

HINT-31300: Health Care and Culture: Malawi, Africa
An International Field Experience
2 Credits
Malawi, Africa Summer 2020

Instructors: Kathaleen Besemer, CLT, BS Health Science
Hammond Health Center kbesemer@ithaca.edu
Mary Taylor, RN, BS

Course Description: An investigation of socio-cultural factors in the delivery of health care and rehabilitation services in an international context. An examination of the role of ethnicity, race, gender, religion, and socio-economic status in shaping the health-related beliefs and behaviors of individuals in a selected country through experiential learning, discussion, and lectures.

Prerequisites: None

Rationale: First-hand experience in a foreign country immerses students in issues of culture in everyday life, and helps them to gain an appreciation of some of the difficulties faced by people from different cultures as they pursue health care in the United States. It also encourages examination of the effect of culture on health care beliefs, behavior, services, and delivery systems, permitting reflection on how our own system had evolved differently.

Class Meetings: The class will meet in Malawi. Attendance will be required at all scheduled daily events, which will include guest speakers, visits to selected health-related facilities (Local hospitals, mobile medical clinics, crisis care nurseries, community based orphan care programs, feeding centers, individual residences, etc.) exploration of living and working environments, scheduled discussions, and lectures.

Course Competencies: Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Examine personal cultural orientation and its potential influence on delivery and use of health care services;
2. Identify why the study of socio-cultural issues is important in allied health education;
3. Discuss the impact of socio-cultural factors on health care practices and service delivery with the United States;
4. Compare and contrast perspectives on health care delivery, health behaviors, and rehabilitation in selected foreign countries;

5. Describe the impact of history, politics, culture, religion, gender, and economics on health care and rehabilitation today in the host country studied.

Required Reading: Students will be required to read The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope (Kamkwamba, William and Mealer, Bryan. (Harper Perennial 2009)

Suggested Readings:

Mountains Beyond Mountains (Kidder, Tracy. Random House, August 2004)

Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide (Kristof, Nicholas D and WuDunn, Sheryl. Knopf; 1 edition (September 8, 2009)

The Blue Sweater: Bridging the Gap between Rich and Poor in an Interconnected World (Novogratz, Jacqueline. Rodale Books; Reprint edition (February 16, 2010)

Strength in What Remains: A Journey of Remembrance and Forgiving (Kidder, Tracy. Random House, 2009)

Course Format: This course is primarily experiential, but will include more traditional learning experiences, such as lecture and discussion. The field experience will be structured to provide observation and experience with various aspects of Malawian culture and health care and will include volunteer activities within the community or health care environments.

Other Requirements: Students must comply with policies and procedures outlined by the instructor and the Office of International Programs, Ithaca College.

Assignments and Grading:

1. Journal 30% - Students will keep a reflective journal while in the Malawi. This should include daily entries related to thoughts and feeling engendered by the field experience. Journal will be submitted to the instructor before departing Malawi.
2. Book Review 20% - Students will read The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope and write a short book review. The book review will contain a summary of the content of the book, discussion of insights gained, and a critical analysis of the books content as it relates to culture and health related issues.

3. Reflection Paper 30% - Students will write a summative paper, no longer than five pages, which will represent a critical examination of their experience in this course. Students may alternatively choose to make a video or slide show production reflecting their learning experience. This project will be submitted to the instructor within three weeks of our return to the United States of America.

4. Student Interest and Involvement 20% - Students' effort, interest, and involvement will be reflected in this grade, including student attendance at all classes, individual effort, group participation, and reliability in local and international contexts.

Attendance/Behavior Policy: Because much of the focus of this course is experiential, students must attend all activities designed for this course, including information sessions, reflection meetings, field trips, and lectures. Any unexcused absences will result in the reduction of one full letter grade. A second unexcused absence will result in course failure.

Because we are concerned about student well-being, the quality of the learning experience, and the need to demonstrate respect for the people and property of the Malawi, students are expected to conduct themselves with care. Students will follow guidelines established by the instructor or host institution with respect to attendance, behavior during class activities, and behavior during free time. The instructor reserves the right to dismiss any student for the course for failure to comply with attendance and behavioral guidelines established in this course. Any student dismissed for the course will be returned to the United States immediately upon dismissal.