

Summits & Waterfalls: An Alpine Swiss Adventure

Instructor Information

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Course Description

One hour. Pass/Fail (no letter grade). Embark on an immersive journey through Switzerland, where natural wonders, cultural heritage, and modern innovation intersect. This journey explores Switzerland's breathtaking landscapes and rich history while engaging students in discussions on geography, sustainability, and Alpine tourism.

Begin in Lucerne, where medieval architecture and stunning lake views set the stage for learning about Switzerland's unique blend of history and modernity. Cross the iconic Chapel Bridge, explore Old Town, and sail across Lake Lucerne before ascending Mount Rigi to examine Alpine geography and its impact on Swiss culture. Then, travel to Grindelwald, a picturesque mountain village at the foot of the Eiger, where students will experience firsthand the effects of glacial erosion at the Grindelwald Glacier Gorge.

Venture to Jungfrauoch, the "Top of Europe," where students will explore ice caves, glaciers, and high-altitude ecosystems, considering climate change's impact on these fragile environments. Discover the Lauterbrunnen Valley, home to the roaring Trümmelbach Falls, and visit Wengen, a car-free mountain village that highlights Switzerland's commitment to sustainability. The adventure continues at Grindelwald-First, where students will zipline over alpine meadows, cross the thrilling First Cliff Walk, and hike to the pristine Bachalpsee Lake while discussing ecotourism's role in preserving these landscapes.

Finally, conclude in Zurich, Switzerland's financial and cultural hub, where students will reflect on the country's global influence in banking, chocolate production, and environmental initiatives. Through this journey, students will gain a deeper understanding of Switzerland's geography, culture, and sustainable tourism efforts—all while experiencing one of the world's most breathtaking destinations. The costs of the trip include airfare, accommodation in three- and four-star hotels (double or triple occupancy), all meals*, travel within Switzerland on trains, metros, buses, and plenty of cable cars, and a variety of excursions, including a scenic boat ride on Lake Lucerne, a journey to Jungfrauoch – the "Top of Europe" – and a tour of the Ice Palace, a tour of Grindelwald Canyon, a visit to the stunning Trümmelbach Falls, an exhilarating ziplining and mountain cart experience at Grindelwald-First, and breathtaking hikes to alpine lakes and panoramic viewpoints. *All meals are included either in the package or by providing a stipend, and this includes meals during the days of travel, at the airport, and during the flight.

Course Student Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze the historical and cultural significance of Swiss cities and regions (Lucerne, Zurich, Lauterbrunnen, Grindelwald) by engaging in guided tours, site visits, and structured journal reflections.
2. Assess the role of Switzerland's transportation infrastructure—high-speed trains, mountain railways, and cable cars—on tourism, sustainability, and economic development through guided experiences and structured journal responses.
3. Interpret Swiss geography and natural landscapes by documenting key observations from guided excursions and outdoor activities, using structured journal entries to analyze their impact on the environment and tourism.
4. Explore Switzerland's multilingual and multicultural identity through structured interactions with locals, engagement with regional customs, and journal reflections analyzing how history has shaped modern Swiss society.
5. Synthesize personal insights, academic connections, and cultural observations by applying reflective writing techniques in a structured daily journal that examines specific themes related to the trip.

Statement of Engaged Learning:

The entire course is experiential, i.e., completely "engaged," through daily tours and visits to sites of historical importance and other places of interest.

Evaluation & Grading Scale

The class is pass-fail. You will be expected to reflect daily, on the day's experiences, in a journal to be turned in for grading. A complete journal (at least 70%) and willing participation in the trip's activities will result in a passing grade.

Pass ≥ 70 Fail < 70

Attendance & Class Participation

Students must attend, engage in, and be on time for all tours, events, activities, meetings, etc. that are planned for this trip. Any student who is absent from any planned activity will not receive credit for the course unless that absence is excused (i.e. medical reason). Medical or other emergencies that would prevent participation should be discussed with the instructor immediately, when they occur.

Required Journal & Vlog

In order to pass the course, students must submit a Journal and a vlog of their trip.

- **Journal (80% of grade):** Students will maintain a structured daily journal, which serves as the primary academic component of this course. Journal entries must be at least 500 words per day and should not only describe what happened but also analyze key themes from the day's experiences. Each entry should be written in standard English paragraph form

using correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. You should use the following journal prompts and themes:

Day	Location	Focus & Required Reflection Topics
Day 1	Arrival & Lucerne	First impressions of Switzerland. Compare Lucerne's architecture, transportation, and daily life to your home city. What historical or cultural aspects stood out?
Day 2	Mount Rigi	What did you learn about Swiss geography and its impact on daily life? How does Switzerland balance tourism with environmental conservation?
Day 3	Travel to Grindelwald & Explore	As you transition from city to alpine village, what differences do you notice in lifestyle, architecture, and infrastructure? How do small mountain communities adapt to tourism while maintaining their traditions?
Day 4	Jungfrauoch	Reflect on the engineering and infrastructure that allow access to high-altitude regions. What role does Jungfrauoch play in Swiss tourism and sustainability efforts?
Day 5	Lauterbrunnen & Wengen	Analyze how Switzerland preserves natural beauty while maintaining a strong tourism industry. How do small mountain villages maintain their cultural identity in a globalized world?
Day 6	Grindelwald-First Adventure	How does adventure tourism contribute to the Swiss economy? What were your personal takeaways from experiencing Switzerland's outdoor culture?
Day 7	Zurich & Lindt Chocolate Factory	How does Switzerland's economic model (e.g., banking, luxury goods, sustainability) contribute to its global influence? What role does Swiss chocolate play in cultural identity and international trade?

- **VLOG (20% of grade):** The second required submission is a vlog, of at least three minutes, containing pictures and video clips from your trip. Take a lot of photos and videos during the trip. Be intentional about this. Upon returning to FSC, you should use an online video maker to "glue" your selected photos and videos together with background music of your choosing.

You must submit both the Journal and a YouTube link to the Vlog by **11:59 pm on Sunday, November 9th**. Failure to turn in an acceptable journal and vlog will result in your failing the course.

ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FALL 2025

Florida Southern College and Student Disability Services are committed to providing access and inclusion for students with documented disabilities to courses, facilities (including Residence Halls), and programs. Categories of disabilities could include, but would not be limited to, chronic health diagnoses, learning disabilities, and mental health conditions. If you anticipate or experience barriers to your college experience due to the impact of a disability, please notify the Office of Student Disability Services to discuss the eligibility process for establishing accommodations. You can reach FSC's Student Disability Services professionals through Asst. Dean for Student Support Dr. Sandy Calvert by e-mail at disabilityservices@flsouthern.edu, in Carlisle Rogers Building, by telephone at (863) 680-4900, or by fax at (863) 680-4195. Our Student Disability Services professionals are available for both face-to-face and Zoom meetings, by appointment.

For more information on disability accommodations and access, please visit our website at <http://www.flsouthern.edu/campus-resources/student-disability-services.aspx>

NOTE: This trip involves quite a lot of walking, sometimes on rather steep hills and stairs. Students with mobility issues may find this trip inappropriate. Please discuss any such concerns with Dr. Pospichal and the instructor before signing up for the trip.

FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE HONOR CODE

"I will practice academic and personal integrity and excellence of character and expect the same from others."

As an academic community, Florida Southern College is firmly committed to honor and integrity in the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, as a member of this academic community, each student acknowledges responsibility for his or her actions and commits to the highest standards of integrity. In doing so through this Honor Code, each student makes a covenant with the college not to engage in any form of academic dishonesty, fraud, cheating, or theft. Further information on the Honor Code is available in the current Catalog.

****Your daily journal and vlog are the the primary sources of your grade. While you will likely have similar observations to those of others, your journal should be your own, individual effort, in your own words.*

RULES OF THE TRIP

The following set of rules have evolved over the years and can be generally divided into two categories: cardinal rules and strong suggestions. Breaking any of the cardinal rules is grounds for being sent home immediately with no refund of the trip.

Cardinal Rules

1. **Never, ever, ever travel by yourself.** Exploring on your own is STRICTLY not allowed. The minimum group size for exploring on your own is three students. If you plan to travel or

roam around in such a group, you must notify the trip director/chaperone on the WhatsApp group (see below). During your time away from the group, if one travel partner(s) needs to use the rest room, the other(s) must accompany them. If you are in a cross-gender partnership, the other partner(s) must wait outside the restroom. No exceptions will be made to this rule. Any time you leave the group, you must tell one of us about it and get our approval. That is any time you leave the hotel or other building, for any reason. We are responsible to know where you are and what you are doing at all times.

2. You must always be reachable – by phone - by your trip director or your chaperone.
3. **Your chaperone has equal authority to that of the trip director. End of story.**
4. WhatsApp will be used for group communication. Your phone must have a data plan, and you must have WhatsApp installed on your phone. We will have a WhatsApp group for this Junior Journey, and we will use this WhatsApp group to send details about events and meetups throughout the duration of our trip.
5. Harassment of any sort – bullying, racist or bigoted talk, unwanted touching or interference etc. will not be tolerated.
6. **This is a Class.** Junior Journey is a college class; it is not a free-time vacation to do whatever you want. During the day, you are officially "in class." That can be hard to remember when your assignment is to explore the Ice Museum atop Jungfrauoch, to observe the natural wonders of Trümmelbach Falls or even indulging in some of the best fondue Switzerland has to offer! But it is officially "class" time. You need to be present, in good mental condition (not hung over, not sleepy), and participating in the group activities each day. You also need to be on time each morning, ready to head out for the day's adventure.
7. **Behavior.** Please do not sleep, write notes to each other, listen to music, text, or engage in any other activity that may disturb others during tours, films, lectures, etc. Give your undivided attention and respect to tours guides, lecturers, and any other person you encounter during this experience. You represent Florida Southern College and are expected to act in an appropriate, professional manner at all times during this trip.
8. **Alcohol.** The legal drinking age in Switzerland is 16! Echoing the sentiments above, you are a student representing Florida Southern College. Drinking alcohol during the day (before dinner) is not acceptable. You are in class. With respect to the evenings, you do need to be very responsible -- as on a regular school night, going out to a pub and drinking until 4:00 a.m. is simply not reasonable nor acceptable. If the goal is to go out and get drunk each night, you should not go on this trip; it's simply not acceptable, will not be tolerated, will result in a failing grade, and may result in your being sent home.
9. The SAFETY of the people on this trip will always trump any other consideration. ALWAYS. If you engage in unsafe or risky behavior on this trip, whether or not it is codified above, you may be sent back to the US.
10. All students must purchase a [travel money belt](#) that can be discretely hidden underneath your shirt. When traveling, your passport must always be kept in this travel belt. While Switzerland is one of the safer European countries, thieves still operate in heavy tourist areas. They are experts at quickly cutting the straps of such belts and grabbing your money/passport before you know what happened. These should not be worn around your

hip where it is exposed. Rather, the money belt should be worn higher up on your waist, under your shirt, and is solely intended to store your passport and larger bills, which, in theory, should only be accessed within the privacy of your hotel room.

Strong Suggestions

1. Take a photograph of your passport and any other identification you have and keep it on your phone.
2. If the hotel room has a safe, you should lock your passports within that safe during your local travel within the city. Carry your student ID and your US driver's license to serve as identification. When checking out of each hotel and going to a new city, remember to take your passports out of the safe and bring them with you.
3. Remember to bring any prescriptions that you need along with you. Also carry a limited amount of Tylenol/Ibuprofen in case you need it.
4. Do NOT accept drinks in bars from strangers. You never know if the drink would be safe for consumption.
5. Swiss have four main languages, none of which are English! What is essential to remember is not to act like the quintessential American who is loud, obnoxious, and expects everyone to speak in English. Most Swiss do not speak English. You should have a translation app on your phone and should make sincere attempts to speak the local language.

Helpful Advice

1) What to Bring:

- Bring two comfortable pairs of shoes. We will be walking a lot, upwards of 20,000 steps per day. We will also be climbing plenty of stairs and will be experiencing a variety of different terrains. Make sure you are comfortable with slightly strenuous activities.
- Bring a pair of waterproof hiking boots for our trip to Jungfrauoch and our hike on the glacier. Your shoes will get wet, and the last thing you want are numb toes!
- One or two jackets and a raincoat/umbrella. The weather in Switzerland during October averages in the 50s (Fahrenheit), with highs in the low 60s and lows in the 30s. Rain can be expected. You will want to pack a couple of jackets and either a raincoat or umbrella. I strongly recommend waterproof boots/shoes (or the second pair of shoes mentioned above)
- Sunglasses. For many, this is automatic, regardless of the destination. For others, however, sunglasses are optional. Let me be clear: you will WANT sunglasses. Why? When we get to Jungfrauoch ("Top of Europe"), we will take a hike out on the glacier. You will see white (ice) for as far as the eye can see. The glare is quite something and sunglasses will feel like a requirement!
- A compatible adapter for your electronic devices (phone, tablet, computer). Switzerland uses 230v electricity, which means you'll want to make sure any adapters are rated correctly.
- Water bottle. Water in Switzerland is free, healthy, and readily available and arguably better than most bottled options.

- Lock for your luggage! We may arrive in some cities several hours before check-in. While the hotels do offer free storage of luggage prior to check-in (or after check-out) if needed, it's certainly safer to lock the zippers in the hopes of avoiding anyone tampering with your belongings.
- 2) **Don't Over pack!** You MUST be able to handle your own luggage, carry it with you for considerable distances, and climb stairs with it. It's a nice balancing act of packing enough essentials while not over-burdening oneself with a massive/heavy suitcase.
 - 3) **Spending Money.** For many, this is a once-in-a-lifetime trip. You will want to bring spending money, likely three hundred to five hundred Swiss francs. What costs are covered? The first page of this syllabus gives a full listing of what is covered. Beyond that, you will want spending money for other things and souvenirs throughout the trip.
 - 4) **Offline Google Maps.** Prior to leaving FSC, you should open your Google Maps app on your phone and download an offline map Lucerne, Grindelwald, Lauterbrunnen, Wengen, and Zurich. You will be using Google Maps often while walking around, and there's no reason to eat up your data for this when you can download those maps ahead of time.
 - 5) **Be comfortable and confident to explore in your small group of three – but be safe.** Once students have completed the activities planned for the day, they may explore on their own. This will include several hours on most days.
 - REMINDER: exploring on your own is STRICTLY NOT ALLOWED. You must be in a group of at least three students, and everyone must be reachable by phone.

Do not fear exploring in your group of three. Be confident. **BE SMART.** Trust your gut instinct. If something does not feel right, there is a good chance it is not right. **Leave. Call the Switzerland Emergency line 112** (the equivalent of 911).