



Jesuit Business in Las Vegas

The Creighton College of Business Las Vegas/L.A. Travel course

Description:

Business is not a singular institution, but is the dynamic multifaceted conglomeration of multiple interests pursuing profit through product or service distribution. In its wake, 'business' has a profound impact on the ways we think the goals we pursue, the 'norms' we consider normal, and also helps direct our interests and so, inadvertently, directs us away from particular values, goals and interests. Insofar as business does this, business helps construct our culture and our lives. This 3 credit course in May will explore the ways in which hyperrealities (realities created through media/marketing or other technology) have become a regular part of our world through the internet, cellular phone, artificial values of marketing culture, and unnatural cities like Las Vegas and Los Angeles. We will thoughtfully reflect philosophically on these events in society, and this will help us to reflect on those issues as we encounter the hyperreal cities of Las Vegas and Los Angeles, as well as experiencing the desert, devoid of hyperreal constructions. Our time will be spent alternately between the Las Vegas Strip, Joshua Tree National Park, Los Angeles, and the Mohave Desert.

The Purpose

The purpose of this course is to help us think about the ways in which business creates alternate realities (for example through media and advertising), and how these affect our society, values, and purpose for living. The course should help students 1) become aware of how business changes the face of culture; 2) help students become aware of the way that commodification of values as a process has permeated our lives, from religion, relationships and traditions, to our food, clothing choices, and personal hygiene; 3) To examine how that consumerism as a way of life has affected American culture, transforming our work, leisure, family relationships, friendships, and even relationship with God. 4) To think about these issues by reflecting on the concept of Hyperreality and how the construction of new paradigms through brand naming, marketing, economic development (out with the old, in with the new) and virtual worlds has created new (unrealistic?) expectations in our concepts of happiness, worth, and success.



Las Vegas Strip

Business Effects Examined

This course is a business course aimed to help us see ways in which business transforms culture and society through development. Business has a profound impact on society, including:

1. The space we live and play in
2. The ways we live our lives and spend our time
3. The rural areas as development progresses outward
4. Our resources insofar as more people cause new challenges for resource use
5. The ways in which we spend our time at work—involved in business
6. The ways our government spends its time and money

But there are subtle ways business affects our lives as well through advertising, media, fashion and entertainment industries. Through these, business has an impact on our lives in these ways:

1. What we think is worth pursuing (our values)
2. What we think the Good Life is
3. What we believe we need to be happy and have success
4. The ways that we think about our own lives, our faith, our personal activities

Who We Meet

This course helps us see the impact of business on society and some of the struggles involved in those arenas. For example:

- Meeting employees and administrators from three of the main industries in Las Vegas and Los Angeles: Gaming, Entertainment, and Fashion
- Meeting city administrators and other planners who wrestle with issues of growth and development (The mayor of Vegas, the head of the LA Chamber of Commerce, etc)
- Meeting people to help us think through the environmental impact of business and development, like the dean of Graduate Studies at UNLV
- Philosophers, Historians, Sociologists and Artists who can help us reflect on how the cities of Las Vegas and Los Angeles have been molded by their industries of gaming, entertainment, and fashion, and how these cities have a larger impact on culture and society throughout the US and even worldwide.

Jesuits in Vegas?

There are actually many longstanding ties between Creighton and Las Vegas. Many doctors and lawyers in Vegas got their degrees at Creighton. We continue to find more and more alum in L.A. as well.

Our class is Ignatian in that it is concerned with the human element behind the glitz and glamour of these cities. We see the high end casinos and also visit the poor in north Vegas. We consider the long term societal consequences of business practices both good and bad, particularly with regard to the environment and water. We also have opportunity to consider the values underlying the practices and behaviors of people in these two cities. Almost inevitably, after 5 days in Vegas, students are ready to retreat from the neon and concrete to the peace of the desert.