

Africa's consumer market: The case of Ghana

Global Immersion Program

Spring 2024
NY Dates: Tuesdays 9-10:30am
Week in Ghana: March 9-14, 2024

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TA:TBA

Important: *This course requires additional time commitment compared to a typical GIP because students will work in groups on a project with a firm in Ghana. Students will be required to work on a project before the trip with a project manager in Ghana.*

COURSE OVERVIEW

Africa's consumer market has large potentials. Africa is the world's second-fastest growing region – after emerging Asia according to the African Development Bank Report. About half of the growth of the continent's GDP growth is due to consumer-facing industries. 1.3 billion people live in Africa and according to the United Nations, the population is expected to increase to 2.5 billion by 2050. The working-class population in Africa is growing by 2.7 percent each year (compared to 1.3 percent in Latin America and 1.2 percent in Southeast Asia). McKinsey projects that by 2025 two-thirds of the estimated 303 million African households will have discretionary income and consumer spending will reach \$2.1 trillion.¹ Not surprisingly, many firms and investors are trying to tap into Africa's consumer market.

This course aims to train students' global intelligence, i.e. their understanding of specific cultural aspects of different consumer markets by analyzing the potential and challenges of Africa's consumer markets – using Ghana as a case study. A West African country with 29 million inhabitants, Ghana was

¹ McKinsey&Company. Winning in Africa's consumer market. 2015.

one of the fastest growing countries in the world with 8.1 percent GDP growth in 2017. Unfortunately, the economic outlook is less stellar now, but hopefully the country is getting back on track. Ghana is considered one of the safest and most stable countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the country shares similar demographic and consumer characteristics with its neighbors: About half of income earners are young (between 16 and 34 years old) and aware and eager to try new products.

The students will work in groups on a project with an organization in Ghana that is consumer facing. Through work with the Ghana partner firm and interviews with consumers in Ghana, the students should develop ideas that can be turned into feasible solutions for the Ghana partner firms. The firms in Ghana will come from different industries ranging from a beverage producer to a tech platform facilitating the hiring of African coders. The projects are time-consuming, and students are expected to spend a significant amount of time in NY working on those projects. In-country, students will spend about 2-3 days working in Ghana with the partner firm and prepare a presentation to the leadership of those companies. As a return on their hard work, students will get a truly multicultural immersion experience in Africa working on a project.

The course aims at familiarizing students with interview-based customer insights as a tool to understand the unmet needs of consumers. Many of the problems facing international firms trying to succeed outside their home market is a lack of understanding of differences in culture and preferences. The project are scoped in such a way that that students are required to complete around twenty interviews with current and potential customers of their partner firm.

In addition to understanding consumers in Africa, the course should also strengthen student's cultural intelligence, i.e. their capabilities to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings. Working together with a student team in collaboration with a partner organization in Ghana will allow student to experience the benefits and also challenges of working in a cross-cultural environment.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

This course is part of the Global Immersion Program but has some specific features that distinguish the course from most other GIP trips. Travel to Ghana will take place during spring break, March, 9-16, 2024 to Accra.

Global Immersion Program classes bridge classroom lessons and business practices in another country. These three credit classes meet for half a term in New York prior to a one week visit to the country of focus where students will meet with business executives and government officials while working on team projects. Upon return from the travel portion of the class, students will have one wrap up meeting at Columbia Business School. The 2023-2024 Global Immersion Program fee for all classes is \$1950 and provides students with double occupancy lodging, ground transportation and some meals. It does not cover roundtrip international airfare. Attendance both in New York and in-country and regular participation are a crucial part of the learning experience and as such attendance is mandatory. Students who miss the first class meeting may be removed from the course. Please visit the [Chazen Institute website](#) to learn more about the Global Immersion Program, and visit the [Global Immersion Policies](#) page to review policies affecting these courses.

A large part of the class is about a project with a consumer-facing company in Ghana. The partner organizations are in different industries, but will all be consumer-facing firms. This will allow the students to observe and talk to consumers in country. 1 full day during the time in-country will be devoted to the project. The rest of the time in-country will be structured in a way as to give a deeper view into the culture, political, and business landscape of Ghana.

The sessions in NY will provide the students with the tools to work on their project in Ghana and give some background about Ghana. Importantly, students need to start working on their project with the partner firm in Ghana. This involves understanding the industry context, setting up conference calls with the firm in Ghana in order to understand the partner firm and the consumer basis, and planning the days of project work in Ghana.

The sessions in NY will be comprised of a mixture of lecture, case discussions, simulations, guest speakers and presentations by student teams.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Requirements for the course are to prepare for, attend class and participate in discussions and exercises in sessions in NY. Even more important is the engagement in the project with the partner organization in Ghana.

Deliverables and Expectations:

"Deliverable"	Type	Evaluation
1. <i>Active participation in class and on trip</i>	Individual	- Attendance and lateness - Engagement in case discussion and company visits
2. <i>Context presentation pre-trip</i> a. Value Map b. Schedule	Group	- Completeness of pre-trip work - Insights - Application of tools
3. <i>Final project deliverable</i>	Group	- Company feedback - Peer evaluation of final deliverable - Peer evaluation of team member contributions
4. <i>Four Reflections</i> a. Pre-trip expectations b. Culture & history reflection c. Working in Ghana reflection d. Summary reflection	Individual	- Depth of reflections

Details about deliverable:

1. *Participation:* Active participation in sessions in NY and on trip is very important for individuals learning. Whether it is a case discussion or interacting with speakers, I expect active engagement and thoughtful questions that increase our knowledge. Missing classes or part of the trip will affect the grade substantially.
2. *Context presentation pre-trip:* Every group will give a presentation on their company and the respective industry/customer for 30 minutes. The presentation has to cover ...

- a. Value Map for the company and implications (see separate instructions)
 - b. Schedule for in-country project (especially interview partners and schedule)
- In order to understand the business and come up with a value map, the teams need to set up conference calls with the partner firm.

3. *Final Project deliverable*: The projects are scoped around customer insights and require teams to do around 20 interviews with existing and potential customers. The insights have to be digested into a presentation for the firm with resulting recommendations. In order to evaluate the merit of the project, I will get feedback from:
 - a. *Company* regarding the interaction and usefulness of the insights
 - b. *Peers* on relative strengths of each group project.
 - c. *Group members*: every student has to give a grade to each member of the team, including themselves. The total score of the team should equal 100.
4. *Reflections*. Reflecting on the experience and learning is an important part of the learning process. To institutionalize the reflections, students need to submit four reflections: a) one before the trip that outline the expectations of the students in terms of country/culture and in terms of project work; b) one after two days of experience the country and the visit to Cape Coast on Ghana's history and culture, c) one after the company presentation about the experience 'working' in Ghana; and d) one after coming back to NY on the overall experience and observations.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Class preparation, Attendance and Participation 25%
Reflections 15%
Pre-trip presentation 20%
Project work 40% (20% for group and 20% for individuals' contributions)

READINGS

Required Readings:

Gyasi, Yaa (2016), "Homegoing", Penguin Random House.

This historical fiction novel by Yaa Gyasi follows the lives of two half-sisters born in Ghana but who never meet. It follows the descendants of each woman, who end up both in Ghana and in the US. The book touches on major historical events from the introduction of cocoa as a crop in Ghana, Anglo-Asante wars, to slavery and segregation in the US. Reading the book will allow students to better understand the history of Ghana and its relationship with the US.

More reading is required for different sessions (listed below).

COURSE OUTLINE FOR NYC SESSIONS

Session	Date	Topic
Session 1	1/23	Intro
Session 2	1/30	Political Situation in Ghana Guest: TBA
Session 3	2/6	The Effect of History on Present: The Case of Slavery Guest: TBA
Session 4	2/13	Consumer Insights and Branding in Ghana Guest: TBA
Session 5	2/20	Project and Schedule Presentations
Session 6	2/27	Project and Schedule Presentations

PROGRAM IN-COUNTRY (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

	SAT 3/9/24	SUN 3/10/24	MON 3/11/24	TUE 3/12/24	WED 3/13/24	THU 3/14/24	FRI 3/15/24	SAT 3/16/24						
8:00 AM		Cape Coast	Company Visits	Company Visits	Project Work	Company Visits	Company Visits	Individual Departure						
9:00 AM														
10:00 AM														
11:00 AM														
12:00 PM														
1:00 PM														
2:00 PM							Wrap up and debrief							
3:00 PM														
4:00 PM														
5:00 PM	Welcome Dinner						Farewell Dinner							
6:00 PM														
7:00 PM														
8:00 PM														
9:00 PM														
10:00 PM														