1. What did you think of the video? Were you able to “ step outside of your thoughts and behavioral patterns” and reserve a part of your mental capacity to “listen” to and monitor your internal reactions as a means of gaining a deeper insight into the nature of yourself? What’s your perspective on this notion of “self awareness” in the present moment as a tool to learn more about yourself?  Was this “radical experiment” an effective one in terms of helping you understand the concept of empathy?  Also, what connections to the concept of cultural humility come to mind?  (Write at least several well-developed paragraphs - very short answers are NOT sufficient!)  
   I really enjoyed this TED Talk. I find self-awareness and the ability to be present to be an everyday challenge. However, once achieved it can change your perspective. The TED Talk proved that through imagery. Sam Richards gave us the perspective as an Arab Muslim living in Iraq by displaying their true fear and uncertainty of American people. At times we view other countries as threatening without realizing that not everyone in that country means us harm.

The example Sam Richards gave with the insurgents and the American soldiers was powerful. I could empathize in that moment with everyone in the photograph in different ways. It should be noted that I am a very sensitive person and will tear up at any commercial that involves a person or animal in need. With that being said, I think Richards using that photograph to create empathy showed me that deep down everyone is human. We all think what we have been taught is the right way.  
Cultural humility to me means being able to accept that I do not know everything, and it might be possible that the things I was taught are not right. Self-awareness follows that same guideline of being able to realize your own faults and grow from them. Both of these skills are something we will all be learning throughout our time abroad.

1. Whenever we travel abroad, we experience differences in perspective and ways of thinking.  Sometimes we may feel that others are judging us inappropriately based on our appearance, our ability to communicate with locals, and our nationality (there's no shortage of stereotypes regarding the "typical" American - and, as an easily identifiable American, you will hear a lot about Donald Trump and American politics during your stay in Europe).  So, take a moment to consider how other cultures / countries may view Americans.  Do some informal research (on the internet or perhaps talking with people who you know who have spent a significant amount of time in foreign countries), and answer the following questions:  1)  What are some perspectives or attitudes, positive and negative, that you believe Europeans (or, more specifically, central / eastern Europeans) may have about Americans? (cite your sources); and 2)  What are some things you can do to integrate more effectively into the local culture - and avoid being labeled with some of the negative stereotypes that Europeans may have about Americans?  (Write at least several well-developed paragraphs for EACH question above - very short answers are NOT sufficient!)  
   * I have often read that people from other countries view Americans as loud and obnoxious. However, I was not surprised to read that some people in European countries associate Americans with being arrogant and ethnocentric (Beckman, 2017). Truthfully, I can see why people from other countries may feel this way. As Americans, we do not typically express interest in cultures outside of our own. At least in my experiences, Americans are mainly focused on what is happening in the United States.
   * During my experience in the Czech Republic and any other countries I may visit this summer, I plan on blending in as much as possible. I think it is important to dive into the local culture not only to learn but also to avoid making yourself a target. I have been researching clothing styles and plan on buying some things from local stores when I get there in order to fit in. I also hope to familiarize myself quickly with transportation methods so I don’t look like a tourist. As far as stereotypes about Americans go, I hope to change at least one person’s mind if they feel this way. I plan on being respectful and learning as much as I can about the culture.

I realize that I will be easily spotted as an American and will also be going to tourist attractions in Prague. However, I think if I really dive into the Czech culture and be aware of my surroundings, I will be able to keep an open mind.

1. How can practicing the concepts of empathy and cultural humility (and understanding something about the history, culture, and traditions of a people / place) allow us to see a clearer view of reality?  Along these lines, to what extent do you believe empathy and cultural humility are practiced by the world’s political leaders, and what suggestions might you have for them?  Be specific, use examples.  (Write at least several well-developed paragraphs - very short answers are NOT sufficient!)  
     
   Practicing empathy by putting yourself in another’s shoes can be a lifesaver while abroad. I think in my situation it is especially necessary because I’m going to be the intruder. I will be the one living in their home for the summer. It is necessary to imagine how they might feel about me being there. Based on their history, how would they feel about Americans? It could also help political leaders to think this way when making contacts in other countries. Getting the backstory of how a country feels towards Americans could mean the difference between a peaceful interaction and a conflict.
2. Finally, I want your ideas for steps you will take (prior to leaving for Europe, and while you are there on program) to enhance your own worldview; to become a more [global citizen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_citizenship).  Assignment 1 asks you to set some goals for your time on the program, and you can just summarize here (for support and future conversations with me and your fellow classmates) your goals and plans related to improving your intercultural competencies.

The first assignment for this class gave me some great ideas on steps to take to enhance my perspective and understand the challenges to come. For me personally, being prepared is imperative. So far, I have been able to prepare myself by doing research on the country of the Czech Republic and their culture. I have also been able to speak at length with my supervisor about the culture of the business I will be working for which has been very helpful.

Professionally, my goal is to help the company I am working for create a new brand image through social media managing. My goals while abroad also include soaking up every bit of culture I can. I am very committed to this because I desire to learn about my ancestors from Czech. A personal goal for me is to leap out of my comfort zone and conquer my own anxieties. This journey is something I need to learn more about myself too.

Beckman, Jamie. “What Other Countries Think of Americans.” *Budget Travel*, 10 July 2017, www.budgettravel.com/article/what-other-countries-think-of-americans\_67402.