also wish to explore whether we could develop a related international summer course with the summer abroad program at Woodsworth College to complement our existing courses in the UK and Italy.

PART III – Itinerary + budget

ITINERARY

*For clarity, itinerary shows days rather than dates, which vary with year. As in 2017, each 2019-21 ICM will begin the Saturday before February Reading Week, and will end the Sunday after Reading Week.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1 (Saturday)</strong></td>
<td>Toronto, Mexico City (MC)</td>
<td>Flight to MC, check in to hotel</td>
<td>Non-stop flight from Toronto to Mexico City to avoid US immigration</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 2 (Sunday)</strong></td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Welcome and introductory lecture by Professor Serrano, meeting with Mexican students; orientation walk</td>
<td>First day’s activities will be light so participants can acclimate to MC’s elevation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Days 3 and 4 (Monday-Tuesday)</strong></td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Substantive full-group activities (meetings with Mexican and Canadian officials, NGOs); see Question 1 for details</td>
<td>We plan one to two substantive activities per day; distances and traffic add to travel time in MC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Days 5 and 6 (Wednesday-Thursday)</strong></td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Small-group research projects with Mexican and Canadian students; see Question 1 for details. Also, concert one evening.</td>
<td>Three to four small groups with two to three Canadian students and a few Mexican students in each group.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Days 7 and 8 (Friday and Saturday)</strong></td>
<td>MC and environs</td>
<td>Cultural activities (pyramids and Anthropological Museum; see Question 1 for details); student presentations of small-group projects</td>
<td>One cultural activity per day; wrap-up with Mexican students to discuss small-group research projects will take up one half-day (probably combined with Anthropological Museum).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 9 (Sunday)</strong></td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Flight to Toronto</td>
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