



Exploring our Gifts in an International Context

Since 2002, the Center for Global Education has been a part of a \$2 million grant by the Lilly Endowment to Augsburg College to strengthen its focus on vocation. The Center for Global Education's section of the Lilly grant was to "Explore Faith and Vocation in a Global Context." The primary focus of the Center's portion was to implement nine international seminars to Center for Global Education sites. The grant was extended for another three years starting in 2008, so will involve the development of three new seminars to the Center's sites.

As a result of the grant, new international courses were developed in a variety of departments, including education, religion, history, women's studies, the Physician Assistant program, the Master of Arts in Leadership program, and American Indian studies. Programs were also developed with two co-curricular groups: LINK (a community service program) and the Pan African Student Center. Programs were developed to all of the Center's permanent sites: El Salvador,

Guatemala, Mexico, Namibia, Nicaragua, and South Africa.

The grant was a part of a larger national initiative of the Lilly Endowment from 2000 to 2007 to fund Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV). In addition to having a large presence with Augsburg's grant, the Center was also involved in grants with



Students on a seminar in El Salvador learn at an agricultural coop

several other institutions to work as a partner in international programming. Chris Johnson, director of the Center for Vocational Reflection, said, “The Faculty Development in Service-Learning for Social Justice initiative at Gustavus Adolphus College was an annual, year-long set of programs and opportunities that engaged diverse groups of faculty and administrators in substantive discussion, reading, workshops, and reflection on vocation, teaching and learning for civic engagement, peace and justice, and diversity. The program also partnered with Augsburg’s Center for Global Education to provide powerful immersion/study experiences (in different years) in Guatemala, Cuba, and Namibia. Anchored by these profound and evocative international opportunities, the initiative has helped not only to sow vocational seeds across the curriculum, via revision of existing courses and the development of new ones. It has also to nurture conversation throughout the

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faculty about the relationship of vocation to a constellation of crucial issues, including pedagogies of social justice and service learning, the relationship of teaching and activism, faculty members’ sense of ‘agency’ and efficacy in relationship to issues of justice and peace,

the meaning and significance of the life of a teacher/scholar, and their own sense of self and of ‘calling’ in/to the larger world.”

This issue highlights the leader from one of Augsburg’s programs to El Salvador, religion professor Beverly

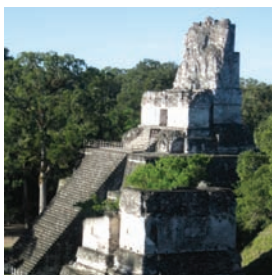
Stratton, who was inspired to propose her course after attending a seminar honoring the 25th anniversary of the assassination of Monsignor Oscar Romero. We also highlight reflections by students who went on the American Indian Studies course to Guatemala. Both of these Lilly seminars established courses that are now ongoing.



Students and leader from the Pan Afrikan Student Center travel to Namibia and South Africa



Participants on the LINK trip to Mexico assist with a building project



Student perspectives from Guatemala

On the Lilly international seminars, students are asked to reflect on what they are called to do in this life, what role faith plays in their lives, and how they see themselves as responsible to a broader world community. Throughout the seminar, students grapple with these issues often through reflection sessions, dialogue with others, journal entries, and final papers. Here is a selection of some of their thoughts from an American Indian studies course, “Indigenous Issues in Guatemala,” in January 2007:

“When I am faced with such intense social justice issues such as with human rights in Guatemala, it just reminds me so harshly that there is So. Much. Pain. In the world. And it hurts. And it even feels paralyzing. But the people under these systems of oppression hold on to their hope in something more, something better, some type of wholeness. Recognizing this, there is no way that I can make the choice to give up hope.”

“What I experienced most often, while preparing for the trip and while actually on the trip, was how closely the story of Guatemala’s indigenous people parallels the story of indigenous people in the United States. ... In Guatemala, our exposure was even more immediate – directly talking to the very people who suffer the most from the lingering effects

of violence perpetrated by the government and the dominant culture.”

“I am trying to understand my identity as an American in a broader, global perspective. Perhaps the person I relate with most when I think about my identity and my responsibilities is Alejandro. [He] is a Guatemalan grad student who worked for three years to dig up and identify hundreds of victims of genocide, despite receiving anonymous death threats for his work. ... He risked his life to give a name, an identity, to some of the countless victims of genocide. ... I asked him why he risked his life [for] this work, and he told me that he figured he was born with so much privilege that he just felt responsible to give some of it back to those who weren’t so fortunate.”

“I believe that each of us has a purpose in life and it is our goal to achieve our full potential through an intersection of our passions with meeting a need at a community level or even a global level. It is necessary to realize that the world is bigger than one individual, and we are connected through the social patterns and experiences as humans. Since traveling abroad I have had more realizations about my personal vocation than any other single experience at Augsburg, and I would never trade those travels.”

“My sense of vocation changed, because overall I had seen many things that changed my perspective on the United States and its global position in the world. I read, heard, and saw impacts of the United States’ foreign policy. . . . The stories that we were told by many of the Mayans also greatly affected me. We were fortunate enough to hear these peoples’ stories and the impact that they have had on their lives.”

“So, how can I utilize this recognition of a calling and this experience from Guatemala? First, I can reflect on what it means to be called and how I am responding to that call. Am I living a life that of peace and justice? Am I living a life that values the worth of all people? Am I listening to other’s stories? I only hope that I can answer in the affirmative of these questions, and that if I cannot, at least I will recognize my shortcomings.”

Helping Monsignor Romero’s Legacy Live on Through a New Course

Professor Beverly Stratton’s first trip to El Salvador was in 2005 for the 25th anniversary of the assassination of Monsignor Oscar Romero. As a professor of religion, she was inspired to create a Lilly international course, “Vocation and the Christian Faith,” that could help students learn from the struggles of their brothers and sisters in El Salvador and share the profound learning that she had experienced. Here are some of her reflections after her first experience in El Salvador:

“There is a theology of martyrdom in El Salvador that we do not know or experience in the U.S. The Salvadoran people know that, through their martyrs and in other ways, God continues to be incarnate wherever people need God’s comfort or courage. Romero, like Jesus, brought the face of God to God’s people, and Romero is alive among the people of El Salvador, as he promised. His more

recent and visible life and death, like the life and death of Jesus, give them courage to continue struggling for justice in a country increasingly shaped by forces of globalization.”

“Most intriguing to me was hearing again, as I’ve learned previously in Mexico, about the method of biblical study and interpretation used by the Christian base communities. Our speaker described the four parts of their method—*ver* (look at what’s going on at this time in their lives), *juzgar* (read and reflect on the biblical texts), *actuar* (consider what the texts are calling the community to do), and *celebrar* (celebrate the ways that the Spirit acts through them to bring about the reign of God on earth).” She gave an example. “As the community was reading the advent texts, they thought about what they were waiting for—the repair

Sobering to see more clearly away from my U.S. context the chasm between rich and poor that I know also exists here.

of the long dike, since the river floods their land during every rainy season. When they read God's words in Ex 14:15 "Why do you cry out to me? ... march," they decided to march. So they walked five days to the capital in San Salvador to speak with government representatives who had been given money from Japan to fix the dike, but who hadn't yet repaired it. They did not despair when these officials refused to meet with them and instead told them to write a letter! When it was clear that the government was still not going to do anything about the flooding, the community celebrated Pentecost by working themselves to stop up the biggest holes—and their land was not flooded in that year's rainy season."

"So, the trip was sobering and inspiring. Sobering to see more clearly away from my U.S. context the chasm between rich and poor that I know also exists here. Sobering to see the violence that people can inflict on one another in war or because of desperation—and to begin to recognize the complicity of the U.S. in such wars and situations. Sobering to realize how little attention I pay to the suffering around the world. Inspiring to see God alive, Jesus and Romero resurrected among the poor of El Salvador. Inspiring to hear from people whose lives have been shaped by the martyrs, by struggle, and by living in solidarity with people of El Salvador. Inspiring to see people reading the Bible, cooperating, and living in community to bring about the reign of God on earth."



Students visit a wall of remembrance in El Salvador



The legacy of Monsignor Romero lives on in a mural

Travel Seminar Opportunities

Please note: The price for all international travel seminars includes all meals and lodging, ground transportation, programming, language translation and interpretation, pre- and post-trip resources, honoraria for local resource people, fees for planned activities, and airfare as indicated. If airfare is included, other departure cities may be available and the price from those cities may vary.

MEXICO

Globalizing Women's Studies: Pedagogy and Praxis. A Professional Development Seminar for Faculty, Staff and Graduate Students
July 12-20, 2008

This 8-day immersion experience will explore the wide variety of issues that diverse Mexican women identify as issues of struggle within the current context of capitalist globalization. While focusing on global perspectives, participants will hear about gender and women's issues within the context of Mexican society, and be challenged in how we use language, theory, and ask questions about the study of women and gender in a global context. Throughout the week we will prioritize the voices of people who have been marginalized in academia and society and provide opportunities for women and men of diverse backgrounds to present themselves and define the issues that they see as essential rather than being re-presented by others. Sponsored by the Center for Global Education at Augsburg College. Price: \$1,350 without international airfare. Please check for availability.

MEXICO

Gender, Migration, and Globalization: A Women Studies Travel Seminar
August 3-13, 2008

"Globalization" and "immigration" come up constantly in U.S. discourse. But what do they really mean, particularly in Mexico? How do they relate to gender and sexuality? Join Professors Patti Duncan and Ann Mussey from the women's study department at Portland State University as they lead students on this 10-day seminar to Mexico. Investigate the gendered experiences of migration, immigration, and globalization, and explore transnational women's and feminist movements. Themes will also include NAFTA, the feminization of poverty, union organizing, violence against women, reproductive health care, education, land rights, the environment, and human rights. Sponsored by Portland State University. Price: \$1,550 without international airfare. Application deadline is May 19, 2008.

NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

A Comparative Study of Southern Africa's Educational Systems, and an In-Depth Study of Southern African Art, Literature, and Culture in Context
September 30 - October 19, 2008

Two themes will be combined on this seminar: a study of southern Africa's educational system, and secondly, an in-depth look at art, literature, and culture. Participants will be able to choose a particular focus during the seminar. Both groups will look at the enduring legacy of colonialism and apartheid, the process of decolonization, nation building, and forging a new national identity in these new independent nations. Learn about the road to reconstructing a new educational system that is based on quality, access, equity, and democracy in both Namibia and South Africa. See firsthand how these countries have been able to expand and improve the provision of education, both for economic and human rights reasons. Sponsored by Cornell College. Price: \$2,700 without international airfare. Application deadline is June 16, 2008.

NICARAGUA

Democracy in the Age of Globalization

November 15-22, 2008

Are you interested in Latin American politics and global economics? Join Colorado Mountain College in learning about the impact of globalization on the politics and economy of Nicaragua and the effect it has on Nicaraguan families, 80% of whom live on less than \$2 a day. This journey seeks to explore the relationships between the international economy and the political life of the Nicaraguan people, and assess the prospects for deepening democracy in a country riding the currents of globalization and living in the shadow of the United States. Sponsored by Colorado Mountain College. Price: \$1,270 without international airfare. Application deadline is September 8, 2008.

GUATEMALA

Guatemala Adventure: Maya People and Culture Today

January 6-18, 2009

We welcome you to experience the culture, society, and history of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala. This seminar will immerse you in the daily lives of Mayan women and men and introduce you to a world that existed long before the Spanish Conquest. During the seminar, you will learn about the Mayan worldview: mythology, spirituality, as well as the Mayan conception of an afterlife. In addition to visiting archaeological sites such as Tikal, the seminar will educate participants about contemporary efforts to promote indigenous rights and secure a life of dignity for Mayan peoples. As part of this experience, participants will learn about effective communication across cultural boundaries in the Guatemalan context. Sponsored by Dana College. Price: \$2115 without international airfare; however, internal airfare to and from Tikal is included. Application deadline is September 16, 2008.

Join a program to the center's newest site—BOLIVIA!****

The first travel seminar to Bolivia is being planned for fall 2008. The program is being sponsored by former Center for Global Education director, Joel Mugge, who serves as the interim director of the Carmen Pampa Fund. The trip will focus on education and development with an emphasis on visiting the Unidad Académica Campesina de Carmen Pampa (UAC-CP), a rural branch of the Catholic University of Bolivia. The college was founded in 1993 to address the historically impoverished conditions of rural Bolivians through affordable higher education. UAC-CP students know that education is the best asset they can bring back to their communities. The program will be led by Fidel Xinico, site director in Guatemala.

Bolivia offers an exciting new location for programming, especially since the election of the first indigenous president in the country's history, Evo Morales, in January 2006. Bolivia is immersed in the struggle for social change and the defense of indigenous and resource rights. Please look for details in our next newsletter and on our website about this new travel opportunity or call the Center's office to have a brochure mailed to you. Join us on this adventure or sponsor your own trip to Bolivia!

Staff Openings

Program Assistant, International Travel Seminars

Applications are being accepted for this position to assist with inquiries from travel seminar participants, billing, processing applications, and other administrative tasks. Application deadline is April 30, 2008 for a starting date of June 1, 2008. Please apply online at: <http://www.augsburg.edu/hr/>

We also expect to be hiring shortly for a marketing and recruitment coordinator. The opening will be listed on Augsburg College's web site: <http://www.augsburg.edu/hr/>. Expected start dates is June or July 2008.



If you have any questions about the Center for Global Education, please contact us at 1-800-299-8889, www.centerforglobaleducation.org, or e-mail gloaled@augsburg.edu.

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