**The KULeuven-Illinois Experience:**

**Encountering Europe through the Lens of Social Science:**

**Spring Semester 2012**

The University of Illinois in collaboration with its partner, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL) is developing a next generation study abroad program in Leuven, Belgium. We are constructing a new field site that will provide students with unique intercultural learning opportunities in the social sciences. European and American students will participate in common classes and curriculum as they explore the social and demographic transitions that accompany and underpin globalization. The inaugural edition of the program is slated for the spring semester 2012 and will feature a thematic focus on population and family dynamics from a life course perspective.

**Academic Program.**

The sociology departments of each institution have taken the lead in implementing the program. Sociology at Illinois has programmatic strengths in population studies, sociology of the family and transnational/globalization studies. Parallel strengths characterize the KUL sociology department along with expertise in public policy and cross-national survey research. To the extent possible this means that KUL courses will fulfill specific requirements for Illinois students and for many students will provide a pathway to specialization through focused study during the Leuven semester. Tentative specializations include family demography, methodology, policy, and European society and culture. For students interested in a broader academic experience other pathways are planned that take advantage of the courses from the arts, science, theology, philosophy, and business. Although the primary language of undergraduate instruction is Dutch (Flemish), a wide range of courses are offered in English.

**The Leuven Advantage**

KUL has a long history of hosting international students. Well-developed programs to facilitate international exchange are a hallmark of KUL’s tradition and commitment to the future, including ERASMUS, ATLANTIS, and PECS (Study Abroad Program in European Culture and Society). They have about 5,500 international students in residence on their campuses, and an extensive portfolio of courses with a comparative or international dimension.

Moreover, Leuven is a beautiful ringed medieval town only a twenty-minute train ride from the international airport in Brussels, capital of the European Union. At nearly six
hundred years of age, KUL is one of the oldest and most respected centers of higher learning on the continent. Students enrolled in this program will be designated as Visiting Scholars at KUL with access privileges to a wide range of university facilities. Only an hour and half away from Netherlands, France, Germany, and Luxembourg means Leuven is an ideal base from which to explore much of Western Europe.

Leuven's historical charms are augmented by a vibrant social life supported by more than 30,000 KUL students and staff. Leuven is a great place for interactive experiences with Belgian peoples and culture as the majority of the population speaks English (as well as French). Outside of class cultural and recreational opportunities abound. In addition to beautiful abbeys, churches, parks, and farms surrounding Leuven, there are important museums and historical sites in Belgium associated with the two major World Wars. The program will include coordinated cultural and social activities such as field trips to Bruges, Ieper (Ypres), Ghent, and Brussels.

**Expenses:** TBA but the goal is to make costs comparable to the on-campus semester.

Watch for detailed on the Illinois Study Abroad website.

[http://studyabroad.illinois.edu/](http://studyabroad.illinois.edu/)

**Priority Deadline:** June 15, 2011

Professor Gray Swicegood

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New SOC Offerings for FALL:

**SOC 396: DS -- "Cyberspace and Social Relations"**

We will be studying the networks that constitute "cyberspace" and the ways that they are embedded in the older worlds of "meatspace." We will address such topics as social networking, virtual reality, panopticism, anonymity and accountability, identity construction, intellectual property regimes, electronic democracy, telecommuting, digital divides, distributed knowledge, and online learning. Most of our texts/materials will themselves be available online, though interested students may want to get paper copies of Lessig's _Code_v2.0_ and Rheingold's _Virtual_Community_.

**SOC 396: INT – “Internships”**
The internship course is designed to provide Juniors and Seniors majoring in Sociology with an opportunity to engage in experiential learning in which they apply sociological concepts, skills, and knowledge in a work environment. Students will complete internships in a setting of their choosing including but not limited to community organizations, government agencies, and local businesses under supervision. Students will attend classes throughout the semester and engage in reflective activities on the process and meaning of experiential learning. **Limited seats available – advisor approval required to register for this course.**

Prerequisite: SOC 100, six additional hours of Sociology coursework, Junior or Senior standing.

For more information – contact: soc-advising@illinois.edu

**SOC 196: “Issues in Sociology-- Youth, Crime, and Public Space”**

This course examines juvenile delinquency at the intersection of youth, crime, and public space. Through an exploration of these social categories, the course spans the sociological subfields of transnational youth studies, cultural criminology, and the spatiality of everyday life.

** this course is not yet available on Enterprise, but will be available soon – so keep checking Enterprise for its availability!!