

Shepherd University
Department of Social Work
SOWK 399 International Community Service Learning

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The study abroad program is an intense small group experience in living, learning, traveling, and studying. Students will be engaged in language acquisition and service-learning activities in Guatemala, C.A. Students will apply various concepts, theories and skills from their experience and academic disciplines to the Guatemalan social context. Students will explore the social issues affecting Guatemalans, the provision of social services, and the role of social work and social policy within the country. Students will develop a general understanding of the socio-political history of Guatemala, how oppressive ideologies manifest in Guatemalan institutions and how the U.S. has influenced the country historically and in the present. Finally, students will experience customs and culture in Guatemala through living with Guatemalan families, visiting museums and taking excursions.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

1. Understand cultural and ideological differences between the United States and Guatemala.
2. Understand the socio-political history of Guatemala and the role that the U.S. has played in that history.
3. Appreciate the diverse cultural and religious traditions of Guatemala.
4. Identify prominent social problems in Guatemala and recognize how the oppressive ideologies (i.e. sexism, racism, classism) contribute to said problems.
5. Describe Guatemalan social policies and social work practices.
6. Examine the emotional experience of living briefly outside of one's own culture and identify the skills or coping mechanisms necessary to complete basic daily tasks.

REQUIRED READING

Menchu, R. (1987). I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala. NY: Verso.

OR

Wilkinson, D. (2004). Silence on the mountain: Stories of terror, betrayal, and forgetting in Guatemala. NC: Duke University Press.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The learning format for this seminar includes small and large group discussions, individual participation, travel to Guatemala, and visits with NGOs. The seminar requires the full participation of all students. Each student is expected to share experiences or ideas that will enrich group discussion.

There are two required pre-class meetings –Tuesday, May 13th 2014 and Tuesday, May 20th, 2014. We will leave for Guatemala on Sunday, May 25th, and will return on Saturday, June 7th 2014. There will also be a post trip debriefing session on Thursday, June 12th for a supper meeting at 5:30 p.m. Students are expected to attend ALL educational sessions before and after the trip and in Guatemala as planned.

INSTRUCTOR’S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Facilitate discussions
- Arrange for supplemental materials as needed
- Evaluate student work and provide feedback
- Be available to respond to questions and issues

STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend and participate in all pre- and post-trip sessions and site visits. You are expected to read all assigned readings, arrive on time for all sessions, attend all activities, and be prepared to participate in discussions.
- Participate in all group events during the study tour in Guatemala.
- Pre-trip assignment: prepare an annotated bibliography on 4 readings on Guatemala. Chapters can be substituted for articles or a book; one page per reading.
- Submit a personal reflection and a final paper together. The combined reflection and final paper is described in the *Course Requirements* section below.
- Students who miss more than 20% of class meetings, for any reason, will not be eligible to receive credit for the course and will be required to withdraw from it. .

Professional Code of Conduct

Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice, as well as inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff (at school or field placement) will be the basis for nonacademic termination.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Distribution of Credit for Required Assignments:

10%	Pre-trip Orientation Session #1—Tuesday, May 13 th
	Pre-trip session #2—Tuesday, May 20 th
15%	Annotated Bibliography
50%	Educational days in Guatemala, participation in travel activities, journal entries
10%	Post-trip session—Thursday, June 12 th
10%	Personal reflection
5%	Final Paper

Participation: Attendance and active participation in all pre-trip seminars, all educational excursions, group discussions, and the post wrap-up seminar are required.

Expectations in Guatemala: Students will participate in a variety of activities the first weekend in Guatemala, some required and others optional. A mandatory debriefing session will be held each evening. One or two group dinners will also be scheduled for the entire group to enjoy together. The final two days in country, students will be given options to choose from for extended cultural trips to areas outside of Antigua. There will be additional free time in which students can relax plan their own outings for shopping, dining out, hiking, etc.

In preparation for the trip all students are required to read either *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* **or** *Silence on the mountain: Stories of terror, betrayal, and forgetting in Guatemala*. After selecting and reading one of these books, each student will post a 3 paragraph reflection on the book with any questions about Guatemala that arise.

Written Assignments:

The following criteria will be used in grading papers:

1. All elements of assignments must be covered;
2. Evidence must be presented to back up your analyses (specific examples must be given to illustrate vague ideas or concepts or to make a point more clearly);
3. Assignments must be well written in terms of clarity of expression;
4. APA style must be used (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>);
5. No typographical, spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors;
6. Assignments must be turned in on time;
7. Assignment must be word processed with pages numbered and a cover page; hand-written papers will not be accepted.

• **Pre-Trip Assignment: Annotated Bibliography**

Select a topic of interest (e.g. child labor, domestic or youth violence, deforestation) that will guide you through your pre-trip assignment, your observations in Guatemala, and post-trip written assignment. Students are required to prepare an annotated bibliography on 4 scholarly readings of their choice related to the topic they have chosen. Articles should be from journals or published book chapters. You are required to write a brief summary of each article, in which you develop 4 ideas/concepts. List the title and citation of the book or article and include a brief synopsis of the reading and a section on its relevance or importance to this trip.

a) Summarize the article (overall, what was this article about) b) describe the relevance of this reading to your area of interest and c) discuss the practice relevant ideas you got from this article. The annotated bibliography will be 3-6 pages. (See sample at end of this syllabus.) Submit all 4 annotated bibliographies together as one document. **Due: May 20th**

• **Post-Trip Assignment:**

- a. Personal reflection (3 pages or PowerPoint)
- b. Final paper (3-5 pages text)

A) Personal Reflection, Part A of Final Assignment

Prior to the trip, throughout the time in Guatemala, and once we return students are strongly encouraged to keep a personal journal. Journaling will allow students time to process and integrate their intercultural and academic experiences. Additionally, journal entries can be drawn upon for completing the personal reflection assignment to the US.

The following questions can guide your pre-trip journaling. Additional questions will be provided for the time in Guatemala and for “re-entry” to the United States. Journal entries should guide and inform your final personal reflection.

Pre-Trip:

1. Why did you choose to study abroad in Guatemala? Who or what influenced your choice?
2. What preconceived notions do you have about Guatemalan culture? How do you see yourself interacting with the host culture in light of your preconceived notions?
3. What are your expectations for the academic program? What do you hope to learn? How do you envision the instructors and the learning environment?
4. How do you feel about leaving the U.S., your home, and/or campus? What will you be happy to leave behind? What do you believe you will miss?

Upon return, prepare a systematic reflection in response to the above questions. We recommend beginning this reflection soon after returning home, while your thoughts and insights are fresh. Your final reflection can take either format below.

Prepare Paper AND a PowerPoint Presentation/Movie of your reflection.

- Utilizing the learning goals you set previous to the trip and the learning objectives set forth in the syllabus, write a personal reflection of your experience during this study abroad course. Your journal entries before, during and immediately after the trip can guide the reflection. The paper should encompass the questions in a narrative form.

AND

- Use photos and power point slides to summarize significant learning from the trip in response to the above questions. This should be e-mailed to faculty and should be 15 slides minimum. All participants are encouraged to present their presentation to colleagues, student groups and other interested audiences. The Social Work Program may arrange opportunities for participants to present to other students, faculty and community members upon return.

B) Final Paper, part B (required of all students)

Prepare a paper in response to the following: (3-5 pages text)

Return to the topic you selected for your annotated bibliography prior to the trip. Based on your readings, in-

country experiences, and discussions, prepare an integration paper. Describe your impressions of Guatemalan culture, social issues, and human services and compare them to your knowledge of North American culture and equivalent. As in integration paper, students should reflect on shifts in their knowledge and perceptions on their chosen topic that occurred from pre-trip orientation through the return to the US. Incorporate your insights on the assigned course text, the articles you studied for the annotated bibliography and additional readings you did for this final paper. While Part A of the Final Assignment focuses on your personal reflections, Part B is an attempt to advance and articulate your intellectual understanding of Guatemala and your specific topic of interest.

Be sure to use APA format with citations and references.

Schedule in Guatemala

The instructors will provide a calendar of the week and daily schedule at the pre-trip orientation.

Example of an annotated bibliography

Giese-Davis, J., et al. (2002). Change in emotion-regulation strategy for women with metastatic breast cancer following supportive-expressive group therapy. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology* 70(4), 916-925.

Study participants included 125 women with relatively grave breast cancer who attended weekly 90-minute supportive-expressive therapy groups (called "SET" by this team), who were monitored as to their level of expressiveness (p. 918). The researchers monitored "emotion-regulation constructs" (p. 916), such as "suppression of negative affect, restraint, repression, and emotional self-efficacy" (p. 916) in order to gauge the depth of the feelings shared by women in the groups. Though suppression of feelings at inappropriate times is a healthy ability, difficult emotions that are consistently denied can lead to negative mental health outcomes and to physical manifestations as illness. The Giese-Davis team found that SET groups were able to help women become more expressive of difficult emotions, but did not lead to harmful expressions of hostility or despair. Giese-Davis reports that "the women in the group have often talked about how important it is to them to be more able to express their strong emotions, particularly fear, anger, and sadness about dying" (p. 922). This effect is a treatment goal of the SET model, which asks group members to excavate and discuss their most painful and difficult feelings. One group member said "When things are bothering you, the therapist brings them to the surface, helps to get the demons out" (p. 922).

Though this article is useful in describing the effect of an intense treatment from women who are dealing with advanced breast cancer, it is less useful to my fictional group than others I reviewed. In interviewing group members, the stage and prognosis of their cancer would be an important factor in eligibility for the group, and I would likely limit it to women who are working through sexual functioning concerns in the context of likely recovery. The women in this SET group had very strong difficult emotions because they truly were dying. At that stage of the disease, I would recommend a different group to address the concerns about unfinished business, grief, and rage that occur for people at the end of life. However, the article does give an empirical evidence base to champion SET as a therapeutic modality, which corroborates the findings for lesbians with less severe breast cancer in the Fobair et al. (2002) study. This leads me to conclude that SET is probably useful to breast cancer groups with a variety of demographics and prognoses, and encourages me to explore it further in clinical practice.

DeYoung, M. & Corbin, B.A. (1994). Helping early adolescents tell: A guided exercise for trauma-focused sexual abuse treatment groups. *Child Welfare*, 73(2), 141-154.

Therapists providing group therapy for sexually abused females are often responsible for facilitating group sessions that encourage all members to disclose their abusive experiences. DeYoung and Corbin (1994) address this difficult task by describing a guided exercise for these specific sexual abuse treatment groups in their article about helping early adolescents tell. The authors believe that the context of group therapy for sexual abuse survivors provides an environment conducive to the telling of the girls' experiences for several reasons. Emotional needs are met without the intensity of individual therapy, feelings of secrecy are decreased, and a peer-focused atmosphere helps to reduce feelings of isolation and alienation that accompany the experience of sexual abuse. The trauma focused group described, has a group structure sensitive to the needs of the participants. For example, the group should include no more than six, same-sexed children, 11-14 years old, all who have confirmed histories of sexual abuse, as well as a facilitator of the same sex. The sixteen week group is focused on telling the story of the trauma as narrated by each individual survivor. The guided exercise begins with the participants completing a written exercise that asks them to document the story as she remembers it, fears about telling the story, and type of support the individual needs from the group. Upon completion of this exercise the group members are prompted to ask questions, the therapist assists the individual in constructing a new interpretation of the abuse, and thoughts and feelings are normalized in an attempt to transform the experience. The authors report that those girls who use the guided exercise share more details about the abuse and are more likely to express their feelings, thoughts, and needs more openly. Those who participated reported that they enjoy the exercise and that it is effective in helping them structure their stories.

I chose to read this particular article because my main clinical interest is working with female survivors of abuse. I specifically chose sexual abuse due to my repeated exposure to females who have experienced this type of abuse at my field sites and my lack of experience in facilitating a group with clients wishing to focus on these issues. This article provided a structured approach for therapists like myself to utilize in practice that encourages females to share their stories in a non-threatening way. I have become more aware of the basic steps in guiding females in the creation of their story that I was not aware prior to reading the article such as using a written exercise, learning about the relevant issues regarding the abuse that need to be discussed, and allowing group members to take a considerable amount of control in running the group. I also became acquainted with the task of the therapist upon completion of the story which includes incorporating the story into the child's life in a newly defined way. These are all relevant ideas applicable to the population of clients that I work with and plan on working with in the future. This was an excellent article for establishing a base for running this type of group and is appealing due to the effectiveness of the intervention and the willingness of individuals to actively participate in the exercise.