***Prompt 1: Describing your internship site***. Tell us a little about the organization where you are interning, and a little about business / industry you’re in.

Discuss how various “academic disciplines” are defined and represented at your organization. What I’m looking for here is how knowledge and skills are distributed across the organization – By project? By department? By position? What are some of the most important / valued knowledge and skills in this organization / career field? What transferable skills are in the highest demand (i.e., communication, team skills, computer skills, etc.). How is the organization structured? How are departments, groups, teams structured / organized (as applicable)?

The organization I am interning for is an investment/ development firm called Getberg. The company started in Russia strictly doing investment and since moving to the Czech Republic a few years ago, began developing their own housing properties. I work in the marketing department as a social media intern. I work with two other interns and we report to our superior, the social media manager.

When I first began my internship for Getberg, the company was more like a family. Everyone worked together and communicated the efforts toward the end goal. However, in my short time there, I have noticed a change in the knowledge distribution. Many people are saying there is a divide between investment and operations, and it has become clear that the two departments are not willing to work together. This means each person from operations must go through the head of investment to communicate with anyone in the investment department. It has created some confusion and resulted in a loss of profit on certain promotions.

The skills that are of the utmost importance at this company are communication, patience, and strategic action. It seems like all of the top management are walking a tightrope and at any moment they could fall and take the rest of us with them. I think in order to succeed at Getberg, one would need a foot in the door to top management – a way to understand their needs and to relay those needs to everyone else.

***Prompt 2: Describing roles and responsibilities.***Tell me about your primary job responsibilities AND the primary job responsibilities of your supervisor.  Also, now that you have gotten started at your internship, what kinds of opportunities exist for you - with respect to gaining experience, enhancing your intercultural communication and competence, and integrating well into your internship environment?  What can you be doing better to help you achieve these goals? (Be specific!)

My job responsibilities include creating content for social media, researching what media tactics are working, and managing the company’s Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. My direct superior is a social media manager and he guides us interns each week on what we should be focusing on. Lately, we have been mapping out a new strategy for social media because Getberg is changing so rapidly. However, it is not very easy to get the information we need to complete the strategy.

My supervisor who hired me for this internship is the Business Operations Manager. She overseas pretty much everything that happens in the development department. She makes deals with endorsers, manages marketing, and communicates with investment to understand the company’s goals. One of my goals is to be more like her. She wears so many hats and is running around all the time. Yet even with all of that, she still makes time to hear my ideas and focuses on each individual in our team.

I think if I can come out of this experience with half of her communication skills and patience, I will have exceeded my goals.

***Prompt 3: Identifying your cultural perceptions.*** If you have yet to do so, please read the cultural sojourner article under the Learning Module 2 / Readings tab. No doubt that you, as a cultural sojourner, are experiencing the daily recognition that there are many differences between USA and the Czech Republic. Tell me something about your perceptions regarding Czech customs and behaviors that you have noticed. What makes you feel comfortable and at ease? Which aspects of the culture and/or Czech behaviors make you feel anxious and uncomfortable?  Make a few explicit connections to the article (so that I can see you have read it) - in particular, some aspects of the cultural transition cycle, and the preparation and sojourn stages as related to your own experience.

I feel now that I am past the feeling of culture shock and more into the adjustment period that the article refers to. I am noticing more things about the Czech culture every day, and also being able to blend in by following suit. Surprisingly, one of the things that makes me feel comfortable is the lack of conversation with strangers. I have not been approached once here by a stranger. I am able to walk around and mind my own business. It is a nice change because where I’m from people to do not leave me alone as I walk around. They comment on my work clothes, the things I’m carrying, or ask what music I’m listening to (while my headphones are in my ears).

Here, I can have my solitude to and from work. I quite enjoy the silence, especially in the morning before coffee. I can definitely see how I could experience another form of culture shock when I go home and strangers are more apt to come up to me. It will be strange.

One of the few things that make me uncomfortable here is the amount to which people smoke. I recently quit smoking and I am having a very difficult time keeping straight with everyone blowing smoke in my face as I walk by. However, I am trying to remain strong and walk faster than the smokers so I do not have to smell it.

***Prompt 4: Cultural Engagement.*** Please reflect on your perception of how effectively you are “engaging the culture of the Czech Republic.” Be sure to respond to ALL of the questions!

* Do you seek out unusual cultural experiences?
* Do you strive to talk to as many native Czech people as possible?
* Are you forming healthy friendships with some of the locals? Or do you spend most of your free time with your ASU / USA compatriots or other internationals living in Prague?
* Based on your time here in Prague thus far, what specific cultural adjustments and changes in your thinking and behavior have you noticed?
* Finally, what goals can you set for yourself for the remainder of the program to become even more culturally engaged?

In my time here, I have tried to do as many things that make me uncomfortable as I can. For instance, I went to a ropes climbing obstacle course with my work as a teambuilding exercise. I also have engaged in many Czech past times like shisha. I could be better at talking with native people. I practice the few Czech words I know on the guards every morning and night as I come and go from my dorm. However, I find it difficult to go up to a stranger and start talking to them because people here do not do that. I have made connections with the baristas at my local coffee shops- they know my order and know that I am trying to learn Czech.

My work relationships have flourished more than I anticipated. The company I work for is all about going out after work for a bite and team building exercises that bring us closer together. The company also just started giving English lessons so I have been able to help some of my coworkers practice their English.

I have learned to not smile as I walk around. It sounds funny, but I used to get weird looks when I would smile at strangers. I realized they are not a very smiley culture. I have also become more aware of my body language. At first, everywhere I went people could tell I was American. I was walking around smiling and laughing and being outgoing. Upon observation, I learned it is okay to wear your headphones and only speak to strangers on the commute when necessary. I have also learned that not everyone is cool with you petting their dogs.

I would like to learn more about why the Czech people can come off cold. My supervisor gave me a brief history of why Czechs are suspicious of Russians, and I know a little back story on other countries that have done the Czech Republic wrong. I would like to understand why the people here take longer to warm up, and I would like to practice ways to get them to trust me.

***Prompt 5: Focus Group 1 Reflection.***Now that you have completed the first focus group meeting, reflect on your key learnings and "aha" moments that resulted from that meeting (and your preparation for the meeting).  What were the most powerful insights you achieved?  What do you wish we had covered more thoroughly in the meeting?  What ideas or suggestions do you have for making the first focus group meeting an even more powerful experience? What might be some learning goals you would be willing to set for yourself based on our focus group discussions?  ***Again, please be specific and use examples.***

I learned a lot about the Czech Republic as well as neighboring countries in our focus group. It gave me some insight as to why it feels a certain way walking down the streets in Prague, and then a completely different way walking around in other countries. I feel like I understand Czechs a little better after learning their power distance and collectivist ratios. My group didn’t get to discuss the uncertainty avoidance category and I wish we had because I find it very interesting. In my time here, I have observed a low uncertainty avoidance in the business culture. But this could just be based on the company I am interning for.

***Prompt 6: Decontextualizing and thinking analogically.*** Offer up something that represents your experience thus far in Prague. It can be a photograph, a poem, song lyrics, a piece of artwork. If you're using a photograph here, you’re not actually showing a picture of yourself. Instead, you are finding some other object, image and/or words to characterize your experience thus far here in Prague. If necessary, you can attach a file with your post. Explain the connection and why you chose it.

I chose a photograph of a sign in Lesser Town. It says ‘from Prague with love’. This represents my time here in the best way because in the left side of the photo you see a building under construction. And in the center is this sign that looks like a smile. This photo is a metaphor for me while I’m here. I’m not really sure what my life will turn into after this, but I’m staying positive while I’m here. ‘Under construction’ vs ‘positive in Prague’ are my overall feelings while I’m here.

This study abroad has been a growing process for me. It has helped me take a step back and realize that I am not happy where I am working back home. I’m actually miserable there. However, I have no idea what else I can do at this point. I’m hopeful that my internship and diploma can help me find something where I can be happy.

***Prompt 7:  (Prague 2018)  Terezen feedback.***  Please provide some brief feedback about the *Terezen* excursion.  Since this is the first time I have ever taken a group there, I'd like to know what you found most valuable about the experience, and whether of not you would recommend that I take next year's group on this excursion.  Thank you for your feedback, and for helping to make the program stronger!

This particular excursion hit home for me because I am Jewish and my family members were taking to Terezin. It was quite emotional for me and very difficult to walk through the camp. I did not end up making it past the torture room before I couldn’t take it anymore. However, I do not regret going and I do not think this should be removed from the agenda for future study abroad programs. Seeing what the Jewish people went through is extremely important to ensure that something like this never ever happens again. I think it would be a shame for other students to miss out on this experience because it was truly eye opening. The prayer room was my favorite part because it showed that even though these people were going through hell, they kept their hope alive. I think this excursion should be done every year and I wish more schools would do it as well.

**One final note: Be sure to review your classmate's initial postings, and then respond to / comment on at least five of your fellow classmate's answers.**