

# Community Education & Engagement Methods in Transylvania, Romania

May 11 – 27, 2025 Three credits  
Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Capstone

1 credit “Planning For International Engagement Methods – ASEC 43100”– 2<sup>nd</sup> 8 weeks, Spring 2025



## Immersion in Romania villages:

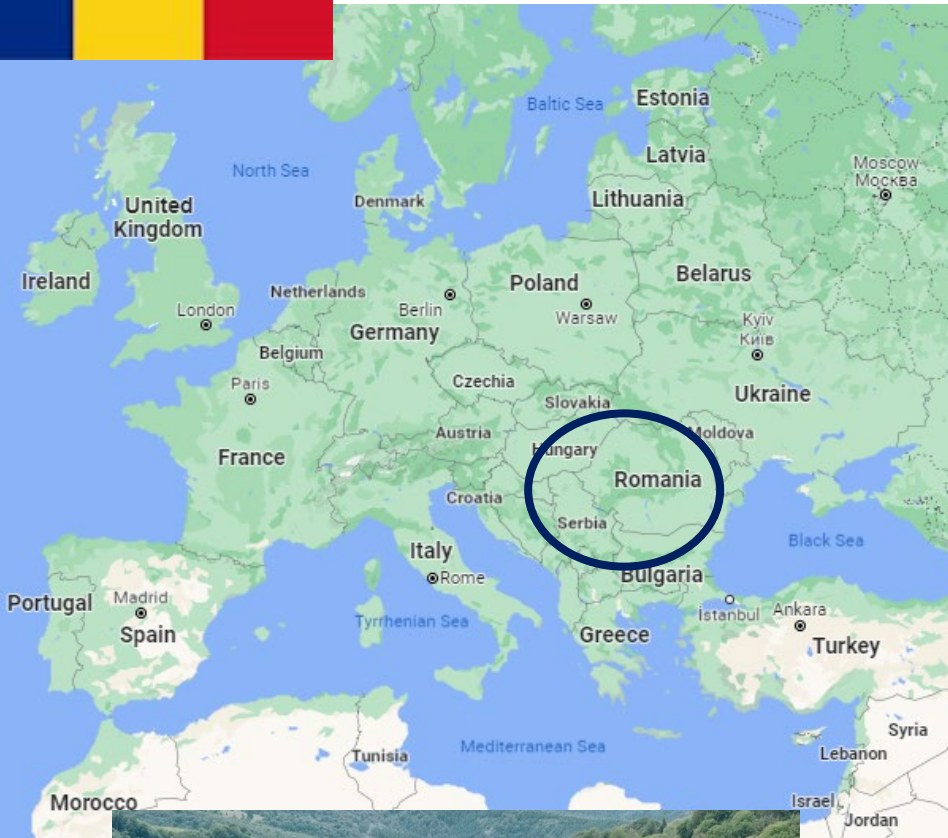
- live and work as part of teams with university students from Cluj Napoca in rural villages.
- stay in homes with local families.
- visit medieval town of Sighisoara, the home of Vlad Tepes (Dracula) and other fortresses and landmarks
- learn to communicate, share knowledge and engage in diverse communities and cultures effectively
- apply your knowledge and principles to public engagement, and entrepreneurship to promote cultural sustainability



- Dr. Sarah LaRose, [slarose@purdue.edu](mailto:slarose@purdue.edu), ASEC
- Dr. Kara Salazar, [salazark@purdue.edu](mailto:salazark@purdue.edu), FNR Extension
- Dr. Mark Russell, [mrussell@purdue.edu](mailto:mrussell@purdue.edu), ASEC
- Drs. Andreea Ona, [andreea.ona@usamvcluj.ro](mailto:andreea.ona@usamvcluj.ro)  
Plant Genetic & Breeding and
- Daniel Chiciudean, [daniel.chiciudean@usamvcluj.ro](mailto:daniel.chiciudean@usamvcluj.ro),  
Rural & AG Economics; USAMV Cluj-Napoca, Romania



# Where is Romania?



- A post-soviet country with democracy since 1989
- A member of the European Union and NATO
- West of the Black Sea
- Borders Hungary, Serbia, Moldova, Bulgaria, Ukraine
- A safe and stable emerging economy
- Similar in geographic size of Oregon or Pennsylvania states
- US Department of State – (08/15/2024) Travel Advisory Romania - Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions





# Cluj Napoca — city (301,250)

Communications, culture, and ethnography training in medieval city



## OPEN FIELDS Foundation



and  
University of Agricultural  
Sciences and Veterinary Medicine,  
Cluj-Napoca (USAMV-Cluj)





# USAMV and Cluj-Napoca



- Meet each other and hosts in Cluj Napoca Airport
- Settle into the Agronomia Club lodging
- Meet our host students and faculty members
- Discover the city of Cluj, sleep, breakfast and then the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine
- Depart to Sibiu Județ and meet with the mayors and our host families
- Faculty will have transportation and visit all homes regularly.

## Local Villages of Sibiu Județ:

- Biertan,
- Copsa Mare,
- Mosna,
- Nemsă,
- Richis,
- Valchid.



Open Fields Foundation



Univ. of Agricultural Sciences  
and Veterinary Medicine

# Our Romanian Partners



## Open Fields Foundation

“our mission vision is to work with communities, helping them improve their lives and their environment.”

Through training and capacity building, **Open Fields Foundation** works with communities to identify and nurture shared values and envision and create a new future.

We are working in partnership with communities and other entities to create sustainable impact, empowering and inspiring people to make personal changes for a better world.



Marius Cobârzan

Open Fields Community  
Project Coordinator

# Our Romanian Partners



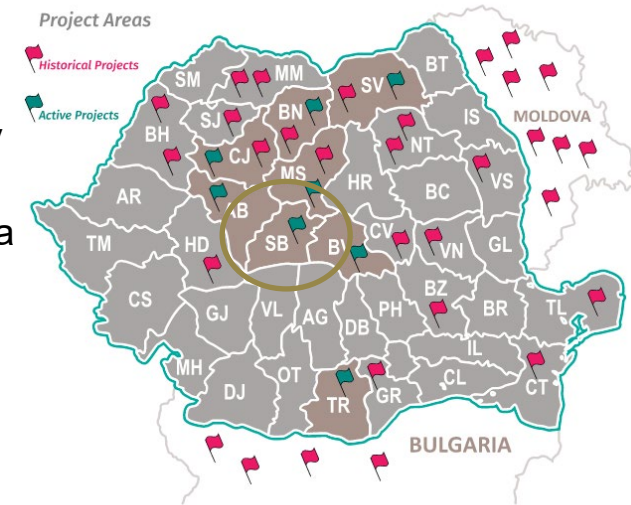


The Study Abroad Experience will become the **(ASEC 43110) Community Education & Engagement Methods in Transylvania” course. Honors credit can be contracted.**

**Overarching Goal:** Empowering Purdue and USAMV-Cluj students to become global citizens through immersive experiences in community engagement, youth development, sustainable agriculture, and cultural exchange in the beautiful Transylvanian Highlands.

### Course Learning Objectives:

- Critical Thinking: Apply critical thinking and ability to evaluate and critically assess opportunities and develop sound responses ....
- Communication: Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively while considering audience and purpose in a different cultural setting.
- Teamwork: Demonstrate the ability to work constructively as part of a bi-national problem-solving team.
- Cultural Understanding: Demonstrate intercultural skills and knowledge of a range of cultures and an understanding of points of view of other than their own.
- Understand Social Science Principles: Evaluate the youth and community environment and organize an appropriate and effective educational program to address the desired outcomes.



# Our Purdue SA class experience



# The Study Abroad Experience IS A (ASEC 43110) Community Education & Engagement Methods in Transylvania” course.

How will we learn? There will be a course syllabus and this is “Learning By Doing with true **Experiential Learning** methods.

Experiential  
Learning  
Cycles

**Act**

Concrete Experience  
*Facts (What Happened?)*  
Theory of Action

**Reflect**

Reflective Observation  
*Feelings (What Did I Experience?)*  
Assess Behavior & Consequences

**Conceptualize**

Abstract Conceptualization  
*Findings (Why Did This Happen?)*  
Revise Theory

**Apply**

Active Experimentation  
*Futures (What Will I Do?)*  
Implement Revised Theory

1. David Kolb
2. Roger Greenaway
3. Chris Argyris & Donald Schön

compiled by Andrea Corney

[www.edbatista.com/2007/10/experiential.html](http://www.edbatista.com/2007/10/experiential.html)

Marius and your USAMV and Purdue professors have personally selected the villages and homes where we will be living.

Teams of three Purdue students and one USAMV student will live with and work with Romanian families and intentionally learn and contribute as possible.

Professors will be visiting all homes every day or two.





**There are assignments and deliverables:**

**Individual Assignments:**

- **Guided Reflection Journals** – three during the travels
- **Participation in Group Reflection** and debriefing sessions
- **Individual Reflective Video Story:** Due after the return to USA – “ah-ha” moments throughout the trip, learning outcomes and how you personally have been impacted.

**Working Group Intercultural Projects:**

- Each bi-national student group will work together and collaborate with Open Fields staff and assist with the on-going community projects.
- Your group will collaborate with a local leader and collect data to inform an **Assessment of Community Opportunities** which will be submitted after travel for future class visits.
- Your group will submit a **Community Partner Snapshot** to the Purdue Journal of Service Learning.
- Your group will create a Community Partner **Documentation and Video Story** - incorporating images, local music and narrative, create a 3-4-minute video about your community partner and describe the experiences and engagement opportunities for Purdue students with the partner in the future. Include as many pictures and specific guidance for next year’s class as possible.



**Our Romanian Partners and  
planning for the future.**

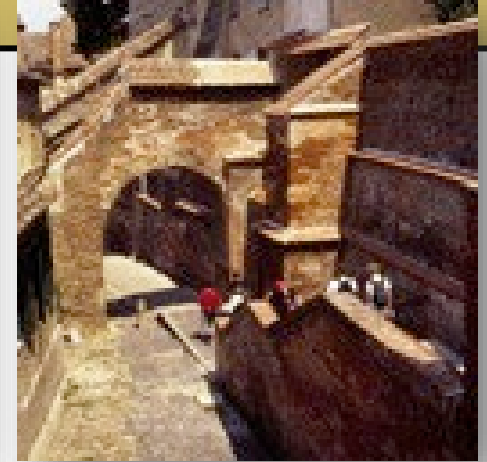


# Additional destinations to visit

- Vișcri village
- Mihai Eminescu Trust
- Sighisoara Medieval City
- UNESCO site Saschiz
- Sibiu Fortress and Towers







- The largest and wealthiest of the seven walled citadels built in the 12th century by German settlers - Transylvanian Saxons.
- This walled town in the heart of Transylvania
- Three 15th century towers have withstood
- The 13th century Passage of Steps, an architectural masterpiece with twin staircases and archways, connects the Upper Town to the Lower Town.
- The Black Bear



## Visits to Sibiu and Sighișoara



# Purdue's Annual History with this SA model in Romania (2008-2016)

## Animals and Food Security: Service Learning in Rural Romania



Purdue is partnering with Heifer International-Romania and Banat University on a sustainable development project in rural Romania. This is an opportunity to work in international agriculture across disciplines AND make a difference – for credit!

**4 Credits!**  
 Spring Preparation (1 cr)  
 Maymester (3 cr)  
 Program fee of approximately \$3200



- By partnering with Heifer International-Romania, students will learn about sustainable development through the application of agricultural ecology, animal management and agribusiness.
- Purdue students will work on projects as team members alongside animal science, agriculture and veterinary medicine students from the Banat University (USABT) in Timisoara.

- Projects will include animal husbandry (cattle, poultry, small ruminants, etc.), facility design and construction, efficient use of resources and youth and adult education.
- Students will work in villages during the week and spend the weekends visiting historical and cultural places not often seen by everyday tourists—Sighisoara, the birthplace of Vlad Tepes (Dracula), 15<sup>th</sup> century Deva Castle in Transylvania, college towns of Timisoara, Cluj-Napoca, and Sibiu, and much more.

Callout I:  
 Sept. 29  
 Lilly 2-425  
 5:30pm



Callout II:  
 Oct. 12  
 Lilly 3-113  
 5:30pm

For more information contact: Dr. Paul Ebner (LILLY 3-230, 4-4820, [pebner@purdue.edu](mailto:pebner@purdue.edu)) or Dr. Mark Russell (POUL 111, 4-7677, [mrussell@purdue.edu](mailto:mrussell@purdue.edu))

International Programs in Agriculture:

494-9690 or 494-8458, <http://www.ag.purdue.edu/ipia/studyabroad/Documents/Application10.pdf>

## Maymester Study Abroad: Service Learning in Romania

MAY 14 – JUNE 7

### Heifer International



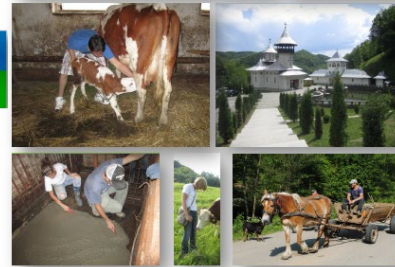
One of our partners is Heifer International. This is a very well-respected international development agency that fights hunger issues through improving agriculture production.



### Banat Agriculture University



Our second partner is Banat University of Veterinary Medicine and Agricultural Sciences, located in Timisoara, Romania. You will work side-by-side with Romanian undergraduates in binational teams to solve problems facing Romanian livestock producers.



### Some highlights.

- Learn about sustainable development through the application of agriculture ecology, animal management and agriculture economics
- Spend a week-long homestay on a small Romanian farm
- Work on projects in animal husbandry, facility design, environmental management and youth and adult education
- Work in villages during the week and spend weekends visiting cultural places not often seen by everyday tourists— Sighisoara, the birthplace of Vlad Tepes (Dracula), 13<sup>th</sup> century Deva Castle in Transylvania, college towns of Timisoara, Cluj-Napoca, and Sibiu,

### CALL OUTS!

October 5<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm  
 Lilly, Rm. 3-113  
 October 17<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm  
 Lilly, Rm. 3-113

For more information  
 Mark Russell, [mrussell@purdue.edu](mailto:mrussell@purdue.edu)

765-464-9359

Paul Ebner, [pebner@purdue.edu](mailto:pebner@purdue.edu)

Apply today at:

<http://www.ag.purdue.edu/ipia/studyabroad/Pages/index.aspx>

# ROMANIA

MAYMESTER 2014

Join us for a four-week service learning course in beautiful Transylvania, working directly with Romanian livestock producers.

### Just some of what you will do.

- Spend a week living with a Romanian family in the beautiful village of Vata de Jos
- Work directly with livestock producers to improve production and market strategies
- Put on a livestock expo!
- Conduct workshops on animal nutrition and production
- Design (AND CONSTRUCT!) improved livestock facilities
- Visit the wonderful cities of Timisoara, Sibiu and Budapest (Hungary)

### You can make a difference.

This is an opportunity to learn by doing, while immersed in another culture. You will work with undergraduates from Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in binational teams to solve real-world problems faced by Romanian livestock producers. It's hands-on and you will get dirty, but you will have a great time in a wonderful country, and you WILL make a difference.

Want more information? Contact us at anytime:

Dr. Paul Ebner: [pebner@purdue.edu](mailto:pebner@purdue.edu); 765-494-7412

Dr. Mark Russell: [mrussell@purdue.edu](mailto:mrussell@purdue.edu); 765-464-9359

You can apply today!  
<http://www.ag.purdue.edu/ipia/studyabroad/Pages/index.aspx>

### CALL OUTS

Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm  
 Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm  
 Lilly, Rm. 3-113



ROMANIA



# Introducing Undergraduates to International Extension Through Service Learning

Ebner, Paul D<sup>\*</sup>, and Russell Mark A.

Department of Animal Sciences, Purdue University

\*corresponding author: [pebner@purdue.edu](mailto:pebner@purdue.edu)



## Course Description

Starting in 2008, the Department of Animal Sciences has offered a service learning course for undergraduates in partnership with Banat University of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine, Heifer International Romania, and the Hunedoara County Livestock and Poultry Breeders Association. Following a one semester preparatory seminar, the travel portion of the course takes place in Romania. The US and Romanian students work in binational teams with the learning objectives of:

- Developing an international Extension program applicable to rural Romania;
- Further developing behavior competencies (critical thinking, communication, teamwork, problem solving, etc.);
- Further developing cultural understanding and awareness;
- Understanding social, economic, political, and environmental principles and their role in application of animal science technologies.

## Preparatory Course (Spring, 1CR)

Students are introduced to:

- Methodologies involved in Extension programming such as needs assessments, introducing appropriate technologies, survey instruments and impact assessment.
- Principles of sustainable development
- Romanian language, culture, and history

## Travel Course (Maymester, 3CR)

Homestays:

- Five nights (in small groups) with a family in the rural village of Vata de Jos
- Short-term immersion in Romanian agriculture

Livestock Exposition

- Students work with local leaders to implement a livestock exposition for Vata de Jos and the surrounding villages

Extension Workshops

- Students develop, deliver, and assess Extension workshops on different animal science topics from nutrition to animal well-being

Livestock Facility Construction

- Students work in groups to construct new and rehabilitate existing livestock building for a farm owned and operated by a local in-patient hospital

## Assessment

**Preparatory Course:** Students (n = 17) are graded in the preparatory course based on presentations focused on animal science topics as well as standardized tests (language, culture)

**Travel Course:** Students complete guided (quantitative and qualitative) reflections after each major activity or transition.

- Qualitative data were organized using descriptive coding to identify dominant themes (Saldaña, 2013)

## Homestay

*"Its good to know that grandmas are everywhere."*

- When asked to describe the similarities and differences in cultures, values, and worldviews between and Romania and home, participants identified the importance of family and community as the strongest similarities.
- Self-sufficiency in food production was identified most often as the biggest difference (US being less self-sufficient)
- Participants would recommend (9.1/10) the homestay experience as an opportunity to learn about rural Romania.



(Left to Right) Students conducting Extension workshops in the villages of Brotuna and Paicisa

## Extension Workshops

*"Our major challenge was taking all the information we had and finding the major points that related most with the audience."*

- Students identified knowing the audience and their needs as the biggest challenge to success and communication skills as the personal behavioral competency most in need of improvement (as highlighted by this experience)

## Livestock Facility Construction

- Communication and team-work were most often identified as the biggest factor in the success of the different teams
- Logistical issues (finding materials and other resources) were most identified as the biggest challenges
- Problem solving skills ranked highest as the behavioral competency most often used
- Students indicated the experience improved your understanding of the application of animal science technologies that are most appropriate for different cultures and economic situations (8.7/10)



Examples of various construction projects. (Left to Right) Building the frame for new footer. New lean-to goat shelter. New roof on swine facility.

## Conclusions

*"This was a very eye-opening experience. It made me think a lot and challenged me in many ways. I really think I found myself along this trip."*

- 83.3% of the students stated that they were "confident" or "very confident" in their ability to apply social, economic and environmental principles
- 100% of the students stated that their ability to communicate and work with individuals from different countries "improved" or "greatly improved"
- 94.5% stated that the experience greatly deepened their understanding of agricultural Extension.
- 100% stated that the experience broadened their knowledge of a range of cultures and understanding of human values and diverse world views.
- Students identified cultural awareness, communication, and problem solving as the skills most improved through the course.
- Students reported that the course:
  - deepened their understanding of mission of Extension (8.7/10) and ability to develop and implement Extension programs (8.3/10); and
  - Improved their ability to work effectively in a multi-cultural team to solve problems (9.00/10)

## References

Saldaña, J. 2013. The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Sage Publications (Los Angeles).



**“We came up with a good plan when we were in West Lafayette. Then we saw the situation in real-life and realized that our plan had to change. Then we sat down with the farm managers and realized we had to change again. Then we found out about what resources they had (and did not have) and our plan changed again. In the end, we came up with a much better plan together, we were able to accomplish much more and we truly made a (small) difference.”**



**Reflection!**





# Costs and Logistics

- Use the QR Code and register for this class and pay the \$500 deposit to hold your place.
- Be sure you have a Passport valid through all of 2025.
- Register for the spring semester, March 17 - May 8, ASEC 43100 “Planning for Community Education & Engagement Methods in Transylvania (ASEC 43100)
- Make travel plans with friends to arrive in CLJ airport by 4:30pm (16:30) Monday, May 12
- Remaining fee of \$2500 will be in your Summer session tuition statement.





# STUDY ABROAD TODAY

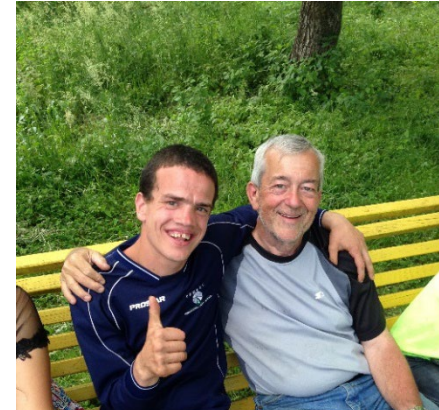
📍 AGAD 104

✉ agabroad@purdue.edu

📷 @AgBoilersAbroad



College of Agriculture Study Abroad





# Romania

## SHORT-TERM SUMMER COMMUNITY EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT METHODS IN TRANSYLVANIA



**Dates:** May 11-27, 2025



**Credits:** 3 Credits in ASEC 43110 & 1 Credit Spring Prepare



**Locations:** Cluj-Napoca, Biertan, Sighisoara, Sibiu



**Estimated Cost:** \$3000 includes housing, some meals, admission fees, transportation in country. Airfare is not included.



### Program Leaders:

Dr. Sarah LaRose, [slarose@purdue.edu](mailto:slarose@purdue.edu)  
Dr. Kara Salazar, [salazark@purdue.edu](mailto:salazark@purdue.edu)  
Dr. Mark Russell, [mrussell@purdue.edu](mailto:mrussell@purdue.edu)



**Callouts:** Oct 3, 2024 @ 5:30 pm in Lilly 3410  
and Oct 15, 2024 @ 5:30 pm in KRAN 680

Be part of teams with university students from Cluj Napoca in rural villages

- Immerse in Romanian Villages
- Visit medieval town of Sighisoara, the home of Vlad Tepes Dracula
- Learn to communicate and educate effectively across cultures and languages
- Apply principles of public engagement and youth education to promote cultural sustainability



## STUDY ABROAD TODAY



AGAD 104



[agabroad@purdue.edu](mailto:agabroad@purdue.edu)



[@AgBoilersAbroad](https://www.instagram.com/AgBoilersAbroad)



- Dr. Sarah LaRose, [slarose@purdue.edu](mailto:slarose@purdue.edu),  
Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication
- Dr. Kara Salazar, [salazark@purdue.edu](mailto:salazark@purdue.edu),  
Forestry & Natural Resources Extension
- Dr. Mark Russell, [mrussell@purdue.edu](mailto:mrussell@purdue.edu)  
Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication

Mrs. Kara Hartman,  
International Exchange and Study  
Abroad Manager  
International Programs in Agriculture

[khartman@purdue.edu](mailto:khartman@purdue.edu)  
Phone: (765) 494-8458

Office: AGAD Room 104C

Address: 615 West State Street  
Agriculture Administration Building,