

CROSS-CULTURAL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE IN A JOHNSTON EDUCATION?

Depth, breadth, and cross-cultural experience are the three pillars of a Johnston integrative education. Students craft unique Graduation Contracts to address each of these as part of an integrative, intentional education. The Contract Committee provides students with advice on how to improve the depth, breadth, and cross-cultural aspects of the Graduation Contract while insuring the integrity of each. Just as they do with depth and breadth, students, advisors, and committees should work together to craft an intentional approach to a cross-cultural experience.

The cross-cultural component of a Johnston education highlights for students, in an experiential fashion, the ways in which our knowledge is shaped by our cultural viewpoints. By extension, cross-cultural experiences enable students to be aware of and challenge their cultural frameworks. Ideally, *through a substantial commitment to an unfamiliar living and traveling situation*, the cross-cultural experience will provide students with radically different perspectives than those experienced at Johnston and will enable them to question and expand their perspectives. In turn, students bring these new perspectives back to the Johnston community and challenge the communities' experiences and frameworks.

Like the breadth and depth components of a Johnston emphasis, the cross-cultural component is determined by the student's individual educational objectives. Many students come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, but the cross-cultural should be thought of as part of a student's education, not just as a life experience. As is the case with breadth and depth, the cross-cultural experience should be chosen with intention, should be a piece of a larger integrative emphasis, and should be subject to negotiation and consensus. Below are examples of different approaches to the cross-cultural aspect of a Johnston education. In addition to working with advisors and Graduation Contract committees, students should think through their options for cross-cultural education in the Johnston First Year Seminar, community workshops, events, and coursework.

CONTRACTING AN INTENTIONAL CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

As you write your contract and consult with your advisor, consider the following:

- How does culture play a role in your contract?
- What does cultural crossing mean for your education? How are you defining culture and cross in terms of the Contract?
- What is the relationship of your cross-cultural to the Contract's breadth and depth?
- What boundaries will your cross-cultural ask you to cross: geographic, intellectual, spiritual, artistic, linguistic, etc?
- The cross-cultural experience *should be a substantial commitment to an unfamiliar living and traveling situation*. In other words, a University of Redlands classroom is not an unfamiliar experience. Likewise, a couple of hours volunteering locally is not a substantial commitment. In what ways, then, will this cross-cultural experience put you in unfamiliar situations or put you at the periphery rather than the center of a culture *as part of your education's learning goals*? In what ways will your cross-cultural experience be a substantial commitment?
- In what ways will the cross-cultural experience test your assumptions about how your education is meaningful?
- If an immersive experience is your goal, how do you plan to achieve it? What is it about your cross-cultural experience that will be immersive?
- What kind of community or communities might you join through your cross-cultural experience?
- How prescribed/structured do you want your experience to be? What role do you want randomness to play?

THE COMMITTEE'S AND ADVISOR'S ROLE IN CRAFTING A CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

- Provide advice on best cross-cultural for the student's unique contract. It is not the committee's role to deny or approve a cross-cultural experience but to advise and negotiate.
- Committees should help students shape their cross-cultural experience as a part of their overall contract.
- Each committee and contract is unique, so what works for one might not work for another. Students should be aware that the process of negotiation and advising is

considered individually, and may lead to different conversations for different students.

RESOURCES AND AFFORDABILITY

- Committees and advisors should be sensitive to students' limitations with regard to the cross-cultural plan. That being said, students should also make full use of the available options when crafting the cross-cultural experience that best suits their educational plan.
- If a student is concerned about resources and the affordability of her or his cross-cultural experience, please meet with the Financial Aid Office and/or Sara Falkenstein in the Study Abroad Office to discuss the financial aid implications and likely costs of specific plans.
- Keep in mind that Johnston does not require that the cross-cultural experience be completed through a formalized program. Some students have taken a Leave of Absence to complete their cross-cultural experience; others, for example, have completed it during the summer months. Note: if the student does not receive academic credit for the experience itself, the advisor/committee might ask the student to complete a reflective project to integrate the cross-cultural experience into an educational context.
- Some students have found opportunities to work abroad in order to defray the costs of an international cross-cultural experience.
- The Integrated Semester in Oaxaca, led by Professor Pat Wasielewski, is an affordable, international cross-cultural option that is run by the Johnston Center (see more information below).

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER

- Integrated Semester in Oaxaca: Johnston and the University of Redlands Study Abroad Office sponsor an Integrated Semester travel trip to Oaxaca, Mexico and Guatemala every two years. This trip is distinctive to Johnston since it is designed to encourage Johnston and non-Johnston students to work together to integrate their travel and study abroad into their emphasis or major.
- Students interested in applying for a full academic year abroad should meet with Sara Falkenstein early in the fall semester to discuss the petition process.