LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES CONCENTRATION

RESPONSES TO LATIN AMERICAN REALITY

...integrando escolaridad, fe y servicio

CCC

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

San José, Costa Rica

Spring 2014
I. RATIONALE

Entitled “Responses to Latin American Reality” the Latin American Studies Concentration (LASC) aims to explore diverse Latin American responses to many of the problems we identified during Core Seminar and the Nicaragua Study Trip.

The engagement of three LASC components will facilitate our exploration of responses to Latin American reality: the Faith and Practice Seminar, Spanish classes focused on Latin American topics, and the Costa Rican Community Immersion Experience/Internship. We hope that these learning experiences will enrich our efforts to integrate telos (reason for being/purpose) and praxis (active response to reality).

LASC’s thesis is that a Christian worldview is inseparably bound to action in the world. In order to test this thesis, we will open ourselves to a re-examination of the Christian faith we claim as the primary motivating force in our lives. “Re-examination” means opening our hearts and minds to the perspectives of our hosts, listening with new ears, and critically engaging the Bible and other literature. We hope that our learning experiences during the LASC will deepen our commitment to following Jesus.

II. GOALS

The Latin American Studies Concentration aims that you:
1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of how Latin Americans respond to their realities.
2. “Re-examine” your worldview by exploring the beliefs of those you meet during the concentration.
3. Allow your telos to direct your praxis, becoming a Christian agent for change in your community.

III. REQUIRED READINGS

1. The Bible.

IV. FAITH AND PRACTICE SEMINAR (SEE DESCRIPTION IN SEPARATE SYLLABUS)

V. SPANISH COURSE (SEE DESCRIPTION IN SEPARATE SYLLABUS)

VI. COSTA RICAN COMMUNITY IMMERSION EXPERIENCE/INTERNSHIP

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The Costa Rican Community Immersion Experience/Internship provides you with an opportunity to live in a community outside of the greater metropolitan area of San José. Your community experience offers you a new context in which to explore how Costa Ricans view and respond to their reality.
REQUIREMENTS

The following is required of you during the Community Immersion Experience/Internship:

- Willingness to assist - in everything or nothing (as your hosts deem appropriate).
- Tenacious engagement - prioritize interacting with your hosts above personal habits (internet, ipod).
- Flexibility – walk a path that you have never traveled.
- Observant eyes, sensitive ears, and an inquisitive spirit – to help you dig beneath the surface.
- Gracious heart – recognizing that your hosts are inviting you into their world for a brief time.
- Perseverance – through experiences that may be difficult and uncomfortable (and rich in learning potential).
- Completion of assignments - readings, 2 position essays.

VII. GRADING

1. Faith and practice Seminar 20%
2. Spanish Course 25%
3. 1st Position Essay – Community Experience 15%
4. 2nd Position Essay – Community Experience 15%
5. 3rd Position Essay – Community Experience 15%
6. Participation/Attitude – Community Experience 10%

Work completed in Spanish will receive 2% extra credit
Tardy submissions will receive a 5% reduction for each day late

VIII. DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1st POSITION ESSAY

Critically respond to Leonardo Boff’s analysis in “The Lord’s Prayer. The Prayer of Integral Liberation”. Describe several points of personal agreement and disagreement with Boff’s proposals. In addition, reflect on how your culture/context has influenced the way you interpret and read the Bible. What new insights have you gained from Leonardo Boff’s thoughts on praying to the Lord through Latin American eyes? Of course, your essay must include specific references to Leonardo Boff’s proposals. References to additional material/experience from Core Seminar, our Nicaragua trip and the Faith and Practice Seminar may also strengthen your analysis.

You will submit the essay on Sunday, April 6th via email: javier@lasp.co.cr

2nd POSITION ESSAY

During the Costa Rican Community Immersion Experience/Internship you will read the book by Eduardo Galeano, “Open Veins of Latin America. Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent”. The Position Essay asks you to propose a critical analysis and a faith-informed response to the topics presented by Galeano and its related problems/challenges.

You will submit the essay on Sunday, April 13th via email: javier@lasp.co.cr

3rd POSITION ESSAY

During the first half of the LASP semester, you engaged diverse cultures in Central America, shared in life with several host families, completed language study, and participated in numerous conferencias during Core Seminar. During the Latin American Studies Concentration, you will continue this journey by engaging a process of reading (assigned books) and acting (community immersion experience). The Position Essay asks you to integrate these experiences with reflections on your faith journey.
The Position Essay requires you to respond to the guided questions outlined below. While it is important to address the three broad areas listed below, you are not required to respond to each point/question listed. Do not mechanically answer each question; rather integrate them into a narrative of your life, experiences, and reflections.

You will submit the essay on Sunday, April 20th via email: javier@lasp.co.cr

Where I Stand
What pre-LASP life experiences (neighborhood, friends, education, church, family, personal struggles, etc.) inform your attitudes, values, opinions, faith positions, and overall worldview?

Seeing More Clearly
How do your experiences in Latin America accompany the above mentioned life experiences to create new faith insights that encourage you to “see” in new ways? How have your interactions with Latin Americans, readings/speakers, and other semester content influenced (or not) your views on the following topics?

- “the life and central message of Jesus”
- “being a Christian”
- “sacred texts”
- “treatment of creation” (human-centered vs. life-centered worldviews)
- “sin” (personal vs. structural)?
- “salvation” (spiritual vs. holistic)?
- “service and missions” (evangelism vs. social action)?
- “The Kingdom of God”
- “political positions”
- “conflict resolution” (violence should be justified vs. nonviolent positions)

Acting More Faithfully
A. How are you being challenged to act on your new insights?
   - in relation to seeing the world from the perspective of the marginalized
   - in relation to your involvement with a church
   - in relation to your future career
   - in relation to how you will use resources (education, time, money, natural resources)
B. What core values and commitments (concern for the marginalized, living in community, solidarity, economic justice, simplicity of lifestyle...) will define your faith and practice?

GRADING RUBRIC FOR ESSAYS

The essays will be evaluated for completeness (Does it respond to the central categories/questions? Does it meet the minimum length requirement of five double-spaced, typed pages), depth of reflection (Does the author show evidence of substantial personal reflection on the issues?), and technical accuracy (Does the author reference semester materials – readings, speakers, experiences – to support their reflections and analysis? Do spelling and grammatical errors interrupt reader comprehension?).

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<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>Adequate performance with little depth of analysis</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>Excellent, creative and integrative work, revealing superior analysis and content</td>
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IX. LASC Calendar

COSTA RICAN COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE
Monday, March 31st – Thursday, April 24th

GROUP REFLECTION
Thursday, April 24th at the LASC office – 1:30 p.m.