Course Overview:

The purpose of this course is to provide students with practical, first-hand exposure to international real estate markets. To obtain this first-hand experience, the class will visit various businesses, institutions, and organizations in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The visits will consist of site tours and presentations on relevant real estate topics. There will also be some historical and cultural site visits to provide a more complete picture of life and business in Argentina. The first-hand experience obtained from the study trip will enable students to better understand and manage international real estate operations, investments, and risk.

The course contains three major components:

1. pre-trip class meetings, quizzes, and group presentations;
2. meetings, company visits, property visits in Argentina, and
3. post-trip writing assignments and student presentations on a proposed investment opportunity.

The study abroad component will take place from August 6th through August 12th. Students will depart for Buenos Aires no later than Friday, August 5th, arriving in Argentina no later than Saturday morning, August 6th. We will meet as a group at noon on August 6th and tour the city of Buenos Aires. Students will depart from Buenos Aires on the evening of Friday, August 12th and arrive back in Florida on Saturday morning, August 13th. Students may choose to arrive in Argentina earlier than August 6th or depart later August 12th if they prefer more time in Argentina.

The pre-trip class meetings, quizzes, and presentations will take place during July. Among other things, these meetings will cover logistical issues and relevant background information, and pre-trip student company presentations. Required class readings and handouts will be distributed during these meetings or be made available on the class Canvas website. The reading assignments will serve as background material for the class meetings and will also prepare students for the study trip.

In country, we will have seven days to learn about the necessary aspects of the governmental influences, legal influences, market forces and capital requirements for valuing and investing in commercial real estate in Buenos Aires and Argentina. As the schedule below reveals, we will start with presentations on the Argentina economy, economic development and the governmental and legal influences that affect investment.

We then begin focusing on the property which is the subject of the case study. The students, working in assigned groups, are tasked with representing an institutional U.S. pension fund (“Gator Pension Fund”) that is looking to
diversify into the Argentina commercial real estate market. Students will underwrite the risk of investing in Argentina commercial real estate, generally, and to place an investment value/reservation price on the subject property, which is the Madero office building (http://www.raghsa.com.ar/projects/offices/madero-office/), one of the prime office building in Buenos Aires that is currently fully leased to three tenants: ICBC, Dow Chemicals and Chevron. The property is owned by Raghsa (http://www.raghsa.com.ar/). The detailed assignment will be distributed during the week of July 11-15. The property and case study context will be presented to the students by Mr. Herman Faigenbaum, Managing Director, Cushman & Wakefield, Argentina, on Monday, August 8th. This will allow the students to better use their company/property visits over the remainder of the week to help them with their due diligence/underwriting/valuation of the case study property.

On Tuesday, August 30th, the student groups will present their investment valuation and recommendation to Gator Pension Fund’s “investment committee,” which will actually consist of Bergstrom Center faculty and staff. More details on the case study will be provided in a separate document.

Your respective bosses at Gator Pension Fund have also asked each of you to prepare a formal memo to them assessing the effectiveness of the trip to Buenos Aires. You are to provide your thoughts on the quality of the meetings, your ability to access relevant information while in Argentina, the most beneficial part of the trip, both professionally and personally, what areas could be improved to provide a better experience, and the effectiveness of your team in preparing the analysis of the case study project. This letter will be graded based on its quality, including your ability to express your opinions clearly and concisely. The instructor who is teaching GEB 5212 (Professional Writing) this summer, Dr. Ainsworth, will assess and grade the letter based on the rubrics she employed this summer. More details on the writing assignment will be provided in a separate document. Your individual writing assignment on Argentina is due no later than 4pm on Friday, August 27th. Please post the assignment on the class Canvas site.

Pre-Trip Class Meetings:

Each class meeting will cover relevant course content and pre-trip logistical issues. There are four scheduled class meetings. Additional class meetings may be scheduled as needed.

Wednesday, June 29: Preliminary meeting: logistical and administrative issues, assignment of student groups

Wednesday, July 13: Argentina: background -- culture, politics, and economy
Four, 15-20 minute power point presentations by student groups:
1. Argentina culture (Group 1)
2. Argentina politics (Group 2)
3. Argentina economy (Group 3)
4. Argentina economy (Group 4)
Introduction of in-country case study
Discussion of assigned readings (TBA-Canvas site)

Wednesday, July 20: Argentina: background – banking system, housing market, commercial real estate market
Four, 15-20 minute power point presentations by student groups:
1. Argentina banking system (Group 5)
2. Argentina rental and owner-occupied housing market (Group 6)
3. Argentina CRE market and CRE mortgage market (Group 7)
4. Argentina CRE market and CRE mortgage market (Group 8)
Review student presentations for importance to case study
Discussion of Wikipedia entry for Argentina and other assigned readings (Canvas site)
Wednesday, July 27: Student company presentations and final logistics/student questions. Company assignments to be determined.

Eight, 10-12 minute power point presentations by student groups:
1. (Group 1)
2. (Group 2)
3. (Group 3)
4. (Group 4)
5. (Group 5)
6. (Group 6)
7. (Group 7)
8. (Group 8)

Course Evaluation:

Final course grades will be determined by four components:
1. Attendance & participation in pre-trip class meetings, quiz performance, and group presentations 20%
2. Attendance & meaningful participation during all of the group site and cultural visits in Chile 25%
3. Post-trip student presentation of the case study property/project 25%
4. Post-trip memo about trip effectiveness 10%
5. Student evaluations of individual team member contributions. 20%

Students must be punctual, present, and alert at all class meetings and site/company visits.

The post-trip presentation, worth 25 percent of your final grade, will be done in groups. Presentation grades will be based on the content and quality of the required power point presentation, as well as the quality of the presentation delivery.

Individual participation/cooperation during the in-country trip component is worth 25 percent of your final grade. Missing or being late for one group meeting/event in Argentina will automatically lower your grade to a C. A second absence or late arrival will result in the issuance of a failing grade for the course.

The pre-trip class component is worth 20 percent of your grade. To prepare for the trip, you are required to read some background material, all of which will be posted on the class Canvas website, and participate in group presentations on assigned topic. Several in-class quizzes will be administered on the pre-trip required reading material.