

Dominican Republic: Education & Culture

Winterim Study Abroad

Instructor Information

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Course Information

Time: January 3-17, 2026

Location: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Number of s.h.: 3

Course Description

This course offers students the opportunity to view and interact firsthand with a variety of community, civil society, and government services in the field of education in the Dominican Republic. These include local organizations carrying out activities such as basic education, social change, empowerment, and community resilience. Additionally, students will actively interact with Dominican Republic youth leaders and discuss the ever-shifting landscape of increased youth leadership and societal change. Themes of diversity and vulnerable excluded populations will be highlighted. Students will be under the tutelage of associate director of school partnerships and global education initiatives for the College of Education, Amira Nash and associate professor, Carolyn Colvin. Group meetings will take place daily following school and site visits to discuss experiences.

Eligibility Requirements:

To have the best possible experience, applicants must meet the following requirements:

-Open to: Undergraduate and graduate students. Preference will be given to students from: All Teacher Education Programs, Education Studies and Human Relations, and the Spanish department.

-Good academic and disciplinary standing at the University of Iowa

Course Goals

This course is designed to support students to:

- ❑ Study the education ecosystem in a middle-income developing country
- ❑ Understand formal and non-formal education opportunities, public school system, barriers and opportunities for development
- ❑ Explore a variety of schooling and curricular models in a variety of settings
- ❑ Interact with key stakeholders within the ecosystem including authorities, higher education institutions and community-based organizations
- ❑ Gain an understanding of Dominican Republic history, society, culture, and educational institutions
- ❑ Foster cultural competencies and appreciation for Dominican Republic culture through interaction and immersion

Pre-Departure Agenda:

<u>Session</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Lecture and Class Activities</u>
1	Complete Reflection Response #1	1. Watch: A Divided Island: How Haiti and the DR became two worlds 2. Read: A comprehensive History of Dominican Republic 3. Watch: America's Backyard: The Dominican Republic 4. Read: Black activists take on Dominican government and society in quest for justice and recognition
2	Complete Reflection Response #2	1. Watch: <i>In the Time of the Butterflies</i> by Julia Alvarez (UI Main Library DVD or YouTube) 2. Read: The United States and the Fall of the Trujillo Regime

3	Complete Reflection Response #3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read: The Education System of the Dominican Republic <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Historical and Social Foundations, Institutional and Organization Principles, Education Administration and Governance, Structure of Educational System, & Educational Trends 2. Read: A Summary Analysis of Education Trends in Latin America and the Caribbean 3. Read: Education in Isolated, Rural Areas 4. Read: Why Girls Aren't Learning in the Dominican Republic?
4	Complete Reflection Response #4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read: The Institutionalization of Anti-Haitianism in Dominican History and Education 2. Read: Making it to the finish line: Educational resilience among Dominican women of Haitian descent

In-country Agenda

- ☐ Arrive to Santo Domingo
 - o Learn about culture and history
 - Colonial Walking Tour
 - Visit the Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Dominicana
 - Visit the 1st public schools of the Americas (Franciscan Monastery; Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo)
 - Participate in Entrena's Presentation on Development and Education
 - o Educational Intervention- Formal and Non-formal, rural and urban
 - Visit Casa de la Cultura de Haina to understand the role art and culture play in community education
 - Visit to Arts School "Centro Educativo en Artes Manuel Feliz Peña" and discuss education challenges
 - Visit Cigar Family Foundation Model School, the first charter school in the D.R.
 - o Community Service
 - Visit La Merced non-formal community school to understand education challenges faced by migrant population
 - Design and implement English lessons with students
 - Visit Las Aldeas Infantiles SOS
 - Visit to the Club the Chica program, sponsored by UNICEF
 - o Lodging: Hotels
- ☐ Travel to Boca Chica / Juan Dolio
 - o Visit Fundación ENED (education service program for orphan boys)
 - Lead educational activities with boys
 - o Visit Academia Yazme Yow a local dance and culture academy managed by a young leader and community changemaker
 - o Lodging: Hotels

Course Assignments

- ☐ **Reading Responses:** prior to departure, students will participate in a pre-departure orientation consisting of four sessions and will complete a 200-300 word reading reflection in order to gain familiarity with the education system, history, and current events of the Dominican Republic.

- ❓ **Journal Reflections:** In country, students will complete reflections through regular journal entries (at least 300 words) to document their reactions to the site visits.
- ❓ **Final Project:** Upon return to the U.S., students will create a video or voice-over PowerPoint presentation highlighting their experiences in schools and visiting sites in the Dominican Republic. The project should include at least 10 photos with captions and each slide should contribute to an overall theme of the students' choosing. The presentation may be used to recruit future student participants for this study abroad opportunity.

Students with Disabilities: We would like to hear from anyone who has a disability that may require some modification of the seating, travel, or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Respect for Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

College Policies

The College of Education policy on student complaints and dispute resolution can be found at <http://www.education.uiowa.edu/dean/policies/student-complaint>

The College of Education policy on student academic misconduct can be found at http://www.education.uiowa.edu/coedean/policies/student_ac_misconduct/index.html.

The College of Education policy on sexual harassment can be found at <http://www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/policy.php>.

Statement on accommodations for students with disabilities can be found at <http://provost.uiowa.edu/docs/notifications/adacover.pdf>, <http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/faculty/index.html>, <http://www.uiowa.edu/~eod/education/publications/assisting-students.html>.