

**Sociology of Health and Medicine—Nicaragua**  
**Sociology 499A 7EA**  
**Spring 2017—2 Credit Hours**

**“Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have.”**  
**Winston Churchill**

**Instructor: Professor Daniel Brewster**

Office: 400 Knapp Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-4:00

Email: Daniel.Brewster@mail.wvu.edu

Phone: 304.293.8167

**Instructor of Support: Dr. Matthew Wilson—Department of Political Science and  
Professor Genesis Snyder—Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

**Staff Support: Blair Dowler—Senior Project Coordinator, Communications and  
Marketing, College of Business and Economics; and Christine Jacobs—Program  
Coordinator, Women’s Resource Center**

**Course Dates:**

**Pre-departure lectures: Shenandoah Room of the Mountainlair: 5:00-7:30**

January 21<sup>st</sup>, January 28<sup>th</sup>, February 4<sup>th</sup>, February 11<sup>th</sup>, February 18<sup>th</sup>, February 25<sup>th</sup>, March 4<sup>th</sup>

**Travel dates:**

March 8<sup>th</sup>-March 18<sup>th</sup>

**Post-departure lectures:**

April 8<sup>th</sup>—Mountain State Brewery

**Description**

This two-credit course enables you to participate in the largest student driven initiative. This course will allow you to continue the efforts of the Global Brigades global health and sustainable development organization. You will participate in skill-based programs that work in partnership with community members to improve quality of life in under resourced regions while respecting local culture.

You will engage in this service/learning experience in the Republic of Nicaragua during Spring Break. The Republic of Nicaragua is a country of dichotomies the lush tropical jungle to the urban sprawl of the capital city, Nicaragua's contrasting nature presents itself repeatedly. In the city, tall skyscrapers and flashy billboards populate the skyline while many of the city's poorest live nearby, in crumbling houses. The Nicaragua Canal symbolizes the economic might of this small Central American nation, with its impressive 9 percent annual GDP growth. However, Nicaragua's extremely unequal wealth distribution can be seen from its Gini coefficient of 52. The countryside houses the majority of Nicaragua's poor populations, who are often beyond the coverage of basic health, water, and educational services. The abundance of natural resources clashes with the harsh economic poverty of many rural communities.

### **Course Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes**

Within our partner communities, access to healthcare remains one of the largest challenges. In these communities, clinics are scarce, and when they do exist they are often without sufficient medicine or are severely under staffed, leaving families with ailments both untreated and undiagnosed, sometimes for an entire lifetime. To help resolve this disparity, Global Brigades has worked with local government, international and local doctors, and student leaders to develop a Medical program with the goal to provide consistent access to healthcare using an economically sustainable model. Our Medical program has three complimentary initiatives: mobile clinics (medical brigades), resident community health workers, and a patient referral program with local specialists.

#### **Medical Brigades Short-term Initiatives**

- I. Provide consultations to 150,000 patients each year with mobile medical clinics who would not otherwise be able to afford or have access to healthcare.
- II. Provide all 126 community partners with a team of licensed doctors and appropriate medicine at least three times per year.
- III. Provide funding for 90% of patient referrals identified on clinic days or by CHWs

#### **Course Objectives**

- I. You will be able to demonstrate the understanding of methods of critical thought and principles of scholarly inquiry concerning issues that have shaped the development of society in Nicaragua including but not limited to politics, education, gender, race, health and medicine, social class and poverty, work and the economy, families, and the environment.
- II. You will be able to demonstrate an understanding of methods of critical thought and principles of scholarly inquiry concerning contemporary United States' culture and society in comparison to contemporary Nicaragua culture and society.

- III. You will be able to evaluate and discuss the individual’s role in making, maintaining, and changing society culture in Nicaragua.
- IV. You will evaluate and discuss the connection between the individual and society and the Nicaragua culture.
- V. You will evaluate and discuss the role that individuals and groups of people play in shaping our society and the Nicaragua culture.
- VI. You will evaluate and discuss the important topics that sociologists encounter in their research and the Nicaragua culture.

**Topical Outline:**

Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup>—Introduction to Study Abroad, and Sociology of Health and Medicine Lecture

Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>—Dr. Matthew Wilson—Socio-Political and History of Nicaragua

Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup>—Professor Genesis Snyder—Culture and Nicaragua

Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup>—Dr. Matthew Wilson—Health/Medicine in Spanish

Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>—Travel Risks and Precautions to consider in Nicaragua Lecture

Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>— Former Brigades President Pranav Jain and Former Brigades Vice President Tommy Casto, “What to expect, what you can gain, how you can apply it to future goals”; Final Charla Prep, last class before travel,

Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup>—Triage Chair and officers; Triage training

Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup>—Mountain State Brewery: Closing Reflection and Discussion

**Grades:**

The following components will comprise the grade for the course:

Journal	125 points
Reflection Paper	125 points
Attendance/Participation	125 points
Spanish Prep Quizzes	60 points

A—391.5-435 points

B—348-391 points

C—304.5-347.5 points

D—261-304 points

F—260.5 points and below

**Journal.** You will be expected to keep a journal, recording their thoughts and impressions from the daily service/learning. Topics for journal entries should be connected to the Learning Outcomes (see above) as they relate to the sights and experiences of any given day. Journals will be graded on the basis of completeness and intellectual depth; you are expected to engage with the community, people, work and not merely personal diary entries. The journal should total between 10-15 pages standard pages. The journal will be due upon return to the United States (Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> in my office)

#### **Journal-grading Rubric:**

112-125: This is an outstanding journal that reflects a perceptive and thoughtful response to Nicaragua. The journal is well organized with excellent development of its ideas and reflects the student's understanding of the issues outlined in the course objectives.

100-111: This is a very good journal that fulfills the assignment and shows evidence of clear thought and understanding. It is well organized with good supporting explanations of the issues outlined in the course objectives.

87-99: This is a satisfactory journal that fulfills the assignment and is adequately developed. The cross cultural analysis and understanding of Nicaragua culture and society is adequate but not detailed and/or strongly explained.

75-86: This is a below-average journal that fulfills the assignment but exhibits major problems in analysis. It may have difficulty with the presentation of ideas (e.g., lack of a clear topic, weak organization, poor development of ideas, or inadequate examples).

0-74: This is a journal that relates to the topic but is so poorly presented that it fails to fulfill the assignment. It fails to present its basic ideas, either because of poor organization and lack of clarity or because the analysis lacks a thorough examination of the issues outlined in the course objectives.

**Reflection Paper.** You will be expected to reflect on their experience associated with the study abroad. This reflection assignment will be disseminated prior to departure but it will be due during the post travel lecture. Although there is no page limit on this paper, in order to adequately reflect on the cultural aspects of your experience a minimum four double-spaced page reflection paper is required. This assignment is listed below and will also be provided in a hand-out prior to departure. Due Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

**Preparation:**

1. Plan in advance for this paper by keeping a journal, mementos, or correspondence.
2. Spend some time brainstorming: review specific events, striking conversations, sights, sounds, and even smells.

**Analysis:**

1. In your paper reflect on some or all of the following questions:
  - a. In what ways is the culture where you studied different from your own?
  - b. How is this culture similar to your own?
  - c. What, if anything, shocked you?
  - d. How does this culture define “learning” or “knowledge”?
  - e. How have cultural differences made you more aware of your own culture---of its benefits, limitations, strengths, or biases?
  - f. In what ways might your own culture/society benefit by learning from that of others, specifically from the one in which you studied?
  - g. How do cultural differences allow others to view you differently than you view yourself?

**You must address the following question:**

1. How might your experience abroad affect your future --- with regard to academic, social, career, and/or personal choices?

## Rubric for Grading Reflection Paper

### Responsiveness to Topic

Score / 65

65—Clearly addresses the topic and responds effectively to all aspects of the assignment;

58—Clearly address the topic, but may respond to some aspects of the assignment more effectively than others

52—Addresses the topic, but may slight some aspects of the topic

45—Indicates confusion about the topic or neglects important aspects of the assignment

39—Suggests an inability to comprehend the assignment or to respond meaningfully to the topic

0-38—Suggests little to no analysis

### Communication of Ideas

Score / 60

60—Explores the issues showing thorough comprehension of the text; goes beyond the obvious or class discussion

54—Shows some depth and complexity of thought

48—May treat the topic simplistically or repetitively; doesn't demonstrate sufficient comprehension of the text

42—Lacks focus, demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking, or fails to communicate ideas

36—Is unfocused, illogical, incoherent or disorganized

0-35—Failure to communicate ideas

**Participation and Attendance.** There are two levels of attendance expected for you enrolling in this course: 1) pre-departure, and 2) in Nicaragua.

**Pre-departure attendance and participation.** In order to prepare you for their travel and provide them with some medical, historical, cultural, and language background, you will be expected to attend the following pre-departure lectures:

- Foreign Language Lectures—focusing on the basic concepts that the group may encounter during this experience (e.g., health, medicine, medical, dental, food, etc.)
- Health Lectures—focusing on the medical and health issues facing the people of Nicaragua. You will be trained in the areas of triage, consultation, OGBYN, dentistry, and pharmacy.
- Latin American Culture Lectures—special topics regarding issues to prepare you for a visit to this region of the world.

**Attendance Grading Scale: 50 points**

You can miss 1 meeting without penalty but it is **STRONGLY** urged that you attend all sessions. All absences beyond the 1 excused/unexcused will result in a 10 point grade reduction.

**Nicaragua Attendance and Participation: 75 points**

Since attendance is critical to the Brigade and the service/learning project will only last one week, it is imperative that all you participate on a daily basis (i.e., minus illness/hospitalization). Your community missions and daily assignments require your highest work ethic and thus it is imperative to be more than just be present in the capacity of your work and thus participation will be both quantitatively and qualitatively evaluated.

**Participation Grading Scale: 75 points**

A (67-75): Student contributes regularly and at a high intellectual level during reflection, with substantive and original comments. The student always attends meetings and daily excursions and other arranged activities, is consistently engaged at a high level, and exhibits clear respect for our hosts, our host country, myself, Dr. Wilson, Ms. Dowler, Ms. Jacobs and their peers.

B (60-66): Student contributes regularly at a medium intellectual level during reflection, with less substantive or original comments. The student attends the majority of meetings, excursions and other arranged activities, is consistently engaged and exhibits respect for our hosts, our host country, myself, Dr. Wilson, Ms. Dowler, Ms. Jacobs and their peers.

C (52-59): Student contributes only rarely, but at a sufficient intellectual level during reflection. The student attends only some meetings, excursions, other activities and even then is not engaged or respectful toward our hosts, our host country, myself, Dr. Wilson, Ms. Dowler, Ms. Jacobs and their peers.

D (45-51): Student contributes only minimally during reflection, only answering direct questions and then in no depth. Student missed more than 1 meeting, excursion, or other activity and is disrespectful of our hosts, our host country, myself, Dr. Wilson, Ms. Dowler, Ms. Jacobs and their peers. Such disrespect includes disruptive behavior and excessive inebriation.

F (0-44): Student refuses to participate in any way, or offers nothing more than a body to a mission. Student is disruptive, disrespectful to our hosts, our host country, myself, Dr. Wilson, Ms. Dowler, Ms. Jacobs and their peers, and consistently incapacitated due to excessive inebriation.

**Spanish-Prep Quizzes:** There will be four quizzes to assess your Spanish preparation. Each quiz will be worth 15 points. There will be emphasis on commands necessary for triage, medical terms we will reference, and public health instructions.

### **Inclusivity Statement:**

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. 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 the Office of Disability Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

West Virginia University expects that every member of its academic community share the historic and traditional commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth. Academic dishonesty is defined to include but is not limited to any of the following:

- I. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined in terms of proscribed acts. You are expected to understand that such practices constitute academic dishonesty regardless of motive. Those who deny deceitful intent, claim not to have known that the act constituted plagiarism, or maintain that what they did was inadvertent are nevertheless subject to penalties when plagiarism has been confirmed. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: submitting, without appropriate acknowledgement, a report, notebook, speech, outline, theme, thesis, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been copied in whole or in part from the work of others, whether such source is published or not, including (but not limited to) another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper. In addition, any paper previously



submitted in another course is by definition plagiarism, as previous professors have provided the guidelines and thus should be included as a listed author.

### **Upon departure:**

Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup>—Prep Day (On the first day we work with the doctors, dentists, and pharmacists to prepare the materials/medicine that we need to use during the clinics. We prepare care packages for each patient to take home at the end of the day, as well as divide and count all of the medication to assist the pharmacy during the week)

Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>-Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>—Medical and Dental Clinics (In these clinics over four days, you will shadow doctors, dentists, pharmacists and other medical professionals in varying capacities of learning where the you will shadow and learn in the field with the Nicaraguan people)

Wednesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>-Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>—Public Health (During three days we will work with the people of Nicaragua to assist in their public health mission, including but not limited to digging ditches, building latrines, providing a water supply source)

Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>—Water Brigade/Cultural Day (During the last day the group goes into one of the local communities, we arrive shortly after breakfast, and tour their village, we break into groups and go to individual huts where we are able to ask the villagers about their lives. We then have lunch in the village and in the afternoon we further tour the area as well as engage in cultural experiences. Last year this included the villagers sharing some of their local dance, music, art, crafts, body art, etc. We also shared with them the "Country Roads"). Additional Cultural Day (In Nicaragua on the last day, unlike in Panama I have designed a day for us to visit some of the cultural/historic places in the capital of Managua)

Reflections (Every evening the group meets for a minimum of 1 hour to discuss the day, and assess problems that arose, how we can move forward and suggestions we can make for the next day's clinics and the program as a whole. Each student is required to participate in during the hour and offer their input); Attendance and Participation will be noted

Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup>—Return to Managua, day in city, at hotel.

### **Upon return to the United States**

Final Lecture (In this lecture we are able to discuss many of the issues that were faced by the people of the region, we discuss issues of culture, values, norms, culture shock, health/medicine, economics, gender stratification, crime, etc.)