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 21st, January 28th, February 4th, February 11th, February 18th, February 25th, March 4th

Travel dates:
March 8th-March 18th

Post-departure lectures:
April 8th—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 21st—Introduction to Study Abroad, and Sociology of Health and Medicine Lecture

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

Sunday, February 4th—Professor Genesis Snyder—Culture and Nicaragua

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

Sunday, February 18th—Travel Risks and Precautions to consider in Nicaragua Lecture

Sunday, February 25th—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 4th—Triage Chair and officers; Triage training

Sunday, April 8th—Mountain State Brewery: Closing Reflection and Discussion

Grades:
The following components will comprise the grade for the course:

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish Prep Quizzes</td>
<td>60</td>
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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 13th 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 24th, 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Clearly addresses the topic and responds effectively to all aspects of the assignment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Clearly address the topic, but may respond to some aspects of the assignment more effectively than others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Addresses the topic, but may slight some aspects of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Indicates confusion about the topic or neglects important aspects of the assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Suggests an inability to comprehend the assignment or to respond meaningfully to the topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-38</td>
<td>Suggests little to no analysis</td>
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## Communication of Ideas

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<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Explores the issues showing thorough comprehension of the text; goes beyond the obvious or class discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Shows some depth and complexity of thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>May treat the topic simplistically or repetitively; doesn’t demonstrate sufficient comprehension of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Lacks focus, demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking, or fails to communicate ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Is unfocused, illogical, incoherent or disorganized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-35</td>
<td>Failure to communicate ideas</td>
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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 9th—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 10th-Tuesday, March 13th—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 14th-Thursday, March 15th—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 16th—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 17th—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.)