Columbia Business School

Executive MBA Summer & Fall 2027 International Seminars

Overview

The Executive MBA Programs at Columbia Business School offer several International Seminar course options in different locations. Because we will ask you to rank order your preferences from among these choices, we are providing preliminary information for your reference and planning.

Some quick facts:

- Seminar destinations include Shanghai, China; Santiago, Chile, Cape Town, South Africa; and Munich, Germany.
- Each seminar is three credits and counts as one of your elective courses.
- Single-occupancy accommodations, breakfasts and lunches, local guides, transportation to and from class, and official evening events are included as part of class tuition for your first international seminar.
- Students are responsible for airfare, any immunization and/or visa requirements, meals that are not included, and travel and health insurance.
- **We recommend booking a fully refundable flight if you choose to book your flight more than two months before departure. In the event of a trip rescheduling, flight change fees will not be reimbursed.**
- Please make sure your passport has no significant damage, is valid up until six months after the end date of the trip and contains at least two blank pages (preferably more).
- Seminars meet in the block week format, which means that the course material is covered in an intense weeklong session at a specified location, often with a post-week deliverable.
- In addition to class sessions, there may be visits to cultural and business locations in the host city.
- **Plus ones** are welcome to participate in the city tours and evening optional social events, assuming they are officially registered as plus ones (paid the nightly double occupancy surcharge), but are not allowed to attend class sessions, lunches, or company visits. There will also be a separate fee for plus ones who want to attend Oktoberfest in Munich—assuming the Munich trip takes place during that timeframe.
- **Class sessions, lunches, and company visits are only open to students registered in the seminar.**
- **Students who request changing their international seminar within 60 days of the start of the seminar for which they are already signed up, will be assessed a $1500 late cancellation fee to help cover penalties incurred through the hotel contract.** Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Permission can be granted only if a student pays the $1500 fee and the travel provider is able to procure hotel accommodations in the desired seminar.
- **Please note that International Seminars are scheduled so that they do not conflict with Friday/Saturday or Saturday courses. Missing class to travel before or after a seminar is not considered an excused absence.**

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Dates, Locations, and Course Descriptions

China International Seminar: Summer 2027
(Open to 2028EMBA & EMBA-Global 2028)
Dates: Tuesday, June 29 – Saturday, July 3, 2027
(Check-in: Monday, June 28, 2027; Check-out: Sunday, July 4, 2027)
Professor: Shang-Jin Wei
City: Shanghai, China
Add/Drop Deadline: Thursday, April 29, 2027
This course is designed to provide future business leaders with the essential knowledge necessary to evaluate opportunities and risks in the People's Republic of China. The course will use analytical tools drawn from several fields of economics to identify the key strengths that have sustained economic growth for three decades as well as the weaknesses and risk factors. The course will also feature multinational executives, local industry experts, and Chinese business leaders as guest speakers. The week-long course will consist of morning classroom sessions followed by company visits and/or presentations from industry leaders in the afternoons. Pre-course readings will be required as will attendance at company visits. There are short assignments within the seminar week and a final deliverable.

Chile International Seminar: Summer 2027
(Open to 2028EMBA & EMBA-Global 2028)
Dates: Tuesday, June 29 – Saturday, July 3, 2027
(Check-in: Monday, June 28, 2027; Check-out: Sunday, July 4, 2027)
Professor: Carlos Singer
City: Santiago, Chile
Add/Drop Deadline: Thursday, April 29, 2027

This course is an in-depth examination of Latin America's economy, finances and firm behavior and performance. The emphasis of the course is on Emerging Markets as a major element of the world economy. It focuses on some of the following questions: Why do countries grow? What causes disparities in income between countries? How relevant is the role of education and innovation in economic growth? What is the role played by foreign investment? What does it take to create first class firms and managers in Emerging Markets?

The class involves both an academic and on-site learning experience. The learning and value acquired from this course is based on class discussion and hands on experience visiting firms in Santiago. It is also a case study, perhaps the most significant one of your graduate business education, bringing together many disciplines studied in your MBA program. The course structure will consist of morning class sessions, followed by company visits in the afternoons. The course grade will be calculated through in-class quizzes and/or presentations, participation in case discussions and a final assignment.

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South Africa International Seminar: Fall 2027
(Open to 2028EMBA & EMBA-Global 2028)
Dates: Tuesday, August 31, 2027 – Saturday, September 4, 2027
(Check-in: Monday, August 30, 2027; Check-out: Sunday, September 5, 2027)
Professor: Stephan Meier
City: Cape Town, South Africa
Add/Drop Deadline: Thursday, July 1, 2027

This immersive course explores the dynamic tech landscape of Africa, with a special focus on Cape Town, South Africa. As one of the continent's leading technology hubs, Cape Town has earned a reputation for innovation, entrepreneurship, and cutting-edge advancements across various industries. The city is home to a thriving ecosystem of startups, incubators, and multinational tech companies, making it a key player in Africa's digital transformation.
This course aims to train students' global intelligence, i.e. their understanding of specific cultural aspects of different consumer markets by analyzing the potential and challenges of Africa's markets – using South Africa as a case study. South Africa is a country of around 62m inhabitants with a GDP p.c. of ~ $6,500 in 2022. GDP was growing about 0.5% in the same year. It is also a country with a very troubling history and one of the highest inequalities in the world.
While South Africa is perhaps best known for its commodities businesses, given its significant mineral resources (it remains a primary producer of Gold), the mining sector does not lend itself as easily to gaining a sufficient impression of the positive changes and also tensions that exist in South Africa's economy and how it may be a gateway to business in Africa more generally. Throughout the course, we will examine the historical evolution of technology in Africa and how Cape Town has emerged as a hub for innovation. We will explore a range of industries where technology is driving significant change. Particular emphasis will be placed on Cape Town's contributions to these sectors, such as its growing fintech scene and the role of technology in addressing social and economic challenges.

Germany International Seminar: Fall 2027
(Open to 2028EMBA & EMBA-Global 2028)
Dates: Tuesday, September 28, 2027 – Saturday, October 2, 2027
(Check-in: Monday, September 27, 2027; Check-out: Sunday, October 3, 2027)
Professor: Bernd Schmitt
City: Munich, Germany
Add/Drop Deadline: Thursday, July 29, 2027

Prof. Bernd Schmitt's course, Managing Brands, Identity and Experiences, focuses on the need for companies to understand the financial value of their corporate brand and products, to manage brands strategically and to deliver implementations to customers that are relevant, differentiated and powerful so as to build an emotional bond and loyalty. The course will focus on three topics: brand strategy and valuation; visual identity and experiential branding; and organizational branding issues. The course will familiarize you with the best practices in branding and also explore successful branding initiatives in financial, pharmaceutical, consumer goods, entertainment and other industries. Drawing on the course location, you will meet with people from the branding industry from various companies.
The course structure will be a mix of classroom sessions, corporate presentations and cultural events. You will be asked to complete a group project/presentation during the week as well as submit a final written assignment after the course.

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International Seminar Selection Process

Registration Process: Friday, November 13 (10:00 AM) – Sunday, November 29, 2026 (4:00 PM)
The International Seminar Selection System (ISSS) will open on November 13, 2026 at 10:00 AM.

- To access the ISSS, log on to the International Seminar section of the EMBA Student Services website (https://travel.business.columbia.edu), and click on the "International Seminar" button. You will then be prompted to log in with your UNI and password to access the system. Upon accessing ISSS, please rank all the International Seminar courses in order of your preference: first choice, second choice, third choice, etc.
- **Important: after ranking all trips according to your preference, click 'continue' on that screen, and then click 'confirm' on the next screen.**

To make the process as equitable as possible, the ISSS will systematically place students in seminars according to their first choice until each seminar is filled to capacity. If there is excess demand for a particular seminar, ISSS will randomly assign the seats to students who chose that seminar as their first choice. For students who do not get their first choice, ISSS will proceed through the choices until all students have a seat.

All selections will be processed by Friday, December 4, 2026. Students will be notified by email indicating which seminar they have been registered for.

Please note: The ISSS process is separate from the Course Match process you will use to choose elective courses.

Add/Drop Process
After initial selection, you may elect changes to your selected seminar. If you register for an International Seminar course and are not able to attend, you will be able to drop the course and add a different seminar in which there is capacity. If space in a seminar fills up, you are automatically added to the waitlist for that class.

We recommend that all students participate in the Initial Selection period. Seminars may reach capacity after Initial Selection, so participation increases the likelihood of getting your first choice.

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FAQs

Can I tag along with another EMBA student on their International Seminar and participate?

Class sessions, lunches, and company visits are only open to students registered in the seminar. If you travel as an officially registered plus one and pay the daily double-occupancy surcharge you are only welcome to attend any city tour or evening optional social event open to plus ones during the week.

Do I need to apply for a visa to any of these locations?

For US citizens, please refer to the International Travel website for the specific visa and/or passport requirements for each country.

For non-US citizens, please inquire with the consulate of your country of citizenship.

Where will classes be held?

This varies according to the seminar location. Note that each trip consists of a combination of company visits and classroom time.

Can I take more than one International Seminar?

We have capacity in the International Seminars for each of our students from the EMBA-NY and EMBA-Global programs to take one course. Opportunity for a second seminar may arise if there is excess capacity in a course after the Add/Drop deadline occurs. All students will be notified of any available seats by email, and a lottery will be held. If you are able to take a second International Seminar, you would be responsible for a second seminar fee of $4500, which covers expenses, in addition to the three credits of tuition for the course.

May I bring a guest?

Plus ones are welcome to participate in the city tours and optional evening social events as long as they are officially registered as plus ones and have paid the daily surcharge for double occupancy, but will not be allowed to attend class sessions, lunches, or company visits. Please note there will also be a fee for plus ones to attend Oktoberfest in Munich—assuming the trip takes place during that timeframe.