UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Laboratory 1 - Beyond Business Travel: Discovering a Mysterious Ecosystem

2627-2-F4902N028

Learning objectives

Business travel is not leisure travel: it operates according to a different set of rules. It is a complex global ecosystem, no longer driven solely by prices and revenues, but increasingly shaped by technological innovation, customer-centricity, inclusion and security. This is the challenge: entering a volatile market where yesterday's certainties no longer apply. Through the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and the practice of active listening, students will learn how to manage conflicts, foster safety and trust for both travelers and suppliers, and develop into highly persuasive negotiators.

Knowledge and understanding
To have a thorough understanding of the structural, pricing and procurement differences between the Leisure, Business Travel and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events) sectors.
Identify and map the roles of companies, Travel Management Companies (TMCs), risk management providers, end suppliers (airlines, hotels, ground transport) and technology platforms.
Be familiar with careers and professions in business travel, cutting-edge financial technologies and the global standards that keep the business world moving.
Understand international security frameworks and national professional qualification standards.
Understand the financial infrastructure of corporate travel, including virtual cards, centralised accounts and automated expense reconciliation.

Applied knowledge and understanding
Learning to balance the objectives of cost savings and employee wellbeing. Understanding the impact of overtourism on business travel and the MICE sector. Developing a modern travel policy centred on informed choice, which incorporates sustainability and diversity.

Independent judgement
Develop the ability to critically assess the pitfalls associated with online booking shortcuts, digital purchasing habits and low-cost promises, whilst recognising the vital role of official institutional networks in protecting travellers abroad.

Communication skills
Effectively convey critical perspectives on business travel and urban dynamics, both orally and in writing. Tell compelling, tailored stories to all stakeholders, including business travellers, suppliers, procurement managers and company executives.
Tailor communication and deliver impactful pitches to different types of corporate audiences.

Learning Skills
Strengthen the ability to conduct independent research, synthesise information and critically engage with interdisciplinary sources and case studies.

Contents

The workshop aims to develop and consolidate analytical, strategic, and practical skills related to the management of global business travel and the MICE sectors, in the context of digital transformation, geopolitical volatility, and the corporate shift toward social, financial, and environmental responsibility. A fundamental part of the course will be the identification and development of appropriate strategic responses to modern corporate mobility challenges. Students will learn to distinguish between different stakeholder priorities—balancing the cost-saving mandates of finance and procurement with the safety, wellness, and diversity needs of human resources and travelers. Each module will focus on a core theme of corporate mobility practice—such as financial technology, global duty of care under ISO 31030, LGBTQ+ safe travel policy implementation, and GBTA-guided sustainability—providing modern analytical tools and presenting real-world, innovative solutions.
Case studies and active simulations will be the structural focus of this laboratory. Through these, students will:
Critically analyze corporate travel friction, considering the complex relationships and differing goals of the actors involved (Travelers, TMCs, Corporate Buyers, Risk Providers, and Suppliers).
Explore modern tools, frameworks, and standards (such as ISO 31030, UNI 11977, Sonders & Beach LGBT+ Manifesto, and GBTA Sustainability Toolkits) to mitigate risk, champion diversity, and reduce the climate footprint of corporate operations.
Address concrete industry problems (e.g., virtual payment reconciliation, emergency traveler tracking, and multigenerational policy adoption), evaluating strategic limits and opportunities for action across companies, suppliers, and individual travelers.

Detailed program

Module 1 (GBTA Seminar): Focuses on the global macroeconomic, social, and geopolitical forces shaping the market today.
Module 2 (The Travel Manager & Ecosystem): Focuses on the actual role of the Travel Manager (governed by UNI 11977), their collaborations, interfaces, and the underlying financial technology.
Module 3 (Duty of Care & Risk): Module dedicated to duty of care, travel and risk management
Module 4 (Diversity & Inclusion): The importance of a dedicated travel policy, D&I management in the AI era, needs vs bias.
Module 5 (Saving vs. Sustainability): The delicate balance between cost-saving corporate mandates and environmental sustainability.
Module 6 (The Value Chain Dialogue vs AI world): Focuses on strategic persuasion, alignment, and communication across the corporate value chain

Prerequisites

To participate in the workshop, students must meet the following requirements:
Basic knowledge of tourism and environmental issues.
Knowledge of English

Teaching methods

? Erogative Didactics (ED) will consist of face-to-face classroom teaching, focusing on the presentation and introduction of general content on the topic of the workshop, key concepts for interpreting market needs, customer journeys, risk management frameworks, and analytical tools. This foundation will enable students to critically analyze case studies and evaluate strategic and sustainable solutions.
? Guest Experts Integration: A key pillar of the laboratory is the direct involvement of industry experts and corporate leaders (such as Travel Managers, TMC executives, security analysts, and sustainability officers). These guest speakers will join the sessions to present practical business cases, share real-world troubleshooting scenarios, and discuss current market innovations. This will include a free of charge participation to GBTA Annual Conference in Milan on Oct 1st with Key Opinion Leaders of the BT Market.These expert interventions are seamlessly integrated within both the erogative and interactive hours, allocating approximately 4 to 6 hours of the total course duration to guest lectures and professional workshops.

The workshop lasts a total of twenty-four hours. Activities will be distributed dynamically, with 7 to 9 hours dedicated to erogative teaching (including guest theory sessions) and 14 to 17 hours reserved for hands-on interactive teaching and workshops, depending on the case studies and projects analyzed.

Assessment methods

Learning assessment will be based on one main element: active participation in classroom activities, including discussions, exercises and case study analysis.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The Teaching materials will be made available before each section and will include slides, industry reports (GBTA), and a selection of real-world case studies on specific topics (e.g., mobility, safety, corporate sustainability, etc.). The texts and case studies will be selected based on their relevance to analyzing current market challenges, the availability of up-to-date data, and accessibility for all students.

Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | CLIMATE ACTION