

سوليا  soliya

Providing meaningful cross-cultural experiences through virtual exchange





## THE CONNECT PROGRAM

Soliya's Connect Program, designed to be integrated into an existing curriculum or offered as an independent study, uses a proprietary online facilitated dialogue model that connects young people from across North America, Europe, Middle East, North Africa, and South and Southeast Asia. Current participants hail from a network of over 180 colleges, universities, language centers, and youth organizations in 30 countries and 29 of the 50 states of the United States of America.

### THE PROGRAM IS AVAILABLE UNDER FOUR DIFFERENT MODULES:

#### CONNECT GLOBAL

Connect Global enhances communication skills and improves attitudes toward difference through discussions framed around current social challenges and world events. The program brings together participants from myriad disciplines, including but not limited to the humanities, sciences, engineering, and business.

**Specialized Track: Connect Global – Foreign Affairs** employs the same curricular module and is tailored for those interested in exploring the perceived cultural fault line between the West and the Muslim world through political, social, and personal values-based discussions.

🕒 Length: 8 Weeks

#### CONNECT COLLABORATE

Connect Collaborate hones team-building skills through project based learning activities. Emphasizing the practical application of lessons, participants are guided through a group exercise, such as an online awareness campaign, developed to address a topic of current relevance and interest.

🕒 Length: 5 Weeks

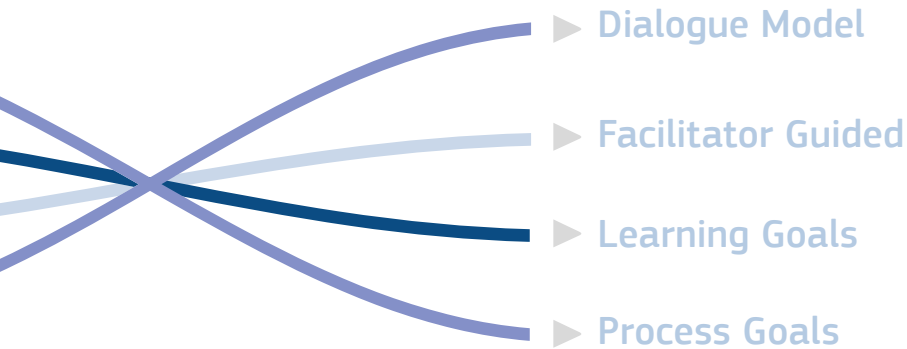
#### CONNECT EXPRESS

Connect Express encourages thoughtful discourse in a digital society and explores how identity constructs and assumed archetypes influence engagement across cultural and continental divides. It is presented as an option for those participants or courses with greater time constraints.

🕒 Length: 4 Weeks



## PEDAGOGY



### DIALOGUE MODEL



Small, diverse groups carefully assigned for ideal size and composition participate in semi-structured, sustained conversations scheduled in consistent intervals.

### FACILITATOR GUIDED



Facilitators provide a safe and constructive learning environment as neutral, multi-partial process leaders that do not influence discussion content. They are trained to support effective group communication, allowing participants to reflect upon the learning process and navigate through interpersonal dynamics.

## LEARNING GOALS



### AWARENESS

Activate emotional awareness and examine underlying assumptions, values, biases, social norms, and experiences that shape perspectives and positions.

### ATTITUDES

Enable participants to exercise empathy and respect, acknowledging each other's humanity through an exploration of shared experiences and feelings.

### SKILLS

Acquire 21st Century skills, inclusive of critical thinking, collaboration, and communication in cross-cultural contexts that empower participants to embrace diversity in a globalized society.

### ACTIVATION

Inspire participants to instigate positive change by addressing local challenges with newfound skills and attitudes.

## PROCESS GOALS

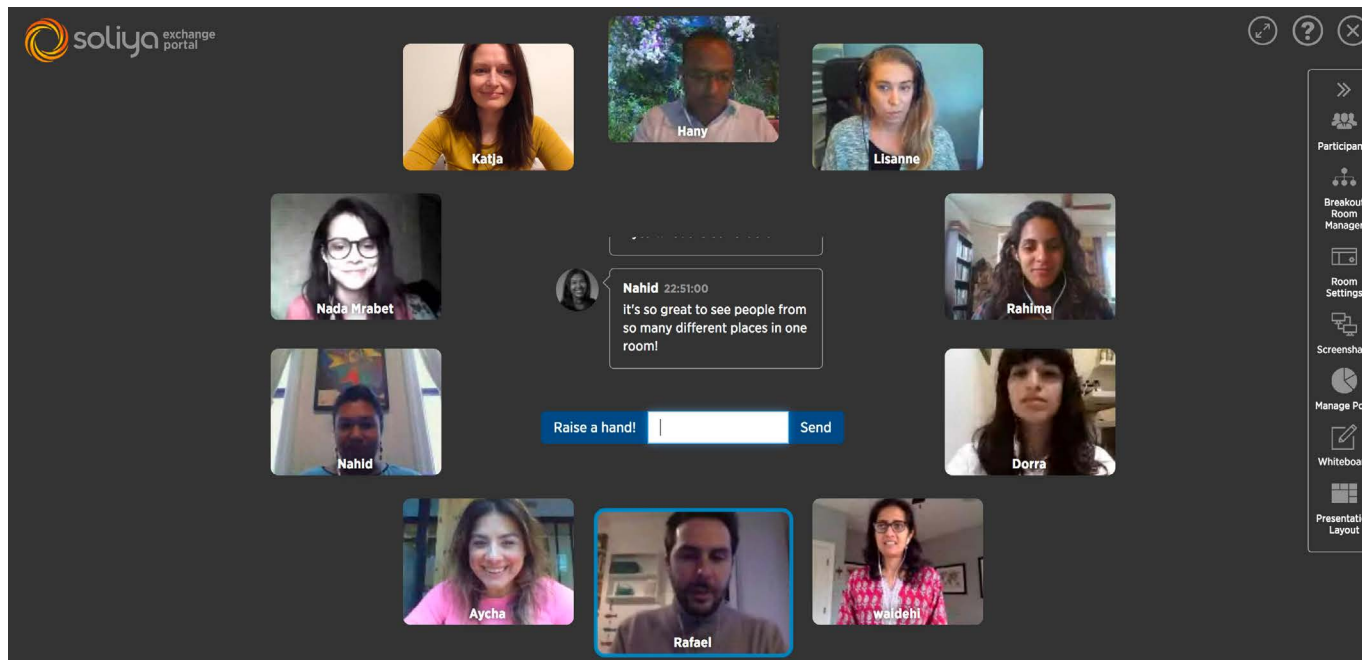


Facilitators pursue the learning goals by guiding the groups through a group process:

- Stage 1: **Orientation**
- Stage 2: **Polite moderation**
- Stage 3: **Learning through difference**
- Stage 4: **Sincere transformation**
- Stage 5: **Forward looking brainstorming**
- Stage 6: **Activation**

## WHERE WILL THE PARTICIPANTS MEET?

**Exchange Portal:** A custom online videoconferencing platform that enables real-time audiovisual conversations. Collaboration amongst participants is supported by asynchronous engagement tools and a backend data management system for user-generated content.



## FEATURES INCLUDE:

### 🔄 Synchronous Interaction

- Unique roundtable design
- Group live chat box and bilateral private chat
- Breakout rooms
- Screen sharing
- Social rooms for non-facilitated dialogue

### 🔄 Asynchronous Interaction

- Vibrant community platform
- Streams and customizable profiles
- Resources
- Scheduling and tracking
- Private messaging

### 🔧 Technical Features

- Advanced security certificates
- Cross-platform support: HTML/Windows/iOS/Linux
- Custom bandwidth optimization (access to remote places and poor connections)

### 📝 Learning Tools

- Whiteboard
- Polls
- Quizzes
- Real-time screen drawings



## How are participants scheduled across time zones?

### Meet Sammy, our Virtual Scheduler

Sammy is a web-based tool designed to place users from different time zones into balanced groups using configurable algorithms.



## What are the technical requirements?

At minimum, participation requires access to a personal computer equipped with stable internet connection, a headset for audio, and a camera for video.

## What will the participants gain in addition to academic credentials?

Participants engage in meaningful cross-cultural experiences with their peers around the world and gain essential employability skills and attitudes. They are also afforded permanent access to the Exchange Portal and its vibrant network of global alumni.

With successful program completion, participants receive an Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Open Badge and a certificate of completion that enriches resumes with confirmation of skills and competencies developed.

## How will I be informed about student performance?

Instructors receive weekly reports detailing attendance, topics, exercises, reminders on assignments, and important deadlines. Final student performance reports include detailed feedback and evaluation highlights.

## How does Soliya ensure quality and measure impact?

Efficacy is measured and evaluated using pre- and post-program survey tools developed by Dr. Emile Bruneau of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and formerly of the Saxelab Social Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Longitudinal impact studies are conducted in coordination with the University of Oxford and University College London.

Comprehensive 360 degree evaluations are implemented in regular intervals to maintain rigorous quality control.





# CONNECT GLOBAL

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**Specialized Track:** **Connect Global – Foreign Affairs** employs the same curricular module but is tailored for those interested in exploring the perceived cultural fault line between the West and the Muslim world through political, social, and personal values-based discussions.

## WHAT IS IN THE CURRICULUM?

Connect Global includes reading assignments and discussions on emerging global issues that traditionally galvanize the attention of young people. Each discussion topic selected by the group is then paired with a skill- and attitude-building activity. Periodic revisions ensure continued relevancy of suggested topics.

## TOPICS

- Values and social norms
- Stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings
- Gender
- Global and social inequality
- Conflict
- Immigration/integration
- Environment

### Foreign Affairs Track

- Religion
- Foreign policy
- Social movements
- Governance and values
- Extremism
- Current events

## ACTIVITIES

- What in the World?
- Two Truths and a Lie
- Partisan Perceptions
- Awareness Test
- Listener/Speaker
- Asking Good Questions
- Role Reversal
- Cultural Iceberg
- Trigger Words
- Student News Briefs
- Identity Activity
- Sharing Circles
- “Cool”







## WHAT IS THE REQUIRED TIME COMMITMENT BY THE PARTICIPANTS?

Connect Global includes 16 hours of synchronous communication, where participants meet face-to-face in the Exchange Portal for real-time, facilitated discussions. Participants also spend an average of approximately five to 10 hours completing asynchronous assignments.

It is recommended that participants allocate approximately 25 hours total during the two months designated for successful program completion.

- Synchronous dialogue: 16 hours
- Asynchronous assignments: 9 hours
- Total: 25 hours

## WHAT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS?

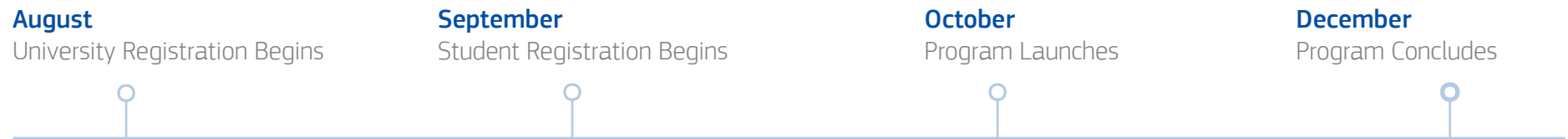
- 2 sets of readings
- 1 final project

## WHAT IS THE RECOMMENDED GRADE OR CREDIT ALLOCATION?

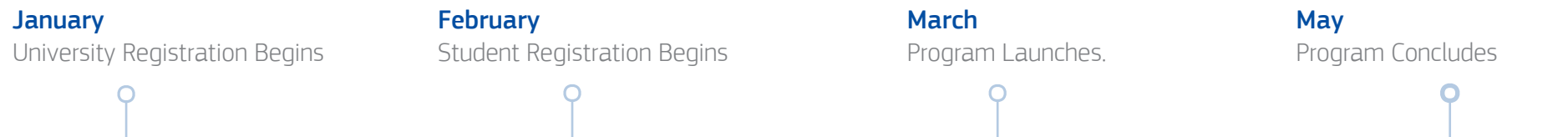
- Course integration: 20 to 25% of total grade
- Independent study: 1 credit per program

## WHAT IS THE TIME LINE?

### FALL



### SPRING





# CONNECT @LLABORATE

**Connect Collaborate** hones team-building skills through project based learning activities. Emphasizing the practical application of lessons, participants are guided through a group exercise, such as an online awareness campaign, developed to address a topic of current relevance and interest.

## WHAT IS IN THE CURRICULUM?

Connect Collaborate offers ample opportunities to negotiate meanings, determine priorities, and make joint decisions. It tracks collaboration and includes a tour of a graphic design website to support those participants conceiving a campaign.

## TOPICS

- Current events and global challenges
- Past challenges included topics on immigration, poverty, and the environment.

## ACTIVITIES

- Community Interview Briefs
- Research on infographics and collection of online content
- Meta Discussions
- Identity Activity







## WHAT IS THE REQUIRED TIME COMMITMENT BY THE PARTICIPANTS?

Connect Collaborate offers 10 hours of synchronous communication, where participants meet face-to-face in the Exchange Portal for real-time, facilitated discussions. Participants also spend an average of approximately five to six hours completing asynchronous assignments.

It is recommended that participants allocate approximately 15 hours total during the five weeks designated for successful program completion.

- Synchronous dialogue: 10 hours
- Asynchronous assignments: 5 hours
- Total: 15 hours

## WHAT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS?

- 1 social media awareness infographic
- 1 short reflection paper

## WHAT IS THE RECOMMENDED GRADE OR CREDIT ALLOCATION?

- Course integration: 15 to 20% of total grade
- Independent study: 1 credit per program

## WHAT IS THE TIME LINE?

### FALL

#### September

University Registration Begins



#### October

Student Registration Begins



#### November

Program Launches



#### December

Program Concludes



### SPRING

#### February

University Registration Begins



#### March

Student Registration Begins



#### April

Program Launches.



#### May

Program Concludes





# CONNECT EXPRESS

Connect Express encourages thoughtful discourse in a digital society and explores how identity constructs and assumed archetypes influence engagement across cultural and continental divides. It is presented as an option for those participants or courses with greater time constraints.

## WHAT IS IN THE CURRICULUM?

Connect Express includes weekly challenges inviting reflection upon communication across digital platforms. Each challenge is linked to a theme and activity, with participants exploring their social media news feeds to identify examples of social identity threats, emotionalized responses, and constructive communication that meaningfully engages across difference.

## TOPICS

- Digital world as a communication environment
- Stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings
- Current events

## ACTIVITIES

- What in the World?
- Two Truths and A Lie
- Student News Briefs
- Identity Activity and Power Dynamic





## WHAT IS THE REQUIRED TIME COMMITMENT BY THE PARTICIPANTS?

Connect Express includes eight 8 hours of synchronous communication, where participants meet face-to-face in the Exchange Portal for real-time, facilitated discussions. Participants also spend an average of two hours completing asynchronous assignments.

It is recommended that participants allocate approximately 10 hours total during the one month designated for successful program completion.

- Synchronous dialogue: 8 hours
- Asynchronous assignments: 2 hours
- Total: 10 hours

## WHAT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS?

- Short weekly and final reflections

## WHAT IS THE RECOMMENDED GRADE OR CREDIT ALLOCATION?

- Course integration: 10 to 15% of total grade
- Independent study: 1 credit per program

## WHAT IS THE TIME LINE?

### FALL

#### September

University Registration Begins



#### October

Student Registration Begins



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Program Concludes



### SPRING

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Design by Nizar Halaweh

