

Chapter 9

The Historic Preservation Approach: The Importance of Place and ‘Boots on the Ground’

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Note: Section II includes Chapters 4-14. These chapters use a standardized template to discuss the details of their respective study abroad programs and reference Deardorff's (2012) framework for intercultural competencies. The use of this template and the intercultural competencies framework are described in the Section II introduction. All courses in this section (except for Chapter 6) were taught through Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), a mid-sized state school located in Murfreesboro, Tennessee (USA).

The *MTSU in Scotland* program centers on a history course, *International Historic Preservation* (HIST 3075/6940), at both the undergraduate and graduate student levels. Students spend three weeks in July living, working, and exploring Scotland in the United Kingdom. The world-famous city of Edinburgh, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the homebase for this program. A unique aspect of this course is its “boots on the ground” approach (experiential learning framework) in which students, like the practitioners of historic preservation projects, engage with historic places, talk with community members, and work to create an experience that is meaningful to both community stakeholders and visitors to the site. Due to its site-oriented approach this course is ideally taught in a study abroad format. A small group of students works best for the program goals; ten students participated in 2016, eight in 2019, and six in 2022.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

While the course is offered through the History Department, my staff position is with the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP), a Center for Excellence at MTSU with a four-decades-long institutional track record of community-driven preservation projects throughout Tennessee and the Southern U.S. My study abroad course is therefore based on a framework of experiential learning that we at the Center normally refer to as “boots on the ground” (MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, 2015; Weiler et al., 2022). This approach conveys the CHP’s philosophy that the best way to learn about a historic site is to show up in person, listen to community partners and stakeholders, determine what their values and priorities are, and shape preservation plans in response that are useful for the community, while still adhering to sound historical research and best practices in historic preservation. Even though a short-term study abroad (STSA) program does not have adequate time to create actual preservation plans, students still learn the skills of identifying and listening to community partners and determining site significance (Niehaus et al., 2019). These skills together determine “why this place matters,” which is an essential part of preservation best practices in both the U.S. and other countries.

This place-based learning approach is based on the idea that places are primary sources for learning and the local community is a hands-on classroom that allows teachers to engage students with real-world problems while also satisfying content standards (Smith & Sobel, 2010). Most study abroad programs are by nature place-based, but the Scotland program takes that further by centering places as the basis for learning, rather than as mere backdrops for other related content. Any townscape, countryside, historic site, or museum we visit is open to analysis

and inquiry. This also reflects a thematic approach to study abroad, wherein students learn to view each site they visit through the lens of historic preservation-themed questions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

By visiting museums and historic sites, including the National Museum of Scotland, Greyfriars Kirkyard, Culloden Battlefield, the Isle of Skye, the Royal Mile, etc., students learn how to analyze and evaluate historic sites, material culture, and cultural landscapes. Students participate in hands-on preservation by taking part in local archaeological and conservation projects led by experts. Students also learn about how heritage organizations, such as Historic Environment Scotland, the National Trust, and the UNESCO World Heritage Center, address the preservation and public interpretation of their properties. These experiences are complemented by a variety of readings, from recent online news articles to excerpts from scholarly publications, to provide historical context and a basis for discussion (see Appendix 9.1 for a list of readings). In addition to academic work, students learn how to conduct everyday activities and interact with strangers in a foreign environment, and they learn how to be good ambassadors for their university and their country.

Course Learning Outcomes

As a result of participating in this program, students will:

- a. Learn to examine historic sites and objects and understand the different choices and processes that affect preservation and interpretation.

- b. Learn basic analysis of buildings, spaces, and material culture to gain historical perspectives that are not always part of the documentary record.
- c. Learn the issues surrounding the preservation and public presentation of historic sites in a global context, answering questions such as, “How do historic sites tell stories about the past?”
- d. Contemplate how the interpretation of Scottish history at historic sites/museums reflects the cultural values and political agendas of the Scottish people and government.
- e. Examine major threats to the conservation and preservation of historic sites and artifacts in today’s geopolitical society, including the threats of climate change, excesses of tourism, gentrification, and economic inequality.

Students learn much more than course content, however—they learn to experience learning in the context of a foreign country while they broaden their perspectives on cultural values and practices by experiencing life in a neighborhood setting. They understand why learning history in an actual historic city center is more effective than learning it inside a classroom. Students learn about and appreciate a foreign culture and expand their minds, abilities, and confidence to travel to different places and connect with people from different backgrounds. This indirect learning is just as valuable and likely much more memorable than the course-specific content.

COURSE HISTORY

MTSU in Scotland Program, 2016-2019

I first offered the *MTSU in Scotland* study abroad program in 2016, after an initial experience leading a successful study abroad program in Rome, Italy, in 2014. From the beginning, I wanted to highlight the approach of looking at a city through the layers of its preserved history. The course theme “International Historic Preservation” reflects my professional focus at the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) and presents graduate students in the Public History program with the rare chance to earn credits for their M.A. or Ph.D. program through a study abroad course in their field.

In order to present students with a first-hand experience of fieldwork abroad, I emulated the CHP’s partnership approach to projects. In 2016, I made contact with representatives from both Rubicon Heritage, an Irish-based archaeological firm working on a project in Edinburgh, and Edinburgh World Heritage, the independent charity that administers the UNESCO World Heritage Site encompassing the Old and New Towns. Through these contacts, the students were able to participate in both a cemetery beautification workshop with the historic graveyards project coordinator for Edinburgh World Heritage, and a two-day archaeological dig with experts from Rubicon Heritage and also with the city archaeologist of the City of Edinburgh Council. By nurturing these contacts over the years, my students were able to participate in similar workshops in both 2019 and 2022.

These partnerships yield valuable opportunities for students to participate in hands-on service workshops and learn directly from preservation professionals. For example, working with

Rubicon Heritage staff, students in the 2016 program began initial excavation and documentation at a 17th-century castle site called Red Hall. Students in 2022 joined the Edinburgh Archaeology Field Service (under the auspices of the City Council) in the excavation of outbuildings at Cammo Estate. In each case, students observed first-hand how material culture evidence is discovered, documented, and interpreted as part of the history of Edinburgh and its vicinity over the centuries, as well as how current organizations manage these sites. Their excitement from “digging up old rocks,” as they put it, points to the importance of personal connection when it comes to learning and practicing history and in the connection between history and “real-world issues,” such as how a site will impact a public’s sense of place (National Council for Public History, n.d.).

Because of my own background in cemetery preservation, I gravitate toward projects involving historic cemeteries. In Edinburgh, I have forged an ongoing partnership with the Edinburgh Graveyards Project, which is a partially grant-funded initiative within the Edinburgh World Heritage organization. Through this partnership, students have contributed to hands-on projects for the beautification, interpretation, and documentation of some of the historic graveyards within the World Heritage Site designation. For example, in 2019, students spent a whole day cleaning up the “Orphan Section” of Old Calton Burial Ground, which is a small corner of the historic graveyard that was separated from the more prominent main part (where philosopher David Hume and others are buried) by a 19th-century road (see Fig. 9.1). Because this small section is across the street from the main tourist path and can only be accessed by a back alley, it has largely been neglected by the general public and used for “antisocial” purposes (such as littering, drug use, etc.) (Buckham, 2013). When I showed the 2022 group of students the

Orphan Section, I was pleased to find that much of the cleaning and beautification efforts the 2019 group had worked on had indeed paid off and that the section was pleasantly inviting and marked by clear signage from the street. The students in 2022 remarked that were proud of what the students in 2019 had done; this brief visit to the Orphan Section helped them see how contributing to a sense of place—even if is not your own hometown—makes you feel like a stakeholder in a community.



Figure 9.1: Students from the 2019 MTSU in Scotland program work to beautify the “Orphan Section” of Old Calton Burial Ground. Photo provided by Stacey Graham and printed with consent of volunteers.

MTSU in Scotland Program 2022 (post-COVID-19)

The 2022 group had the opportunity to beta-test an observational survey for Greyfriars Kirkyard, which is famous largely for the tombs of Greyfriars Bobby, inspiring several character names from the *Harry Potter* series, and for its supposedly haunted nature. Over the course of an hour-long observational period, the students took detailed notes on a prepared rubric concerning visitor activities in the kirkyard. They then discussed their findings with the Graveyards Project Manager and the Graveyard Engagement Officer of Edinburgh World Heritage. Their feedback was used in the creation of a visitor self-survey form and other resources available at the “Making Lasting Impressions” page on the Edinburgh World Heritage website (Edinburgh World Heritage, 2023). Students also contributed to another ongoing project at Greyfriars, the preparation of five selected mural-style tombstones for high-quality photographic scanning. For the greatest amount of stonework detail to be properly scanned, all loose bits of debris must be removed gently so as not to damage the delicate sculpture. Students spent a day using soft brushes and other supplies to clean off these intricate tombstones, which date to the 17th century and are significant for their artwork and association with prominent Edinburgh families. Though it meant getting coated in graveyard dust, students greatly valued the chance to be part of actual preservation efforts in Edinburgh, to learn from experts, and to spend a day actively improving one of the most famous and historic graveyards in Scotland. Their efforts were acknowledged in the latest issue of the Greyfriars Kirkyard Community Project’s newsletter (Edinburgh World Heritage, 2022), which gave them a great sense of pride and belonging.

The evolving nature of partnership projects ensures that each study abroad group I bring to Scotland will have a variety of experiences, different from the previous groups yet still within

the thematic and experiential scope of the program. The slight differences in locations visited from program to program—most notably on the “Highlands and Islands” excursion—are mainly a matter of logistics within a fluctuating heritage tourism market but have the added benefit of broadening my own familiarity, as the faculty leader, of preservation concerns at various sites to better inform students of examples across Scotland. We went to the famous monastery of St. Columba of Iona in 2016; the town of Kirkwall and the neolithic sites of Skara Brae and The Ring of Brodgar on the Orkney Islands in 2019; and various beautiful natural and cultural landscapes on the Isle of Skye in 2022.

COURSE LOGISTICS

In addition to their academic and hands-on learning, students earn three credit hours through approximately 80 hours of instruction (including walking tours, site visits, and class discussions) during the three-week period. There are no official course prerequisites for this program, mainly because it tends to attract undergraduate History majors and minors who have already taken introductory courses and graduate students already enrolled in Public History or Master of Liberal Arts programs.

PRE-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

To prepare students for both the content of the course and the realities of living abroad, the first two of the three-hour class periods are held on campus one and two weeks before departure. The first class focuses on the major theme of the course, international historic preservation, by providing a brief overview of Scottish history and politics (including independence referenda

and Brexit), the fields of historic preservation and material culture, and the most important preservation organizations in Scotland. The second class covers safety and practical considerations for foreign travel, emphasizing expectations for student behavior as MTSU representatives.

CLASS ACTIVITIES & INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES

After our arrival in Edinburgh, I orient the students to their new surroundings in both geographic and historical senses. We start off with walking tours of the Old and New Town sections of Edinburgh, including Calton Hill, Princes Street Gardens, and the Royal Mile. We visit major national museums in the city, such as the National Museum of Scotland, the Scottish National Library, and the National Gallery of Scotland. We also visit preserved sites such as Edinburgh Castle, Holyrood Palace, and Rosslyn Chapel. The 2016 program included a side trip to Glasgow, while the 2022 program also went to the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow Cathedral, and the Necropolis. A “Highlands and Islands” excursion includes a few days in Inverness to experience nearby Urquhart Castle on Loch Ness and the Culloden Battlefield, as well as a day trip to a nearby island of historic interest. The last major component of the program is the hands-on, service-learning workshops we participate in through partnerships with the Edinburgh Graveyards Project and the City of Edinburgh Council (see Appendix 9.2 for the day-to-day schedule). As is the case with place-based learning, students analyze each of these places as primary sources through the stories and material culture that are presented to the public. This builds students’ content knowledge about the role these places played in Scottish history and culture, as well as student understanding of how these places are significant to people in the present. For instance, Rosslyn Chapel preserves beautifully intricate stone carvings from the 15th

century and interprets the stories of the wealthy family that commissioned the building and the changing use of the chapel over time. When students are there in person, they can also see how other people connect to it not only through its artistic merit, but through its local history, religious value, and its popular (though unsubstantiated) connection to the Knights Templar. Historic preservation is not only about one moment in time but also about how subsequent generations find new, present meaning in the places that connect them to the past.

Through the hands-on workshops, students feel like they are not just taking on new perspective, in terms of learning and experiences, but also giving back to the communities from whom they are learning so much. The workshops represent experiential learning by providing students with the chance to listen to members of the local community and hear what they want to experience at their local historic sites and museums. Students experience first-hand why these places still matter; without an answer to this question, historic preservation is meaningless. I would argue that this enhanced sense of place is an “intercultural competency” that is gained during this program, even if it is discipline-specific at the same time. In contrast to some research on STSAs (Niehaus et al., 2019), I have found that there is not always a clear division between disciplinary and intercultural learning. For example, when this course asks students to contemplate how current Scottish culture and politics affect the stories that are told about the Scottish past at historic sites and museums, it is asking them to be aware of their own cultural attitudes as well as those of the host country at the same time. This is to be expected, as the field of historic preservation asks professionals to analyze why we talk about the past in different ways over time, which forces us to be aware of our changing and enduring values and how they connect or clash with the values of others (Deardorff, 2006).

Beyond the discipline-specific skills that students learn as part of the course, they pick up important “soft skills” through various “meta-curricular” features built-in into the program (Harvey, 2017). This includes, first and foremost, simply living in apartments (locally called “flats”) in an Edinburgh neighborhood for three weeks. This allows students to gain skills such as a geographical and spatial awareness of the environment, close observation skills when watching locals for cues as to what to do/where to go, civic engagement skills when using public infrastructure, and increased awareness of themselves as part of a global network of travelers. While these skills aren’t articulated within specific, assessed assignments, students nevertheless are given the space, time, and encouragement in which to explore and develop these skills and often derive the most meaning and pride from these experiences, as is clear from their reflection papers. Many of the intercultural competencies that students experience are interwoven into the course content itself so that students are constantly paying attention to the human geography surrounding them and absorbing social norms and practices even while I am constantly presenting them with historical context.

Activities

Walking Tour of the New Town

New Town is the 18th-century planned Georgian extension to the city meant to represent Enlightenment ideals in contrast to the medieval Old Town. The walking tour tasks students with locating prominent monuments, streetscapes, architectural features, etc., based on the walking tour, “Athens of the North,” available from the Edinburgh World Heritage website

(Edinburgh World Heritage, 2022). This activity emphasized the intercultural competencies listed in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1: Intercultural Competencies in the Walking Tour of the New Town Activity

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Neoclassical architecture • Content learning for Edinburgh history in the 18th and 19th centuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation of the built environment • Orientation in urban space • Using a physical map • Following directions • Working in pairs and small groups to navigate through space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curiosity in the observation of local practices • Stamina in experiencing so much activity on foot across a cityscape

Visit to Culloden Battlefield

Culloden Battlefield is the site of the final defeat of the Jacobites and “Bonnie Prince Charlie” in 1746. Many of the students are already familiar with the story of the battle from the book series/TV show *Outlander*, in which the battle is largely portrayed from the Scottish point of view. Because of this, and because the students are fairly familiar with Scottish culture by the time we visit the site, they usually expect to hear the story from the Jacobite perspective, which renders it a tale of lost hopes and tragic consequences for the Scottish people. While this was once the narrative that the site and its museum presented, the experience that is currently provided explores both the Scottish and the English perspectives of the battle, its lead-up, and its aftermath, using primary sources, which highlight the words of the people who experienced the battle firsthand. Students are always surprised by what they perceive as fairness in the way the

story is presented in the museum. The students then have this more balanced narrative in mind as they go on to walk the battlefield grounds and view the famous stone monuments that memorialize the Scottish highlanders by clan and where the English soldiers were supposedly buried. The students make note of this perceived fairness in their site assessment forms that they complete shortly after their visit. The intercultural competencies gained by the students through this activity are listed in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Intercultural Competencies in the Visit to the Culloden Battlefield Activity

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content on the Jacobite rebellion of mid-18th-century Scotland • Understanding of the event from the perspectives of various figures on both sides of the conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of the narrative of the event based on the primary sources and artifacts provided in the museum and on the battlefield • Analysis of the legacy of the battle in Scottish popular memory through battlefield memorialization and other outlets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-mindedness to various viewpoints on a controversial event that still resonates in the present • Sensitivity to ongoing tensions between Scotland and England in the wake of Brexit, COVID-19, and renewed calls for a referendum on Scottish independence

Tasks

Getting Around Town

I know from my own experiences as a world traveler that while visiting important sites or participating in fun activities may be the ostensible point of international travel, what gives me

the greatest sense of accomplishment is figuring out mundane tasks such as navigating public transportation routes or completing a grocery store run. While these tasks are never articulated as requirements in the course syllabus, they are nonetheless expected, encouraged, and, in most cases, inevitable. I try to provide the framework in which students can best achieve success at these tasks, while also leaving them to their own devices to solve such challenges. On the very first day in Edinburgh, I take the group to the TravelHub outside Waverley Station to get their Ridacards, which are travel passes that will cover their bus fare for the duration of the program. Then I have the students take a bus to find their apartments on their own, which helps them start to develop awareness, agency, and confidence as people who can move about a foreign city unaccompanied by a faculty leader. The intercultural competencies integrated into this task are summarized in Table 9.3.

Table 9.3: Intercultural Competencies in the Getting around Town Task

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building self-awareness as one moves through foreign environments where one is at a cultural disadvantage • Knowledge of how the city is laid out and the locations of important city sectors and neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving by figuring out bus routes, timetables, and payment methods • Communication with locals who have a different dialect and often a different worldview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity to social etiquette in public spaces • Stepping outside one's comfort zone as an outsider in a local environment • Patience with public transportation delays • Independence as one accomplishes tasks one has never had to encounter in the U.S.

Scavenger Hunt

I try to help set students up for tasks with a brief scavenger hunt on the first day of the program, which challenges them with locating neighborhood staples like grocery stores, post offices, pubs, and banks/ATMs. That way, students notice the service locations they will most likely need to utilize, and they can add those to their mental maps of the city. The intercultural competencies observed in this task are listed in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4: Intercultural Competencies in the Scavenger Hunt Task

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning what the major chains and local branches are for grocery stores, banks, restaurants, cafes, pharmacies, etc., in Edinburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calculating currency conversion, comparing rates, and figuring out customs forms at the post office• Planning ahead for daily, small-scale grocery shopping (don't forget to bring your plastic bag!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrating humility and open-mindedness when talking with locals and other tourists• Being flexible when faced with options (at stores, restaurants, etc.) that are unfamiliar, inadequate, or unexpected

POST-PROGRAM AND FUTURE CLASS ACTIVITIES

Approximately one week after returning to the U.S., students meet on campus (2016, 2019) or virtually (2022) for one last three-hour class period in which they share their final presentations and reflect on their experiences. While one week may not be considered enough time for adequate reflection, I find that students are beginning to speak like seasoned world travelers, with confidence and perspective gained during the program.

The experience of being at these places in person and dealing with new and unfamiliar cultures can be overwhelming to students, diminishing their understanding of the historical content at the expense of the in-the-moment experiences. Therefore, I would like future class activities to create time for an expanded discussion on course content before we arrive in Scotland. This could be done by adding one additional three-hour pre-departure, in-person class, as well as one or two discussion posts on the learning management system course site.

I am pleased, however, to have found what I believe to be a good balance between scheduled activities and student free time while in Scotland. I am considering giving the students the freedom to schedule their own chosen site visits (for which they will need to fill out a Site Assessment Form), which will encourage a closer analysis of available sites, connecting places to their own interests and curiosity, and taking the initiative of booking tickets, mapping locations, and handling transportation without the faculty leader. I also want to encourage them to step outside their comfort zones more by talking to local people. This will help students better understand the course content of how Scottish people view their history through sites and museums, while also opening their minds to other perspectives.

EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENTS

The grade breakdown for the course is outlined in Table 9.5:

Table 9.5: Grade Breakdown

Assignments	Percentage of final grade	Type of assessment
Daily assignments	15%	Formative assessment
Final projects	30%	Summative assessment
Reflection papers	15%	Summative assessment
Participation	40%	Formative and summative assessment

I make participation the largest component of the grade because it is the most important. Participation covers conventional course behaviors such as attendance and communication with the faculty leader, but it also covers group dynamics (with each student responsible for contributing positively to the safety and learning experiences of the group) and student responsibility (as representatives of MTSU and the U.S. in general). Therefore, 40% of each student's grade is based on intercultural competency, covering a wide range of expected behaviors and responsibilities. After all, showing up on time to class in this context means navigating your way on foot or by bus to a designated meeting place in the city that you likely never have been to before and calculating how much time it will take to get there.

Site Assessment Form

One of the formative assessments for students is the Site Assessment Form (see Appendix 9.3)—one form for each site we visit, whether it is a museum, castle, cemetery, city block, a pile of ruins that once was a medieval abbey, etc. This form asks the same four questions as a

fundamental introduction to site interaction: Who owns and/or operates this site? What kinds of material culture are displayed? What story/stories are told by the site, and in what ways? Who is the audience for this story/these stories? The hope is that students will be able to view any historical narrative presented in any kind of setting as a construction that reflects the vision of a certain set of values and goals in time. This assignment allowed the students to gain the intercultural competencies listed in Table 9.6.

Table 9.6: Intercultural Competencies in the Site Assessment Form Assignment

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content knowledge related to specific museums and historic sites on the itinerary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical analysis method applicable to historic sites/museums around the world Observation, communication, and writing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect for other cultures and their history through analysis of their development and presentation

Final Assignments

During our final class period after our return to the U.S., students turn in their final two assignments. The first is a presentation shared with the whole class on a chosen historic site/museum, which assesses the discipline-specific skills they gained through experiential- and theme-based learning. The second is a reflection paper, in which students are asked to evaluate both the academic content they learned as well as their experiences as students abroad, which is more individualized in tone. This paper is a better gauge of students' intercultural competencies and gives me a sense of what they felt were the most important things they learned during the program. While students generally enjoy and learn from the historic site visits (especially the

excursions, which are more memorable by nature/design), they almost always point to activities, travels, or even simple wanderings they did by themselves in unassigned free time. I see this as a vindication of the decision to challenge students to step outside their comfort zones and make the most of their opportunities (Harvey, 2017). This assignment helped the students develop the intercultural competencies listed in Table 9.7.

Table 9.7: Intercultural Competencies in the Final Assignment

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural self-awareness, as one compares one's experiences and expectations abroad to those back in the U.S. • Content knowledge: Overall understanding of basic concepts of historic preservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on one's experiences upon program completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness to local culture, as evidenced through the frequenting of a favorite neighborhood pub • Taking the initiative for deciding one's own activities during free time (instead of relying on a faculty leader)

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback comes in different forms. Site Assessment Forms show me how students are developing their analytical and observational skills from week to week. For example, these forms revealed how some of the students were honing their observational skills by considering issues such as accessibility when it comes to museums and sites. Final presentations give me an overall indication of their understanding of the course topic. The student reflection papers are the most

valuable for articulating what students felt they learned during the program. Because student course evaluations are focused entirely on the academic content of the course, I find that reflection papers are the best ways to evaluate students' intercultural competencies. Below are two direct quotes received from the student reflection papers. Following each quote, the program year and the intercultural competencies gained by the students are listed.

“Living, studying, and working in a major international capital city broke through a previously unrealized trepidation within me regarding travel outside this small region of my country; therefore, it made the entirety of the world more accessible and less intimidating. I now feel as if I can, not only travel the world, but turn another of my dreams into a realistic goal: obtaining an internship or job outside the United States within the next several years.” (*Student 1, 2022; discovery, risk-taking, stepping outside the comfort zone*)

“I noticed little in terms of public parking spaces [in Edinburgh], instead seeing numerous bus stops and sidewalks meant for daily usage. It does make me curious about further exploring how this big difference between the U.S. and Europe impacts the preservation of cities, as increased pollution and need for parking space undoubtedly has a strong [effect] on numerous parts of the U.S.” (*Student 2, 2022; cultural self-awareness, observational skills, evaluation skills*)

In addition, I implemented a post-course survey in 2022 (see Appendix 9.4) that asked the students to compare their expectations of the program before departure to their actual experiences upon return. The majority of students agreed that their experiences exceeded their

expectations, citing their confidence as independent travelers and openness to other cultures as the primary gains from the program (apart from academic learning).

CAVEATS AND REFLECTIONS

Conducting the course at the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic certainly created additional logistical challenges, as many historic sites now insist on pre-booking tickets and entry times to better control crowd numbers. This meant a greater exercise of organizational skills for students when making plans for free time. They also had a fruitful area of cross-cultural comparison by experiencing the COVID-19 response in Scotland, which at the time, had a 78% vaccination rate compared to a 52% rate in Tennessee.

Overall, the main strength of the course is that it reframes the way students approach historic sites in general. Students come to see places as successive constructions by groups of people over time to help them make sense of their place in the world. This new perspective is both discipline-specific, in that it asks questions about practices in historic preservation, and indicative of intercultural competency, in that it compels students to see how people in other countries conceptualize and preserve their past through places and material culture. The main challenge is time—three weeks is not always enough for students to develop a deeper understanding of why sites tell the stories that they do about the past. I do feel, however, that the seeds of understanding are at least planted during this course and continue to percolate through students' growing awareness for months and even years later. I was impressed how one student in my very first study abroad program in 2014 was so struck by the layering of cultural landscapes emphasized in that course that they brought that approach into other graduate work.

Furthermore, the same student participated in my 2019 program as a Ph.D. student and applied the lessons learned in Scotland to a dissertation on agricultural history.

The course is not the only study abroad program offered by the History Department at MTSU, but it is the only one associated with the Center for Historic Preservation. The program, therefore, provides an opportunity for both undergraduate and graduate students in the nationally renowned Public History program to examine issues of historic preservation and public history abroad. It also serves to bolster student resumes when applying for the Public History graduate program as well as for jobs in the field, due to the opportunities it provides students to participate in historic preservation projects in World Heritage Site cities.

The inclusion of intercultural competencies is one of the greatest benefits that students experience in a study abroad program in part because they are unanticipated and therefore experienced authentically by each student. The experience of living in a foreign country provides the overall context into which any specific course information will be processed by individual students. The atmosphere of a bustling, cosmopolitan city such as Edinburgh, with a continuous history stretching back further than the history of the United States itself, influences students' actions and interactions for a period of three weeks. After only a few days, students are usually familiar enough with where they are going that other foreign tourists often ask the students for directions, mistaking them for permanent residents. Adapting to their surroundings as short-term residents requires students to exercise their skills of observation, attention, and openness, which lends itself to critical thinking about the subject matter during site visits and class discussions. Engaging with their environments builds skills at the academic and personal levels in a way that no classroom instruction can duplicate. This sense of place can only be

earned by students literally putting their boots on the ground and learning a city by navigating spaces and the people in them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 9.1: Reading List from Syllabus

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Additional graduate student readings (HIST 6940):

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Appendix 9.2: Day-to-Day Schedule (Scotland Itinerary)

Day	Scheduled Activities	Duration
Day 1	Arrival; orientation and introductory walking tour	2 hours
Day 2	Royal Mile walking tour, part 1: Edinburgh Castle to Giles Cathedral	4 hours
Day 3	New Town walking tour: Calton Hill, St. Andrew Square, George Street	4 hours
Day 4	The Mound: National Museum of Scotland, Princes Street Gardens, National Gallery of Scotland	5 hours
Day 5	Graveyard preservation workshop (Day 1 of 2)	5 hours
Day 6	Day trip to Glasgow: Glasgow Cathedral, The Hunterian, Buchanan Street	10 hours
Day 7	Graveyard preservation workshop (Day 2 of 2)	5 hours
Day 8	FREE DAY	
Day 9	Royal Mile walking tour, part 2: Canongate, Museum of Edinburgh, Scottish Parliament	3 hours
Day 10	Holyroodhouse Palace, Holyrood Park: St. Anthony's Chapel and Arthur's Seat	4 hours
Day 11	Excursion to Inverness; walking tour of historic sites in city center	3 hours
Day 12	Bus trips to Urquhart Castle/Loch Ness and Culloden; walk to Clava Cairns	6 hours
Day 13	Ultimate Isle of Skye Day Tour (charter bus)	12 hours
Day 14	FREE DAY in Inverness	
Day 15	Train to Edinburgh; class discussion and reflections	2 hours
Day 16	Historic archaeology workshop (Day 1 of 2)	5 hours
Day 17	Historic archaeology workshop (Day 2 of 2)	5 hours
Day 18	Surgeon's Hall Museums, Rosslyn Chapel	4 hours
Day 19	FREE DAY	
Day 20	Scavenger hunt, final discussion, independent study	3 hours
Day 21	Depart Edinburgh	

Appendix 9.3: Site Assessment Form (Assignment)

MTSU in Scotland Site Assessment Form

HIST 3075/6940: International Historic Preservation

Student Name:

Name of site:

Who owns/operates this site?

What kinds of material culture are displayed?

What story/stories are told by the site, and in what ways?

Who is the audience for this story/these stories?

Additional comments and reactions:

Appendix 9.4: Post-Program Survey

MTSU in Scotland Summer 2022

HIST 3075/6940 (section 002): International Historic Preservation

Post-Program Survey

1. What was the most important thing, concerning the academic content of the course, that you learned from your trip?
2. What was the most important thing, concerning any other aspect of the course, that you learned?
3. What were your biggest challenges while abroad?
4. How was Scotland similar to your expectations? How was it different?
5. How confident do you feel about traveling to other places in the world now?
6. Explain your understanding of what “historic preservation” is.
7. Explain your understanding of what “intercultural competencies” are.