RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
COURSE OUTLINE

Empowerment through Community Engagement and Development:
Building Cross-Cultural Competencies

19.910.533.03 Special Topics in Social Work Research– Global Education to Mexico – Winter 2018
01:959:373:01 Course Place Holder

Location: Autonomous University of Yucatan (UADY), Merida, Mexico

Dates: Pre-departure Orientation: TBD
In-country dates: Tuesday, January 2- Saturday, January 13, 2018
Course available on Canvas: December 15, 2018

Travel Information: Merida, Mexico is the destination
Arrive in Merida, Mexico (MID): Tuesday, January 2, 2018
Depart Merida, Mexico (MID): Saturday, January 13, 2018

I. Course Description

This course provides students with the historical and current information on vulnerable populations across the life cycle in the Yucatan, Mexican culture and tradition, and education and practice of social work in Mexico. The course of study emphasizes knowledge and skill-building in community engagement and development that is specific to social work practice in Mexico, specifically, and Latin America, more broadly. Community development and empowerment for addressing discrimination and oppression is a special strength of social work in Spanish-speaking countries in contrast to US models that emphasize more individualistic approaches to problem-solving. Comparative research on the efficacy of different models will be explored. Field visits engage students directly with clients (where possible), faculty, students and practitioners in public and private social services agencies, local traditional healers and religious community groups.

II. Course Overview and Format:

The proposed course will be in-country and modeled on existing Study Abroad Courses in which there is a combination of lectures by faculty at the UADY social work program and field visits that engages students in discussion with practitioners about programs, services and practices that work; the structure of social welfare programs. Cultural and artistic visits will also be included.

III. Place of Course in Program
This course is an elective course for undergraduate or graduate students with a special interest in social work across border, social work with immigrants, and Mexican culture.

IV. **Course Objectives**
At the end of the program, students will be able to:
- Discuss and compare social work education and practice in Mexico, Latin America, and the US in terms of positives and negatives.
- Identify vulnerable populations across the life cycle in Mexico, and most particularly, those specific to the Yucatan.
- Describe and apply community engagement theory and principles to a specific vulnerable group within Mexico and Latin America.
- Identify social and community development interventions and their appropriate utilization in Mexico.
- Describe and discuss the shared opportunities and constraints for building the capacity of social work in Mexico and the US
- Demonstrate an ability to engage reciprocally with professionals, community members and leaders in national context other than one’s own
- Assess how one’s personal and cultural values affect interaction and understanding across borders.

V. **Course Requirements:**

1. Mandatory pre-departure course work and orientation
2. Read required documents and articles that are posted on Canvas
3. Participation in a Threaded Discussion on Canvas
4. Attendance and Participation in 90% of the scheduled meetings, classes and cultural events.
5. A personal journal about experiences, observations, thoughts, and feelings.
6. A final paper (8-10 papers) that addresses a specific vulnerable population within the Yucatan (outline provided by separate document).

VI. **Grading**

Assignments for course:

1. Travel Journal or Travel Blog to be submitted to the instructor by January 31, 2018. You are required to keep a travel journal that you organize in a way that works best for you. Journaling is a very private thing. You may find that you write every day, or you may decide to write once every 2-3 days, but in more detail. Some students prefer to combine writing and scrapbooking. It’s up to you to do what works best. There is no right way or wrong way to keep a journal. The instructor will keep your journal contents confidential! It will be shared only if you decide you want it to be shared.

2. Participation in an ongoing Threaded Discussion on Canvas is required as part of the class participation. The ongoing threaded discussion is focused on
Empowerment through Community Engagement and Development which is the overall theme and title of the Mexico Study Abroad Program. There are readings on Community Engagement that will be useful for reflection and analysis of our experiences, the programs that you are visiting, and the interventions that are used in Mexico, and more specifically the Merida and the Yucatan.

3. **Final Paper 8-10 pages:** This is a paper that you will write that will provide the instructor with the opportunity to evaluate how well you achieved selected course objectives through a guided assignment. The due date is January 31, 2018.

Overall Grade will be determined by:
- Participation in threaded discussion/reading
- Attendance and full participation in at least 90% of the program in-country
- Journal submitted on the agreed date with professor
- Final Paper: to be submitted on the agreed date with the professor

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<th>Numerical Grade</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Equivalent</th>
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VII. **Course Evaluation**
Study Abroad at Rutgers University will issue a survey that evaluates the course and instructor. This survey is completed by students after the end of the program and all answers are confidential and anonymous.

**Mexico Informational and Travel Resources**


IX: Course Outline

**Itinerary is provided separately**

Site visits will be organized in partnership with UADY’s Social Work Program and School of Nursing and the Social Work Program – in consultation with the Center for International Cooperation. There are specific programs that provide internships for UADY students that will provide excellent learning opportunities including a prison, elementary and high schools, domestic violence shelter, and the public social welfare and child protection services.

Readings: Available on Canvas

**Selected Readings by Special Topic and/or Vulnerable Group**

**Community Engagement**


**International Education**


**The Profession of Social Work and Social Work Education in Mexico**


Child Welfare and Protection
doi:10.1111/plar.12177


Disability Studies


**LGBTQIA**


**Mental Health and Mental Illness**


**Education**


**Child Labor**


**Human Trafficking**


**Aging and Gerontology**


**Gender-Based Violence**


**Maternal and Child Health**


Political Science and Public Administration

Migration


HIV/AIDS and Other Infectious Diseases


**Justice and Incarcerated Populations**


**Indigenous Groups**


**Latino Families in the United States**


**Women’s Rights Reports**


**Country Conditions**


**X. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**
All work submitted in a graduate course must be your own. It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be construed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited material as your own. Use the APA citation style which is described in the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition.

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or footnote. Acknowledgement is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: “to paraphrase Plato’s comment…” and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

Plagiarism as described in the University’s Academic Integrity Policy is as follows: 

“Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

– Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
– Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one’s own words another person’s written words or ideas as if they were one’s own.
– Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
– Incorporating into one’s work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other nontextual material from other sources without proper attribution”.

Plagiarism along with any and all other violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by undergraduate students. Since all violations of academic integrity by a graduate or professional student are potentially separable under the Academic Integrity Policy, faculty members should not adjudicate alleged academic integrity violations by graduate and professional students, but should refer such allegations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF) or to the Office of Student Conduct. The AIF that you should
contact is Antoinette Y. Farmer, 848.932.5358. The student shall be notified in writing, by email or hand delivery, of the alleged violation and of the fact that the matter has been referred to the AIF for adjudication. This notification shall be done within 10 days of identifying the alleged violation. Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ or incomplete grade shall be assigned until the case is resolved. For more information regarding the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures, see: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers.

It has been recommended by the Office of Student Conduct that the honor pledge below be written on all examinations and major course assignments.

To promote a strong culture of academic integrity, Rutgers has adopted the following honor pledge to be written and signed on examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading: **ON MY HONOR, I HAVE NEITHER RECEIVED NOR GIVEN ANY UNAUTHORIZED ASSISTANCE ON THIS EXAMINATION.**

**XII. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are taking your courses, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form. Please make sure you indicate the campus where you are taking your courses on this form.

**Annotated Bibliography Selected Readings on Syllabus**


The authors describe the Pragmatic Action Research approach which was introduced by Greenwood and Levin and is a hands-on model, where the researcher is an “involved citizen” rather than a theorist. This multiple methods research model was applied to a population of Mexican American elders who underuse home care services and formerly incarcerated women in a community faith-based program in southern California. The findings from this research showed that Mexican American elders need increased home care services. Recruitment efforts depended on the cultural relevancy of the interventions,
language accessibility, and trust in the caregiver. At the same time, the findings showed that community faith based programs and reentry programs should be expanded to help women who were formerly incarcerated. The authors demonstrate how the Pragmatic Action Research model is a participatory, empowerment based, and informed approach to research. It is highly valued and successful when working with minority, underserved, and vulnerable communities.


Hernandez and Dunbar discuss community based social work practice in Mexico and the role that social workers play in medical settings, businesses, children and family services, mental health services, schools and drug and alcohol treatment settings. The social work practice theories in Mexico are based on those from South America, specifically Brazil’s Paolo Freire, who developed a widely-known communitarian theoretical framework. This is an educational, grassroots, and participatory approach which differs from the U.S. individual based approach. The authors describe the different social work offerings in schools, such as the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) which is the largest professional social work program in the country. The authors highlight that through social work exchange programs, students from Mexico are studying in the U.S. and Canada to expand their knowledge of different modalities. The authors suggest the expansion of exchange programs, and graduate programs that emphasize inter-program collaboration and the global social work perspective.


The author discusses the ethnographic perspective of gender based violence in Mexico and the delicate nature of working with survivors of sexual assault. Howell demonstrates through ethnographic research in Oaxaca, Mexico that women and girls’ experience of sexual violence is often under reported and not widely discussed. Howell analyzes sexual violence and assault in Latin America and explains that women fear state-sponsored sexual violence and assault as well as everyday violence within their homes and communities. From research and qualitative interviews, Howell found that sexual violence is used as a form of coercion, punishment, and control over women by their male spouses, family members, and acquaintances. The instance of sexual violence in Mexico is accompanied by victim-blaming and shaming of the woman who was assaulted, often regarding the loss of her virginity outside of marriage. In the state of Oaxaca, Howell explains the prevalence of traditional gender roles stress that women have less power than men. Despite legal advances in Mexico, prosecution of those responsible for sexual violence is still a slow and often unsuccessful process. Looking back, Howell emphasizes the need to build a trusting and compassion working relationship with women in these communities.

Montaño describes Latin American developmentalism and the relationship between social work practice and theory in the region. Developmentalism is described as the developmental process which led to Reconceptualization and the questioning of social sciences, social policy, and social work in Latin America. This originated during the period of transition to the capitalist system in the region, between the 1930s and the 1970s. Montaño highlights that this transition also gave rise to positivism, which is the general acceptance and coercion of the majority of the population to adopt norms and values of the capitalist, bourgeoisie class. Montaño discusses that social work developed in the context of this association with unchallenged capitalism and as part of a socio-psychological field, focused on practice, action, and intervention. He proposes six strategies to separate from this positivist rational and emphasizes the need for ethical-political social work practice when working with vulnerable populations in the short, medium and long term.


Pollack and Rosman discuss the fundamental principles of international treaties as well as those of interest to the international social work community. International treaties are held to standards set by the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (Vienna Convention) of 1969, which was first enforced in 1980. Treaties are designed to address an issue among states and hold states accountable through a process called ratification. When states ratify the treaty, they bind themselves to it and are responsible for upholding the terms of the treaty. The authors highlight the several treaties which pertain to international social workers, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These treaties and conventions affect international social workers, as states often struggle to enforce them and by doing so violate human rights. At the same time, treaties can affect the relationship between the social worker’s country and a country in which she or he wishes to interact.


The authors conducted a cross-sectional population-based study of from June to September 1998, among 1,535 women 15 to 49 years old, to determine the prevalence of and risk factors for violence against women in Cuernavaca Morelos, Mexico. The study was conducted through qualitative interviews and demonstrated that male partner
violence is prevalent in Mexico. Almost 50% of the women experienced male partner violence in the form of low-level emotional and physical violence, 10% experienced more serious physical violence, and 6% experienced extremely serious physical or emotional violence, such as direct threats to their life. The authors found a positive correlation between lower economic status, male partners’ abuse of drugs and alcohol and higher rates of male partner violence. The authors suggest that regardless of high prevalence, due to cultural stigma and legal limitations male partner violence is often underreported in Mexico. This study suggests the need for research involving male perpetrators and more education for boys, girls, and women on substance abuse, sexual and physical violence.


The authors describe the adoption of The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption in Guatemala in 2008. This initiated Guatemalan policy focusing on the best interest of orphan children, specifically by intercountry adoptions, keeping the child within their family group or kinship group. Along with intercountry adoptions, Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is discussed as a culturally adaptable intervention to protect the cultural practices and rights of children, specifically indigenous children. FGC is based in the empowerment approach and ecological perspective and gives family group members the ability to make decisions about the care of the child. The authors discuss the historically problematic adoptions of Guatemalan children by foreigners, which required a drastic evaluation. The new practices emphasize the paradigm shift in Guatemala away from institutionalization of children and out of country adoptions. This prominence of intercountry adoption and FGC requires the professional training of social workers in family support and child welfare intervention.


The authors discuss the burden of ageing in developing vs. developed countries through an assessment of longitudinal data from the Mexican Health and Aging Study (MHAS) and the U.S. Health and Retirement Study (HRS). Disability as a burden of ageing is described as the loss of physical, cognitive, and emotional functioning. Burden of ageing also relates to dependence, which is considered by the World Health Organization as the low or absence of capacity to perform activities which are considered normal. Through the analysis, the authors found that the burden of disability in old age is lower for young elders in Mexico than in the U.S. However, people aged 80 years or older experience disability at higher rates in Mexico than the U.S. The authors found that there is a higher rate of disability among women than men, with even higher rates for women in the U.S.
Other variables in their study included health care coverage, standards of living, and risk factors associated with disability, such as smoking, obesity, and sedentary lifestyle. While Mexico has a large ageing population and low standards of living, elders experience less risk factors and underreport disability when compared to elders in the U.S.