

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES
CS 747 - Guatemala Global Justice Trip
January 12-22, 2009
Instructor: Chris Smith
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Course Description:

Since the mid 1950s Guatemala has been a militarized country, and during the 1970s and 1980s had one of the worst records for human rights violations in the Western Hemisphere. Also, it is a country in which the indigenous Mayan population has remained culturally vibrant and strong in the midst of grinding poverty and racist genocide. During the trip we will focus on Mayan culture and spirituality, human rights issues and violations, and issues of global economics that continue to be so oppressive to the people of Guatemala. We will be traveling to several villages in the northern highlands of Guatemala, speaking with World Bank representatives and human rights advocates in Guatemala City, and visiting grass-roots cooperatives that help sustain the social and economic life of the Mayan Indian people of Guatemala. This course satisfies the global justice requirement.

Required Readings:

1. *Guatemala Reading Book* – This is a book of articles and chapters produced by The Center For Global Education – **100 plus pages**
2. Julia Esquivel. *The Certainty of Spring: Poems by a Guatemalan in Exile*. Washington D.C.: Ecumenical Program on Central America, 1993.
Julia Esquivel is one of Guatemala's famous poets, and her other two books, *Threatened With Resurrection*, and *Secrets of God's Reign* are great as well.
3. Trish O'Kane. *Guatemala: A Guide to the People, Politics, and Culture*. Massachusetts: Interlink Books, 2004. **94 pages**
Even though this is designed as a "travel" book, it explains so much of the complex history, cultural realities, genocide of the Maya people there, that it is a great book to begin your reading.
4. Pamela K. Brubaker. *Globalization at What Price? Economic Change and Daily Life*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2001. **120 pages**
5. Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, Brendan Smith, *Globalization From Below: The Power Of Solidarity*. Cambridge: South End Press, 2002. **138 pages**
6. Victoria Sanford. *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2004.

Suggested Readings:

1. *The Hour of God? People in Guatemala Confronting Political Evangelicalism and Counterinsurgency (1976-1990)*. By Veronica Melander

2. *Secrets of the Talking Jaguar: Memoirs From the Living Heart of a Mayan Village* – Martin Prechtel
3. *The Story of a Great Love* – Ricardo Falla, SJ
4. *Death and Resurrection In Guatemala* - Fernando Bermudez
5. *Fear as a Way of Life: Mayan Widows in Rural Guatemala* by Linda Green
6. *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race And Nation* – Greg Grandin
7. *Guatemala: A Cry From the Heart* – V. David Schwantes
8. *I...Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman In Guatemala* – by Rigoberta Menchu
9. *Love in a Fearful Land: A Guatemalan Story* – by Henri J.M. Nouwen
10. Thomas R. Melville. *Through a Glass Darkly*. Xlibris Corporation, 2005.

Guatemala Internet Links:

1. <http://globalvoicesonline.org/-/world/americas/guatemala/> - Global Voices
2. http://www.fhrg.org/mambo/index.php?option=com_weblinks&Itemid=4&catid=79
Foundation For Human Rights in Guatemala
3. <http://www.preventgenocide.org/edu/pastgenocides/guatemala/resources> - Resources on Genocide in Guatemala – **This one is a must read, and follow the links.**
4. [**CALDH- Centro para Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos**](#) Center for Human Rights Legal Action, *est. 1989, 1994*)
5. [**Peace Pledge Union**](#) (est. 1934, London) Study guide on genocide for student, teachers and parents, includes material on past genocides in NAMIBIA, ARMENIA, UKRAINE, the HOLOCAUST, CAMBODIA, GUATEMALA, RWANDA and BOSNIA
www.ppu.org.uk/genocide/
6. [**Fundación Myrna Mack**](#) www.myrnamack.org.gt Works for the modernization of the judicial system and to facilitate the building of democracy. Founded in 1993 and named after anthropologist Myrna Mack Chang (1949 - 1990) who was assassinated in September of 1990.
7. [**El Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional \(CEJIL\)**](#) Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) is a non-governmental organization (NGO), founded in 1991 by a group of prominent human rights defenders in Latin America and the Caribbean.
8. [**Fundación Rigoberta Menchú**](#) www.rigobertamenchu.org Fundación Rigoberta Menchú Tum (FRMT) The Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation A foundation created by Rigoberta Menchú after winning the 1992 Nobel peace prize. The foundation works to promote peace, human rights, and development, especially as it concerns indigenous people. For the 1995 elections, the foundation launched a project to promote voter participation and turnout.

9. **Guatemala Human Rights Commission** www.ghrc-usa.org
10. **Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala** www.nisgua.org - **All the sites are worth looking at, but this site is absolutely great.**
11. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/all-countries/guatemala/page.do?id=1011162> – Amnesty International
12. <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/history/chasteen/country/guatemala.htm>
13. http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/country/guatemala/
14. http://viewswire.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWCountryVW3&country_id=560000056&rf=0
15. <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107596.html>
16. <http://upavim.pursuantgroup.net/english/homeeng.htm> **I am pretty certain we will visit this project**
17. http://www.tenthousandvillages.com/catalog/artisan.detail.php?artisan_id=110
I think we will visit this project as well

Global Justice Policy Goals:

- To experience life in God’s creation in one interdependent global community
- To experience the struggles in these various contexts for justice, liberation, peace, and fullness of life.
- To learn to interpret the Bible and our traditions theologically in relation to these struggles.
- To develop ways of doing ministry and living consistent with the above-mentioned aspirations.
- To develop the ability to examine critically our own social-cultural contexts and those elsewhere
- To open ourselves to transformation
- To commit ourselves to reshaping our institutions and programs to to express what we have learned.

This section of the syllabus is taken directly from United’s Global Justice Policy on page 69 of the student handbook.

Additional Educational Goals For This Specific Trip:

- That students will have a basic understanding of the social, cultural, economic and military history of Guatemala from 1954 to the present, and the role and impact that the United States had in that history.

- That students will be able to articulate and analyze some of the structures of “globalization,” or the global economy that have a direct impoverishing impact on the lives of indigenous Mayan people and their communities in Guatemala.
- That students will be able to articulate some of the basic beliefs, cultural values, and spiritual commitments of the Mayan people in Guatemala. This will involve a basic exposure to the cosmovision of the Mayan people and participation in a traditional Mayan Ceremony.
- That the students will be able to compare and contrast their own religious beliefs and traditions with the Mayan beliefs and traditions they experience in Guatemala.
- That students will gain a basic understanding of the role of the churches in present day Guatemala, and allow this understanding to inform, challenge, and clarify their own ecclesiology, their understanding of mission, and their vision of the role of the churches in The United States in the work of creating greater social justice in our own country.
- That students will be able to analyze and articulate through discussions and a final 10 page paper the impact of their trip to Guatemala on their social analysis of systemic oppression , and the impact of the trip on their religious faith, spirituality, theology and ministry in the world.
- That students will be able to acknowledge and analyze dimensions of their social, cultural, and economic privilege, and understand how one’s privilege is related to oppressive systemic structures in Guatemala and at home.
- That students will be able to analyze the social, cultural, and economic realities of their own life contexts with more specificity and clarity.
- That students will deepen their understanding of the impact of U.S. international policies, trade agreements, governmental decisions, and military involvement in Guatemala in particular, and also be able to translate these understandings to other U.S. international relations.
- That as a result of this global exposure and educational experience students will be more prepared to articulate and embody what it means to be a justice seeking global citizen in diverse contexts of ministry back in The United States.

The course experiences, educational goals and course requirements are intended to contribute to these indicators of integration for M.A.R.L, M.Div. and M.A. students:

- The student demonstrates accountability for their own learning process and decisions
- The student demonstrates awareness of their personal strengths and limitations and takes responsibility for their own emotional health
- The student attends to their own spiritual life and formation
- The student is able to understand and articulate both the particularity of their own (cultural, familial, religious, personal) story as well as its resonances and dissonances with other’s stories, and with larger social, religious and cultural narratives.
- The student is able to identify historic connections of their own stories with the stories of others around the world

- The student demonstrates a clear appreciation of other theological perspectives and is able to make a case for a perspective other than their own.

Course Requirements:

1. To keep a running journal of the trip experience during the 12 days that we are in Guatemala.
2. To do 15 hours of solidarity/advocacy work upon returning home. This advocacy work ideally should be related specifically to Guatemala (fair trade work, advocacy work around Guatemalan immigrants, or an on-going connection with a group or organization that we connected with in Guatemala). If this is impossible, each student will negotiate an alternative experience of advocacy with the instructor.
3. To lead worship once on the trip with a team of colleagues.
4. To attend eight hours of pre trip learning and preparation time that has to do with community building, practical trip matters, and learning about Guatemala in particular
5. To actively participate in the travel seminar's planned experiences as faithfully and as authentically as one can.
6. To write a 10 page final reflection paper that articulates the impact of their trip to Guatemala on their social analysis of systemic oppression, and the impact of the trip on their religious faith, spirituality, theology, and ministry in the world.
7. To turn in one written page related to each of the 6 required readings. This page will be a running list of insights, challenges, new understandings, and places of disagreement that you have with each text.

Tentative Itinerary for Guatemala Travel Seminar

January 12-22, 2009

United Theological Seminary

Monday, January 12

PM Arrival at the International airport and transfer to.....
Introduction and Orientation to the program and schedule review
4:00 Brief History of Guatemala and current situation
6:30 Dinner

Tuesday, January 13

7:30AM Breakfast
8:00 Tour of the Central Plaza
8:45 Visit the Secretary of Peace office
10:30 Visit with Peace Brigades International
1:00PM Lunch
2:00 Meet with Bishop Rios Montt
3:30 Visit with Family Members of Detained and Disappeared Person (FAMDEGUA)
6:30 Dinner

Wednesday, January 14

- 7:30AM Breakfast
- 8:30 Talk about the role of the church in Guatemala
- 10:30 Visit with an Evangelical Pastor or Evangelical organization that works with Social Issues.
- 12:30 Lunch
- 2:00 Visit UPAVIM
- 6:30 Dinner

Thursday, January 15

- 7:30AM Breakfast
- 8:00 Leave for Quetzaltenango
- 10:30 Stop at Iximche ruins and talk about Mayan Cosmovision
- 1:00PM Lunch
- 5:00 Arrival in Quetzaltenango
- 6:30 Dinner

Friday, January 16

- 7:00AM Breakfast
- 7:30 Leave for Santa Anita
- 10:30 Talk with Community Representative
- 12:30 Lunch
- 2:00 Visit the Rural Language School of La Montaña
Return to Quetzaltenango
- 6:30 Dinner

Saturday, January 17

- 7:00AM Breakfast
- 11:00 Talk with Methodist Pastor and widows of community of Chontala
- 1:00 Lunch
- 3:30 Visit the sewing project of Ruth and Nohemi in Chichicastenango
- 6:30 Dinner

Sunday, January 18

- 7:30AM Breakfast
Free time in the market
- 12:30PM Lunch
- 2:00 Participate in Mayan Ceremony
- 6:30 Dinner

Monday, January 19

- 7:00 Breakfast
- 7:30 Leave for San Lucas Toliman Mission
- 9:00 Tour of the Projects of the Mission
- 12:30 Lunch
- 2:00 Talk with Father Greg
- 6:30 Dinner

Tuesday, January 20

- 7:30AM Breakfast
- 9:00 Tour of Santiago Atitlan
- 12:30 Lunch

Leave for Antigua
6:30 Dinner
Wednesday, January 21
7:30Am Breakfast
9:00 Visit the Common Hope Project
12:30PM Lunch
Final Evaluation
6:30 Dinner

Thursday, January 22
Leave for the US