

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Winter Break 2016 Feb. 19-28 3 Credits Bluefields, Jamaica

SWRK 479/592: International Social Work: Service Learning in Jamaica

Teaching Team:

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Course Description

This course includes both an introduction to Jamaican customs and culture, and an experience of social work in an international setting. Service learning will be an essential focus, within the context of a developing country. Students will learn to enter such a community with cultural humility.

Academic Service-Learning Rationale

Academic service-learning is a form of pedagogy that highlights the connection between theory and practice for greater academic engagement among students and, at the same time, provides a needed service for the community, thus forming a reciprocal relationship between students and community. By actually working in the community, the students will gain a concrete and deeper understanding of the themes of the course. While working in the community, a student must (at all times) be respectful of others (children, school officials, community workers, etc.) and their traditions, values, and ideas, even if they clash with or differ from those of the student.

The service-learning component for this course seeks to give students a call to action to promote civic engagement, active learning, and authentic opportunities for reflective practice. This course will intersect service learning and the tenets of social justice in providing teachable moments regarding student's ideologies, and the complexities of our multicultural/multiethnic global society.

Course Overview

Global connections in social work are recognized as increasingly important, as populations migrate to different countries either to seek economic opportunities, or to flee violence and oppression. Social workers both work with immigrants in this country who are from developing countries, and also travel abroad to work with those in need in their own countries. Some social work students, for example, enter the Peace Corps after

graduation in order to make a contribution to developing countries that are impacted by poverty and insufficient resources. Others seek out international aid organizations that provide disaster relief, child welfare, or community building.

Whether providing services in this country to immigrant populations, or serving in an international setting, social workers need to develop the skills related to cultural competency and cultural humility. Both of these approaches involve learning about cultures that are different than one's own, and learning how to "negotiate" within an unfamiliar culture in a way that promotes relationship building, rather than hierarchical dominance. This international experience will support students in developing an attitude of openness and curiosity about unfamiliar customs and traditions, rather than being critical or judgmental. They will become aware of their "first world" privilege, and sensitized to the impact of third world living conditions. By being in the role of "learner" while providing service, students will have the opportunity to develop the critical skill of negotiating unfamiliar cultural environments with cultural humility.

This elective course is designed to be offered during winter break, and will include an experiential component of traveling to Bluefields, Jamaica for the entire winter break as a group (Friday – Saturday, and mandatory class sessions both before and after the trip). Faculty will be working with the student group, providing and coordinating workshops and will be coordinating the service learning projects. Students, in small teams of 3-4 students, will be assigned to service learning projects in the local area. These projects will initially involve work with local pre-school children, high school youth, and community development.

English is the standard language, although many community members will speak Patois with other Jamaicans. The current population of Jamaica is about 2.7 million, with another two million living abroad. Of the population, 91% are of African descent, 7.3% Afro-European, and 0.2% white. A number of traditions and customs come directly from Africa, as well as from the colonization of Jamaica by the Spanish and the British. In the 1800's, there were over 300,000 slaves working on sugar plantations, with thousands worked to death. There was a history of "underground" resistance, and the Patois language that is still spoken among Jamaicans reflects that history. Slavery was abolished in 1834 throughout the British Empire, however it continues to have an impact.

Students in this course, in workshops, readings, and field visits, will develop comparisons of the history and impact of slavery in Jamaica and the U.S. Conditions for slaves between Jamaica and the U.S. will be compared, in addition to the long term impact on the present day. The slave experience in both countries will serve as an underlying theme in better understanding the histories and current issues in both counties, as well as the immigrant experience for modern day Jamaicans who leave, and for the families who remain and depend on "remittances".

Most Americans who visit Jamaica stay confined to the inclusive resorts scattered around the north coast, unless they are visiting a "returnee" who has come home following time abroad. There are about 50-60 Peace Corps volunteers who are living in the communities

throughout the island. At least 1-2 Peace Corps volunteers are based in Bluefields, and will be incorporated as guest speakers into our class sessions.

For the entire trip, faculty and students will be in Bluefields, a fishing village on the southwest coast, which is a one hour drive from the major international airport of Montego Bay(approx. 35 miles). It is within the same time zone as Michigan.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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1. Students will demonstrate a basic knowledge of Jamaican customs, history, and culture, with recognition of the effect of previous slavery and colonization.

2. Students will develop skills in negotiating an unfamiliar cultural environment.

3. Students will develop cross-cultural relationships with cultural humility.

4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the development, structure, function and social context of organizations and social welfare policies in Jamaican society and the processes of social policy development and change.

5. Students will be able to identify and articulate what are the current social welfare problems and challenges for Jamaican society.

6. Students will be able to work collaboratively with local community groups to implement service-learning projects in an international environment.

7. Students will be able to identify the opportunities for international social work.

8. Students will develop greater sensitivity to potential country-of-origin and cultural issues when working with U.S. clients who are immigrants.

9. Students will identify the similarities and differences of slavery and racial discrimination in Jamaica compared to the U.S.

Students will recognize their role and responsibility as global citizens and our shared fight against oppression and injustice through their collaborative work with the citizens of Bluefields.

Attendance and participation

Enrollment is by permission of the instructors, through the Academic Programs Abroad office (103 Boone Hall; http://www.emich.edu/abroad/application.html). Social work students meeting the general criteria for selection will be given priority for this course.

PRE-TRIP EXPECTATION:

**** Inter-cultural and Intra-cultural issues
Jamaica as a British colony, Immigration issues;

Students will either

1) watch the 3 hour DVD from PBS "Small Island" based on the novel by Andrea Levy. This DVD can be watched on reserve in the library, or purchased (even jointly) from the PBS website..

Describes a Jamaican traveling to Britain to be a soldier during WW II, and the white racism and difficulties that he experiences in making new friends, while still trying to maintain his connections to Jamaica. In a short paper (3 pages) students will reflect on the experience of moving from being in a racial majority to a racial minority, and similarities and differences between first world and third world countries.

- 2) watch the online video of Life and Debt about the global forces impacting the poverty of Jamaica, (on YouTube). Write a 3 page paper about your reactions to these global factors effecting the economy of Jamaica.
- 3) read an article or book chapter about a social issue in Jamaica (e.g., trafficking, child abuse, teen pregnancy, etc.). Write a 3 page reflection paper about this issue and include the article that you found.

Workshops will be conducted Mon. - Thursday during the week in Jamaica. These may include lectures, discussion, guest speakers, and field trips. The schedule of specific topics will be scheduled according to the logistics of field trips, guest speakers, etc. -TBD.

Workshop II. Jamaica

- **. Jamaican traditions and customs; Third World and First World Comparisons
 - Local Guest Speaker
 - Current events in Jamaica and Bluefields
 - RAJ community tour
- Comparison of Slavery in Jamaica and the US
 - slavery history in both countries
 - Discussion and analysis about the experience of people of African descent being in the majority (Jamaica) compared with being a minority (U.S.)
 - FIELD TRIP to buildings and a Plantation House in local area from slavery times
- ** Reflections on Service Learning; International Service Opportunities (Thurs)
 - Sharing reflections as a larger group about service projects
 - Benefits and limitations of service learning during a one week trip

- What will we do after we return home to a first world country?
- In what ways have we changed from this experience?
- Guest Speaker: local Peace Corps volunteer

Other field trips that are recreational include a group trip to YS Falls and Treasure Beach.

SATURDAY March 12 4 hours (1 – 5 pm)

POST-TRIP WORKSHOP

- A. Whole group discussion on reflections on your learning from the trip and your service projects.
- B. Students will work in small groups to prepare a public presentation about their service- learning project. This lab time will take place in a computer lab to facilitate work on a collaborative powerpoint presentation.
- C. Students will demonstrate their 15 minute powerpoint presentations to each other (with pictures) and receive feedback from the group as a whole about ways to improve it for a more public presentation.
- D. Students will make arrangements and schedule a collaborative presentation that is advertised to the School of Social Work and to CHHS. They will also make themselves available to present within individual classes as per invitation of the faculty.

Assignments

- I. Class Participation: Attendance and participation in all classes, workshops and assigned field trips; Participation in service-learning project as assigned, and follow-up presentations. (20%)
- II. **Pre-trip and post-trip Brief Reflection Papers**. Pre-trip choices (videos or article); and post-trip overall reflection of the trip. (3 pages each) 30% total 15% each
- III. **Red Folder Projects** about the culture of Jamaica. Each project has instructions in the Red Folder and includes activities such as reviewing a school book, reading a folk story, playing dominos with a local, or buying a daily newspaper from the local shop. Each project involves a one page reflection paper to describe your reactions and how you implemented the project. Select two projects of your choosing. (10%)
- III **Journals:** Since this is an experiential learning class, the primary assignment will be journals that will encourage reflection and critical thinking about the experiences both in the workshops and the service learning projects. Journals will be due at the end of each day in Jamaica (20%).

- III. **Group Presentation**: Each small group assigned to a service learning project will be expected to create a 5-10 slide powerpoint presentation with pictures from their trip to Jamaica, a description of their service learning project, and reflections on their learning. (20%) (group grade)
- IV. Graduate Students will sign up for leadership responsibilities that include introducing speakers, facilitating discussions, etc.

Our Service Learning Projects and Community Partners

- 1) Basic School with Director Joy Baker (pre-school) assisting teachers
- 2) Community Group Community Issues Wolde Kristos
- 3) Belmont Academy (High School) Peer Mediation Principal Mr. Simpson
- 4) Belmont Academy Parenting Education Principal Mr. Simpson

Possible Readings

- Baker-Henningham, H., & Walker, S. (2009). A qualitative study of teacher's perceptions of an intervention to prevent conduct problems in Jamaican pre-schools. *Child Care*, *Health and Development*, *35* (5), 632-642.
- Brown, J., & Johnson, S. (2008). Childrearing and child participation in Jamaican families. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 16(1), 31-40.
- Burton, A. L. (2006). *Women's slave narratives*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.
- Ferguson, G.M., & Cramer, P. (2007). Self-esteem among Jamaican children: Exploring the impact of skin color and rural/urban residence. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology.* 28(4), 345-359.
- Garten, A., & Goodman, H. (2005). An educational model for child welfare practice with English-speaking Caribbean families. *Child Welfare: Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program*; (Special Issue: Immigrants and Refugees), 84(5), 771-790.
- Hutchinson, K. M., Jemmott, L.S., Wood, E. B., Hewitt, H., Kawha, E., Waldron, E.B., & Bonaparte, B. (2007). Culture-specific factors contributing to HIV risk among Jamaican adolescents. *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care*, 18(2), 35-47.
- International Association for Service-Learning and Community Engagement. (2010) www.researchslce.org
- Jones, T. (2008). Jamaican immigrants in the United States and Canada: Race,

- transnationalism, and social capital. New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC.
- Kristof, N. D., & WuDunn, S. (2009). Half the sky: Turning oppression into opportunity into opportunity for women worldwide. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Learn and Serve Clearinghouse.(2010) www.servicelearning.org
- Mapp. S. C.(Ed.)(2007). Human rights and social justice in a global perspective: An introduction to international social work.
- McGoldrich, M., Giordano, J., & Garcia-Petro, N. (2005). *Ethnicity and family therapy*, 3rd. ed..

 Relevant chapters: Families of African origin; British West Indian families.
- McLaughlin, A. (2009). Africa: A bucket half empty or a bucket half full? *The New Social Worker*, 16(3), 29.
- Michigan Campus Compact (2010) Introduction to service-learning tool kit. www.micampuscompact.org
- National Youth Leadership Council. (2010) Reflection: Learning from the service experience. www.nylc.org
- Norman, L. R., Figueroa, J., Wedderburn, M., Byfield, L., Bourne, D., & Gebre, Y. (2007). Trends in high risk perception, condom use and sexual history among Jamaican youth 1996-2004. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 19(2), 199-207.
- Phillips, R. (2009). Food security and women's health: A feminist perspective for international social work. *International Social Work, 52*(4), 485-498.
- Robinson, C. (2007). Fight for freedom: The destruction of slavery in Jamaica. Kingston, Jamaica: LMH Publishing Limited.
- Smith, D. E., & Ashiabi, G. S. (2007). Poverty and child outcomes: A focus on Jamaican youth. *Adolescence*, 42(168), 837-858.
- Welsh, D. D. (2005). *How to raise your child like a Jamaican*. USA: Island Flower, Dahlia Welsh.
- Whitley, B., & Hickling, F. W. (2007). Open papers, open minds? Media representations of psychiatric de-institutionalization in Jamaica. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 44(4), 659-671. doi: 10.1177/1363461507083903.
- Wint, E. (2000). Factors encouraging the growth of sustainable communities: A Jamaican

case study. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 27(3).

Yetman, N. R. (Ed.). (2000). *Voices from slavery: 100 authentic slave narratives*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

Proposal Belmont Academy Bluefields Jamaica – our high school partner

From the Belmont Academy Website http://www.belmontacademy.edu.jm/