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Amizade and West Virginia University

HONR 499A: Global Service Learning in Brazil

Santarem, Brazil Travel dates May 11-25 3 credits

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**Amizade: Global Service Learning in Brazil**

**Course Description:**

Global Service-Learning in Brazil provides students a forum for critical reflection on community-driven service, intercultural experiences, and global citizenship. The course will progress through a framework which explicitly links personal experience and readings through regular writing assignments in a journal and also through class discussions. Journal assignments and formal reflections begin prior to intercultural immersion and then cover the following broad themes while in Santarem, Brazil: personal values and ethics, service in a cross-cultural context, global citizenship and communication, and activating the GSL experience post-cultural immersion. Successful completion of this course will include critical thought and principles of inquiry concerning contemporary issues, ideas and/or values as seen from a humanistic or scientific perspective. Furthermore, historical, cultural, and/or political issues pertaining to a western nation in an international context will be explored.

The time that you spend in Brazil is sure to be one filled with many new experiences: new outlooks, new cultures, and new situations. Therefore, the Amizade experience is enhanced by looking at some of the things that have been written in relation to the country and the issues over the last several years, getting a rough idea of what's happening, and going with an informed set of questions in mind. The entire experience is about getting in deep enough and starting to dream enough to realize that your time abroad can't possibly be enough to see and understand all of Brazil or Latin America, but it can be enough to get an idea of it, connect with new friends, meet and struggle with some significant challenges, make connections, create difference, and begin to understand an entirely different kind of place. That's really a lot for such a short amount of time, and much of it will happen.

While in Brazil, volunteers will complete service activities with Amizade’s community partner, Fundação Esperança. The first week will be spent at a clinic in Santarem while the second week will be spent on a medical boat travelling along the Trombetas River providing health services to isolated Quilombo communities.

**Objectives:**

**Service.** Students in this course are required to travel to and participate actively in the life of the host community during the duration of the program. This participation includes a minimum of 40 hours of service work in collaboration with our community partner organizations in Santarem, Brazil. While the students are required to perform this service work and additional designated activities in order to receive a passing grade for the course, they do not receive further academic credit for service activities. The intercultural service experience serves as a basis for course discussion and student writing.

**Intercultural Immersion Activities.** Students will participate in the daily life of the community in activities such as social gatherings, holidays, special events and time spent with locals. They will have the opportunity to hear from local community members and these lectures are part of the academic experience. They are expected to prepare questions for speakers and to actively engage in learning from locals throughout the course. These questions will be recorded in students’ journals in advance of each presentation. Field trips to sites with local cultural meaning, history and attraction are also part of course activities. These reflections should go beyond a simple recitation of facts to explore in some way the significance of what has been seen or done or learned.

**Readings.** Scholarly readings as well as those culled from popular media will provide the bedrock for this course. The readings are chosen selectively, with the goal of introducing the students to the culture of the host community and helping them to reflect on the complexities of social life. This course assumes that students will approach critical readings, such as editorials and opinion pieces, as active readers, interpreting the authors’ views while also comparing and testing these views in light of the students’ experiences.

**Journal Writing.** Regular, daily journal writing functions as a tool for students to reflect on course content and experiences as well as develop writing skill and technique. The journal should merge theory with personal reflection in order to deepen knowledge about the topic at hand.

**Class Dialogue.** Students will participate in regular dialogue in class meetings. Readings and journal assignments will often provide the focal point for dialogue but examination of experiences at the service site and in the community are encouraged as well. Students are expected to create a learning environment where diverse viewpoints, emotional learning and academic discourse are respected and promoted. As the course progresses, students may be asked contribute to facilitation and course leadership during at least one session.

**Attendance.** Students who make the commitment to participate in this course make the commitment to the instructor and to each other to attend all class meetings, in Morgantown, online, and in Brazil, and to participate in all service activities. Absences will be excused only when unavoidable. An unexcused absence from a class session will result in loss of participation credit for that session. (Reading and journal writing requirements are not waived when absences are excused.)

**Final Reflective Paper.** The sequence of writing prompts concludes with a short formal essay due soon upon return. In this assignment, students are expected to draw upon and revise their journal writing to synthesize the academic and experiential components of the course.

**Capstone Project.** The capstone projectsynthesizes the course and intercultural learning experiences. The capstone is a group project with the goal of representing community: both the physical one in which the course took place and the overall learning community. It hones skills in communication because it requires students to find a creative way to translate their experience to an audience (usually in their home community). In addition, it should address the concepts that guided our course dialogue particularly that of global citizenship and associated ethics for a global community. Some examples of past capstones include publishing a website or newsletter, creating a photo documentary, designing a museum exhibit, collecting oral histories from community members, and doing presentations in the students’ home communities.

**Measurable Learning Goals and Outcomes:**

**Intercultural Learning: Students engage in active, meaningful participation in the life of the host community**. Learning Outcomes:

* Students will actively participate in service and all designated program activities.
* Students will demonstrate an increasing knowledge of the host community.
* Students will demonstrate an increasing ability to draw upon, analyze and synthesize diverse sources of information, extending from course readings to their own research and to collaborative learning while in the host community.

**Critical Reflection: Students develop critical thinking skills by examining diverse perspectives on course topics and comparing these perspectives with the lived experience of the host community.**

Learning Outcomes:

* Students will demonstrate how they have applied theoretical concepts, skills, and/or aptitudes to their experiences of social life in the host community and, especially, during their service work.
* Students will demonstrate an ability to test and evaluate the knowledge they have gleaned from their studies of and in the host community by applying the knowledge and frameworks and aptitudes of the course content to their daily experience of service and life in the host community.
* Students will demonstrate ability to present information to an audience both through discussion and written materials.

**Global Citizenship:** **Students explore the meaning of service and global civic participation in their own life.**

Learning Outcomes:

* Students will demonstrate thought and exploration of global citizenship concepts and frameworks.
* Students will each develop a critical, if provisional, assessment of the importance of service and civic participation in their own home communities.

**Required Materials:**

You must have reliable access to the internet in order to receive course communication and supplemental readings. Check your e-mail for messages often. All pre- and post-immersion correspondence will be online.

**Grading Policy:**

Your grade will be determined by the quality of your work as defined below, determination, progress and participation. Excellence in all of these areas is required to earn an “A” in this course.

Final grades will be assigned on the following basis:

A: 90 – 100 % B: 80 -- 89 % C: 70 – 79 %

D: 60 – 69 % F: 0 – 59 %

Your overall grade will be based on the following weighted percentages from a total of 400 points:

**Journal Assignments. 40%** Each week you will respond to a series of questions that pertain to the readings, our experiences, your personal reactions and feelings to the immersion, and your understanding and learning about the culture. To earn full credit, you are to respond to each question. Responses to each question should be substantive and be at least 100 words in length. Your ideas should be well developed and well expressed. Regular, daily journal writing functions as a tool for you to reflect on course content and experiences as well as develop writing skill and technique. Your journal entries should merge theory with personal reflection in order to deepen your knowledge. You are expected to write coherently and critically analyze your own ideas as well as those presented in readings by your fellow students in class discussion.

You may buy a journal that you love; size, shape, and style are up to you or use the Amizade journal that will be given to you. Leave the first page blank for Table of Contents. Write legibly, use correct standard English and complete sentences. The journal will be read by the instructor and you will be graded on your entries. You may be asked to share pieces of your journal in class discussion but you will be able to choose the excerpt and edit your comment as you like. Feel free to include artistic representation, photos, and other materials that capture your experiences.

Journal entries will be graded based on the following criteria:

**Distinguished** (7 – 10 points). Demonstrates knowledge of and application of course concepts, ideas, and readings. Incorporates critical thinking.

**Proficient** (4 – 6 points). Shows knowledge of course content but does not apply/incorporate, i.e., refers to an idea or concept but does not illustrated the idea or does so inadequately.

**Developing** (0 – 3 points). Needs to show knowledge and application of course concepts and ideas or student does not submit.

There are 18 journal assignments (outlined in the course schedule). Each is worth 10 points.

**Class Participation. 20%** You will be graded on active participation in all aspects of the course. This includes reading the required material, finishing writing assignments, participating actively in reflection sessions, field trips, and other activities provided in the host community. I expect students to be ***actively engaged*** in these activities, not merely physically present. While students are not getting academic credit for the service work, active participation is required.

**Final Reflective Writing. 10%/10%**

Students will submit two components: a 5-7 page personal reflection and a 5-7 page researched document.

*For the personal reflection*, papers should draw from the readings and reflective journal writing completed throughout the course. Consider the service that has been completed, the issues we’ve learned about, and the ethical approaches to global participation we’ve explored. This essay should identify the ethical stance you choose to take in relation to 1) your home community, 2) the community where we served, and 3) the global community. Identify the personal values and background, reason or rationales, and experiences that lead you to take the stance you take. Show how you can demonstrate that you are living consistently with that stance and then describe the challenges that surface to prevent that consistency. How will you address or overcome those challenges in the future and how will you know if you are succeeding in that effort? Go beyond a summary of thoughts from your journal – build on your reflections and incorporate new ideas. Avoid broad generalizations about the people of the culture, make an earnest effort to understand cultural differences in a way that does not make comparative evaluative judgments between cultures. Reveal in some way an engagement with both the cultural differences observed and your academic work – how will this experience inform your future career decisions?

*For the research document*, identify a particular issue you observed on the service trip. This could be an issue you found with the service learning experience or a problem you see “on the ground” in the community we worked with. First, thoroughly describe your observations of the issue you encountered. Then, do outside research on this issue. The paper should draw from sources that offer a deep and multi-layered discussion of the problem, including its possible sources, its complexities, and ways this problem has been addressed either in the community we worked in or in other parts of the world.

Find out what actors (national or local governments, international NGOs, international organizations like the United Nations, or grassroots NGOs) might be involved in alleviating this problem. Finally, conclude by explaining your own ideas on the best ways to address this issue.

You will be graded on your knowledge of the course material, writing skills, and degree of analytical sophistication.

(50/50 points).

**Capstone Project. 20%** (a) Participate with other members of the course in devising a plan for providing continuing assistance to our Brazilian host, after we return home. This plan should reflect both our experiences working with our community partners and our reading and discussion about global citizenship. (Course participants are encouraged to create a realistic plan which they can, as a group, carry out, but completion of the plan is not a course requirement.)

(b) Construct a 15-minute presentation, including a PowerPoint presentation with photographs and a written script\*, which you will make to a group or organization in Morgantown or in your home community, describing your activities in Brazil, what you learned and what you accomplished. By group agreement, your presentation may play a role in accomplishing part of the capstone project. With approval, you may collaborate with one or more other members of the class in designing and carrying out this presentation.

\*Alternatively, you may create a website with the same mix of photographs and text, a 3 – 5 minute video (uploaded to YouTube with appropriate tags), or a similar project that is outside-the-box. Make sure to discuss these alternate possibilities with me before beginning. (100 points).

**University Policies:**

Do not do drugs. Do not get drunk. Do not break local laws. If you do any of the above, you will be sent home at your own expense.

Work with us to ensure your safety. Be aware of your surroundings and if you’re ever uncomfortable, please let us know. Walk in groups. Work with us to ensure your health. Be aware of how you feel, how you’re eating, and how much water you’re drinking. When in doubt, let us know.

Remember that you’re a guest. If you aren’t sure if something is appropriate, ask first.

Remember that people will be watching you, and forming ideas about the various groups you represent based on your actions and interactions.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to submit only original work for this course and are required to familiarize themselves with WVU’s policies regarding academic honesty. All sources, print and Internet, must be cited properly. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

**Social Justice:**

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect and nondiscrimination. Our university does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (304) 293-6700.

**Group Dynamics:**

* We will create a group agreement early in the course. This agreement serves as our constitution for the entire global service-learning experience. It also provides us with a brief exercise in creating community and being active citizens – two themes of this course.
* Students are expected to activate participation throughout the course including discussions, writing, team building, service and cultural experiences. Students will activate themselves to share as well as to listen.
* We will do regular group monitoring. One technique for this is Fist to Five. The goal is to both cultivate self-awareness and to provide an opportunity to help out members of our team. We can also make decisions in this collective format.
* Students are part of a community in this course that transcends classroom walls. Please prepare for this intensive living environment. Students are expected to be aware of their own mental, physical and social needs so they can be 100% involved in the experience. What do you need to be sane every day? Write it down. Do it. (Ex: Alone time, people time, food, sleep, shower, run).

**Reflection on the course theme: Global Citizenship**

This course includes consideration of the concept of Global Citizenship, which, put simply, is the suggestion that every human life is equally valuable and that multiple positions and perspectives that do not fundamentally violate that first principle must be respected. But global citizenship is neither simple nor easily summarized, and various approaches and related activities will be considered in this class. The key, throughout, is to keep burning in the back of your mind the question of how ethics applies to global questions, and how the application of those ethics can be integrated in your life.

When reading “Why We Travel,” for example, consider why you have chosen a global service-learning experience, and what that conveys about your background. As you look at your culture pie, think about the sources of the values that are most important to you, and examine whether they are universalistic or could just be local values. As you read about historical experiences in the area where you’re serving and learning, consider which of these events occurred because outsiders thought they knew what was best for locals, and what that suggests about the idea of universal ethics and rights.

Be flexible in your thinking about global citizenship. It is a difficult question that necessitates continuous reconsideration. Yet continue to work to formulate your own response to: *How do my ethics relate to people elsewhere in the world, and how can I apply what I believe?*

**Suggested Texts:**

Rahnema, Majid, ed. with Victorial Bawtree. *The Post-Development Reader*. London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997.

Korten, David. *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1989.

Sernau, Scott R., ed. *Contemporary Readings in Globalization*. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, 2008.

Hecht, Susanna and Alexander Cockburn. *The Fate of the Forest: Destroyers, Developers and Defenders of the Amazon*. New York: Verso, 1989.

Nugent, Stephen and Mark Harris. *Some Other Amazonians: Perspectives on Modern Amazonia*. London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2004.

Maxwell, Kenneth. *Naked Tropics: Essays on Empire and Other Rogues*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

**Course Schedule:**

*Subject to Change*

**Overview**

* Weeks one and four will be conducted in Morgantown and online.
* Throughout the immersion we will spend time meeting in a classroom setting where students will discuss course materials and reflect on the service experience.
* Monday – Friday of each week, at least 3 hours per day, are devoted to a service project assigned by our hosts.
* Education programming to support course instruction will include visits to historic regional sites, guided Amazon tours, and meetings with local community partner organizations.
* Several hours each week will be set aside for cultural and recreational activities which include visiting a Cargill Plant, Fortlandia, an Amazon forest tour, beaches, and a coffee factory.
* Honors students will complete additional coursework following the standards Honors add-on format which will include supplemental readings related to international medical service and a final paper.

**Pre-Immersion**

***Readings***

• Iyer,Pico. “Why We Travel.”

• Countries and Their Culture: Brazil Available at: <http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Brazil.html>. Optional.

• Benedek, Emily. “My Mom Always Says, ‘Never Trust a White Person.’” Excerpt from *Beyond the Four Corners of the*

*World*.

• Hecht, Susanna and Alexander Cockburn. Appendix F and Chapter 1. *The Fate of the Forest*. Verso, 1989.

• Nugent, Stephen and Mark Harris. Chapter 2. *Some Other Amazonians*. ISA, 2004.

• Gomez, Eduardo. “In Brazil, Health Care is a Right.” CNN.com.

• Patchett, Ann. State of Wonder. 2011

***Journal Assignments***

1. (Before 1st session) Answer the following questions in the Amizade journal:

(a) What are your expectations, assumptions and fears relating to your upcoming cultural immersion and travels?

(b) Brainstorm a list of words, feelings and even stereotypes when you think of the country or region. Don’t censor yourself. Be free and creative.

2. (Before 1st session) Read the article "Why We Travel" in the Amizade journal and write in response to following questions:

Do you agree with Iyer? Why? What does travel mean to you? How does this article apply to your experiences?

3. (Before 1st session). Pico Iyer’s “Why We Travel” locates a specific kind of value for traveling for the individual.  Compare the journey of Marina Singh in State of Wonder to Iyer’s essay.  In your journal, reflect on how Marina's journey into the Brazilian rainforest complicates Iyer’s ideas about the value of travel, and what, taken together, these texts can tell us about traveling abroad?

4. (Before 2nd session) Write a brief introduction of yourself to the group and email it to all of us. Include your school, your major, your interests, and why you are participating in this service-learning experience (as well as anything else you would like us to know).

5. (Before 2nd session) Answer the following questions in your journal:

(a) What do you want to learn about Brazil during your stay?

(b) Why are you taking this trip? (You can base your answer to this question on the relevant part of your e-mail introduction--see above.)

6. (Before 2nd session) Read the article “My Mom Says ‘Never Trust a White Person’” in the Amizade journal and write in response to the following questions:

Bessie suggests a definition of a human being. How does her understanding of a human being relate to yours? How do those understands relate to global citizenship?

What are the most important lessons you take away from this essay?

7. (Before 2nd session) Read “Countries and Their Culture: Brazil” and summarize what you consider to be the most important information that you learned and list the reasons ***why*** you think this information is important.

**Part 1: Personal Value and Ethics**

***Readings***

• McIntosh, Peggy. “White Privilege Checklist.” 1989.

• Novak, Michael. “Defining social justice.” *First Things Journal*, 2000.

• Singer, Peter. “What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You?” 2006.

• Donohue, Pamela. “Health Care Volunteerism: What PAs Need to Know Before Making a Trip.” *JAAPA*. May 2010.

***Journal Assignments***

8. Write your sensory experience right now upon arrival. Sights, sounds, smells, initial feelings, & impressions. Take a moment and be conscious of the present. Be as descriptive as possible. Don’t analyze, just observe and record. We will share these with each other as a group.

9. Culture Pie: Create a visual, pictorial description of the ingredients that constitute who you are. Think about your history, experiences, memberships, values, education, foundation, challenges, influences, family/friends and more. You can draw this as a pie, a tree, a recipe, or any other creative picture. Add a written assignment answering the following: Looking at your “pie”, reflect on your values. What are they and where did they come from? What is most important to you in life? What do you struggle with the most? How will you find out what values are important in your host community?

10. Reflect on privilege you feel you have as a citizen of the U.S. – make a list. Are these privileges the same as or different from those described by McIntosh and how? How has privilege based on citizenship, racial background, ethnicity and the like influenced the history of this country? Where do you see these issues heading in the future for this country and for the world?

11. After reading the Singer assignment, reflect on the ethical issue of “great abundance and life-threatening poverty” on our planet. Discuss your initial thoughts in regards to the monetary solution represented in the article.

12. What is the meaning of social justice to you?

(a) Respond to Novak’s definition of social justice that is ideologically neutral. Do your values relate to the description of

social justice in this article – why or why not? Is social justice enacted by individuals or society? What vision do you have for global social justice?

**Part 2: Service in a Cross-Cultural Context**

***Readings***

• Illich, Ivan. *To Hell With Good Intentions*. Speech. April 20, 1968. Found in the Amizade journal.

• Zemach-Bersin, Talya. “American Students Abroad Can’t Be ‘Global Citizens’.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 54(26): A34, 2008.

• Esteva, Gustavo and Madhu Suri Prakash. “From Global Thinking to Local Thinking” in Rahnema, M. and Bawtree, V. (Eds.). *The Post-Development Reader.* New York: Palgrave, 1997.

• Conard, Craig. “Student Clinical Experiences in Africa: Who Are We Helping?” *Virtual Mentor*. Dec. 2006.

***Journal Assignments***

13. In reading the Illich assignment, what are the first words that come to mind to capture your emotional response? Do you agree with these pieces? Why or why not? Now answer the same three questions with respect to the article by Zemach-Bersin. Think about the roots of why you are on this service-learning course and put some words to them – what do you hope to accomplish for yourself and the community? What are some concrete ways we can be of service?

14. What is your theory of community development or GSL? How does that fit Esteva’s understanding and/or theories, models? What are the practical implications of using one model or the other given the problems we are addressing in this context? What works well and what’s not working? How would you improve it?

15. Reflect on the meaning of **community.** Answer **2 of the 4** following questions:

(a) What communities are you a part of? Explore your communities of choice vs. those of location. How do your personal values relate to your communities of choice.

(b) Based on your impressions so far, what are some differences between your community at home and our host community. What are some commonalities?

(c) Does community relate to consumerism? Do societies with less consumerism have a different kind of community? Why? Is it good or bad?

(d) What determines community membership? The following could be argued: Geography, nationality, culture, religion, occupation, ethnicity, economic system, choice, and interdependence. Which of these are the strongest influences in your community? Which seem strongest in the host community?

**Part 3: Global Citizenship**

***Readings***

• Shi, David. “The Searchers after the Simple Life” in Rahnema, M. and Bawtree, V. (Eds.) *The Post-Development Reader.*

New York: Palgrave, 1997.

• Appiah, Kwame. “The Case for Contamination.” *New York Times*, 2006.

• O’Neil, Edward. “Medicine and Society: The ‘Ethical Imperative’ of Global Health Service.” *Virtual Mentor*. Dec. 2006.

• Hartman, Eric. “Save My Global Citizen Soul.” 2006. Found in the Amizade journal.

• UN Declaration of Human Rights. <<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>>

***Journal Assignments***

16. What is your definition of global citizenship? Describe his/her actions of both daily and over a lifetime. Some areas to explore: career, environment, consumerism, activism, morality, travel, dialogue, education. How would a global citizen behave? Are people in our host community global citizens – why or why not? Are you a global citizen – why or why not? Cite the readings as appropriate.

17. Briefly summarize Appiah’s perspective on globalization. Compare Appiah’s view to Illich’s. Which perspective do you agree with more? Why? Appiah suggests that it’s possible to balance universal global ethics with people’s freedom to make choices. Where would you draw the line in what we should tolerate as a global community? Why?

**Part 4: Communicate and Activate**

***Readings***

• Amizade. Global Citizenship Resource Guide.

***Journal Assignments***

18. Thank you: Write a thank-you letter to a person in the community who contributed to you. Address the following: What did you learn from them and how does that impact how you think? What inspires you about them? How are they problem solvers and what does that make possible for others? What is your understanding of their role in their community development and what difference does that make to you and others?

19. Translating the experience home. Complete 3 of the following 5 assignments:

* Revisit our stereotype list and write down what you have learned that challenges or deepens your understanding of this culture and community. How will you explain what you’ve learned to people whose knowledge about this community may be limited to this list of terms.
* Write a letter to family/friends or to your future self-describing how this experience impacted you. What do you resolve to do with what you learned here?
* Take one photo from your collection and describe how it captures some aspect of your experience in this country.
* Write a 5-10 minute speech and a 30 second to 1-minute “elevator speech” that describes this experience beyond the standard “It was great/awesome/horrible.” Put words to the biggest lesson you learned here (about yourself and/or the culture). Share this speech with a friend or family member and reflect on their reaction.
* Write a reflection on how you think your experience in Brazil was changed because you read *State of Wonder* before you left? How did it affect your expectations? What observations of Brazil were different than Marina’s?

**Post-Immersion:**

* **Capstone Project:**

Deadline: one week after returning to the US.

* **Final Reflective Paper:**

Deadline: one week after returning to the US.

* **Post-Immersion Meeting:**  Attend a final meeting to reflect on our experiences both in Brazil and afterwards and to turn in your reflective paper and your capstone project. Time, date and exact topics *to be announced.*