

**C.T. Bauer College of Business
University of Houston**

Syllabus

**GENB 7397
International Business in the Current Global Environment**

Summer 2026 Session 1

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Note: The contents of this syllabus will change prior to departure and may change at any time thereafter without prior notice.

Introduction

With 600 million consumers, an economy sized at USD 5.3 trillion, and USD 3.7 trillion in consumer buying power, Latin America is a diverse, vibrant region, with tremendous potential for business.

This course provides students with knowledge and skills related to the international business environment in Latin America. Students are introduced to the economic history of the region, trends in the political and economic climate, and the cultural environment for business. Combining regional trend analysis with in-depth study of business opportunities in Brazil, the class enables students to develop successful business strategies for Latin American markets and consumers.

Objectives

- Acquire an understanding of the business, economics, political, and sociocultural climate of Brazil.
- Increase the social networking of participants with each other
- Utilize company visits to analyze the business culture of Brazil.
- Evaluate country and industry suitability for foreign direct investment based on an analysis of macroeconomic variables (country level) and microeconomic variables (firm level).
- Enhance analytical and communication skills and cultural competencies.

Teaching Procedures and Methodology

The teaching methods utilized in this course include individual research, site visits, a business challenge and a debrief Discussion. Learning in this course requires your constructive participation and active involvement in discussions, a key mechanism for facilitating learning. The site visits will expose you to different aspects of the class and will highlight the practical relevance of the concepts learned.

Course Requirements

Grade breakdown:

1. Site Visit Questions (20 pts)

We will be visiting with approximately 10 different companies. Every student should do some preparatory background research before leaving for Brazil both on the country and on each company. I strongly recommend the *CIA World Factbook* as a place to get started (see Useful Websites below). Each student must submit 3 questions per company that they would like to ask in those site visits. This includes questions for the Foreign Commercial Services Officer. Questions should be thoughtful and meaningful, not information that is easily discovered elsewhere. All questions should be in a single Word document, clearly grouped by company. These questions will be submitted in the Questions Assignment on Canvas (found either through the Assignments link or the Pre-work Module) by 11:55 pm the day before the site visit. Questions for the business challenge visit will not be needed since you are already asking questions, and I have no doubt you will have some more ready for that Monday.

2. Participation (15 pts)

You are expected to represent the University of Houston well, act professionally, abide by all the laws of Brazil, and participate in all required activities. Violating the Bauer Code, delaying the group, being disruptive or inattentive, missing mandatory activities, and bringing along guests without permission are examples of behaviors that will cause a deduction of your contribution grade. The dress code is business casual; jeans are not considered business casual. If attire is inappropriate, the student will be required to buy appropriate clothes in Sao Paolo and points will be deducted from the participation grade.

One of the goals of this trip is to increase the social interaction between participants on the trip. Therefore, interacting with the group during site visits and personal time is important. Leaving the group to meet friends or family while on the IBR is not permitted.

Note that your participation grade is a matter left to the instructor's subjective judgment.

3. Business Challenge (40 pts)

A Brazilian company (TBD) has agreed to participate in a business challenge competition as a case analysis. The specifics are to be determined when the company is chosen.

You will be working in **groups assigned by the instructor** to understand TBD and its goals, strategy and challenges. The team assignments will be posted on Canvas in the Pre-work module. You will be providing your analysis of the company to a team of TBD executives. You will be making recommendations regarding the most immediate challenges and your proposed solutions to those challenges. Your grade will depend on the degree to which the analysis reflects learning, and the application of knowledge gained in the EMBA program. The deliverable for this assignment is a presentation (in any format you wish to use) for the TBD executives, and it will count for 45 pts. The presentation is due on Tuesday June 9 at midnight since it will be presented the next day (Sao Paolo time).

We will be meeting with TBC on a date approximately 3 weeks prior to departure. The final presentation will be submitted on Canvas in the Case Analysis Presentation Assignment. This can be accessed via Assignments directly or via the Business Challenge Module on Canvas.

4. Peer Evaluation (5 pts)

Each team member will evaluate the contribution of the other members. A form has been posted on Canvas. The completed form will be uploaded to Canvas. Each student's peer evaluation grade is the average of the ratings received by teammates. Failure to submit a peer evaluation will result in a grade of 0. If the team's assessment of performance is sufficiently poor, the Business Challenge paper grade will be adjusted accordingly.

5. Post-Trip Debrief Paper (15 pts)

Each student will submit a brief written report describing:

- The business environment in Brazil
- The challenges and opportunities for American companies expanding to Brazil
- The challenges and opportunities for Brazilian companies expanding to the U.S.
- What you learned on this trip about the Brazilian business environment

5. Post Trip Discussion (5 pts)

On Saturday, June 13, a Discussion on Canvas will become available. Each student will submit their own reflections on the trip in general. What you learned, what surprised you, what delighted you, and what disappointed you. Each student must also respond to at least two other students. This discussion is due by 11:55 pm Sunday June 28. The Discussion can be accessed via the Post-work Module or directly through the Discussion link on the Navigation bar in Canvas.

Grade Rubric

| Assignment | Points |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Site Visit Questions | 20 |
| Participation | 15 |
| Business Challenge Presentation | 40 |
| Peer Evaluation | 5 |
| Post-trip Debrief Paper | 15 |
| Post Trip Discussion | 5 |
| Total Possible Points | 100 |

Grading

| Grade | Total Points | Grade | Total Points |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| A | 93 - 100 | C | 73 - 76 |
| A- | 90 - 92 | C- | 70 - 72 |
| B+ | 87 - 89 | D+ | 67 - 69 |
| B | 83 - 86 | D | 64 - 66 |
| B- | 80 - 82 | D- | 60 - 63 |
| C+ | 77 - 79 | F | Below 60 |

AI and ChatGPT

Do NOT use Grammarly or other AI to correct your submissions. It makes the paper sound as if it is AI generated, and Turnitin's AI detectors may flag it as such. I would prefer your Discussion posts be a little grammatically rough but in your own words rather than be corrected by a grammar AI. In part because the project is proprietary, use of any AI to conduct any work in this class is strictly prohibited.

Suggested Course Readings

The Business of International Business is Culture by G. Hofstede, *International Business Review* 3 (1994): 1-14

Infrastructure and the Location of Foreign Direct Investment: A Regional Analysis by Lucio Castro, Paulo Regis, and Daniel Saslavsky (2007)

Liberalization, Transition and Consolidation: Measuring the Components of Democratization by Carsten Schneider and Philippe Schmitter, *Democratization* 11.5 (2004): 59–90

Labor Reform and Dual Transitions in Brazil and the Southern Cone by Maria Lorena Cook, *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2002): 1-34

Recommended Database

International Financial Statistics database from the UH library

You can access information on GDP, unemployment, real wage, exchange rates, volume of trade, inflows and outflows of capital.

Useful Websites

- The World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org/>
- IMF: <http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>
- CIA: The World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>
- Foreign Affairs <http://www.foreignaffairs.org>
- Foreign Policy <http://www.foreignpolicy.com>
- International Herald Tribune <http://www.iht.com>
- Party Politics <http://www.partypolitics.org>
- The Financial Times <http://www.ft.com>
- The New York Times <http://www.nyt.com>
- The Wall Street Journal <http://www.wsj.com>
- The Washington Post <http://www.washingtonpost.com>
- World Economic Forum <http://www.weforum.org>
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development <https://unctad.org/>

University Policy Information

Course Evaluations

The C.T. Bauer College of Business requires all its instructors to be evaluated by their students. The results of these evaluations are important to provide feedback to instructors on how their performance can be improved. We encourage you to take advantage of the evaluation process.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as “representing as one’s own work the work of another without appropriately acknowledging the source.” The university does not institutionalize plagiarism by acknowledging, excusing or condoning ignorance under the rubric of “unintentional plagiarism.” A discussion of the University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy is included in the University of Houston Student Handbook which can be found at <http://www.uh.edu/dos/studenthandbook/>. Students are expected to be familiar with this policy.

Counseling and Psychological Services

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. Also, there is no appointment necessary for the “Let’s Talk” program, which is a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html.

COVID-19 Information

Students are encouraged to visit the University’s [COVID-19](#) website for important information including diagnosis and symptom protocols, testing, vaccine information, and post-exposure guidance. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates. Consult the [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for information regarding excused absences due to medical reasons.

Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for disabled students. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UH strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact [the Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#).

Excused Absence Policy

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Recording of Class

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.