

Global News and Notes

Spring 2013

CGE Blogs: Opening Windows

The Center for Global Education has been traveling into the blogging world over the course of the past several years. At first, our blogs were a place for students to complete reflection assignments. As blogging became more and more prevalent in our society and in the field of study abroad, we added blogs for our staff to use as a way to share program news and updates with both alumni and people interested in traveling with CGE in the future.

As most of our GNN readers know, CGE staff are old pros at juggling a multitude of demands at any given time. An individual may be leading a short-term seminar while teaching a course in our semester program, all amidst the office and financial work that is never-ending. They may be fielding calls from our homestay families, monitoring a current event that applies to programming, and communicating one-on-one with a participant who is sick. Sometimes our blogs are abandoned for weeks or months, but we leave them live because the content is incredibly informative and powerful.

Recently we realized that our blogs do not have the readership we wish they did, perhaps because we have not promoted them as heavily as we should or perhaps because our audience does not prefer the blogging format. Maybe it is indeed because the blogs languish from time to time, and the lack of fresh content generates cobwebs that hide these windows into CGE.

Whatever the reason, CGE wants the blog content to remain alive because of the students and staff who have poured their hearts and minds into the writing. Featuring blog posts in our newsletter is one way to revive interest in and appreciation for our blogs. Please read on for five blog posts from the field. After you read them, be sure to take a peek at all of our blogs in full:

CGE-Southern Africa Staff Blog: cgesouthernafrica.blogspot.com

CGE-Southern Africa Student Blog: cgenamibia.blogspot.com

CGE-Mexico Staff Blog: cgemexico.blogspot.com

Social Work in a Latin American Context Student Blog (Mexico): swkmexico.blogspot.com

CGE-Cuba Blog: cgecuba.blogspot.com

CGE-Central America Staff Blog: cgecentralamerica.blogspot.com

All blogs are accessible from our homepage: centerforglobaleducation.org

They are often linked on Facebook as well: [facebook.com/center.for.global.education](https://www.facebook.com/center.for.global.education)

CUBA BLOG

March 23, 2012: American University
Alternative Break in Cuba, Education for
Social Justice

J. Crew. Mango. Filibuster. Roadie. Sassy. Girl with a magnet tattoo. What do these things have to do with Cuba? Everything. They are nicknames a CGE group from American University bestowed upon themselves while spending a week in Cuba. I share these seemingly inconsequential monikers to demonstrate not only the



uniqueness of the individuals, but also to communicate the special group dynamics that make an international seminar like this an exceedingly significant experience.

Those group dynamics do not just happen. A group becomes dynamic when people step up to the plate, eager to engage. A group becomes dynamic when they exhibit

(Continues inside)

Travel Seminar Opportunities



GUATEMALA

Liberation Theology

May 12-18, 2013

Brite Divinity School invites you to visit with the people and land of Guatemala. Learn first-hand about social justice, liberation theology, and servant

leadership. Participants will be able to see Guatemala's diverse cultures, its historic, socio-political, economic, and environmental challenges, and its church communities who, with creativity and courage, continue to promote human dignity and well being. Possible program content includes visiting with Indigenous communities and development projects, learning about the Historical Recovery Memory, excursions to churches to hear about the role of liberation theology during the civil war, and speaking with Guatemalans about economic challenges. This trip is open to non-Brite Divinity School students. *Application deadline is March 25, 2013. Price: \$1295.*



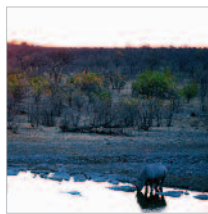
GUATEMALA

Education for Decolonization

June 22-30, 2013

On this professional development seminar, educators will analyze the enduring legacy of colonialism, consider the responsibility to understand the

dynamics of colonialism, and study the strategies being employed to decolonize and reconstruct more just communities. The program will also address the roles that international organizations and committed individuals have played in addressing systems of domination and defending the rights of Indigenous peoples in Guatemala. Activities include travel to the highlands to visit with Indigenous communities, dialogues with women about gender roles in a changing society, visits to schools, and participation in a Mayan religious ceremony. *Application deadline is April 8, 2013. Price: \$1565. See our website for full brochure and additional information.*



SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Political History and Landmarks of South Africa and Namibia

August 11-24, 2013

This seminar is offered by the Augsburg College Alumni Association in partnership with the Center for Global

Education. The trip is open to any alumni or friends of either Augsburg College or CGE. The 12-day tour will take place in August 2013, and participants will spend time in both Namibia and South Africa. Learn firsthand about the region's struggle against apartheid while visiting the Apartheid Museum, Cape Point, and Robben Island. Discover how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia played a significant role in the independence struggle. Participants will also visit the Etosha Game Reserve and the Namib Desert. *Application deadline is April 1, 2013. Price: \$5450, including international airfare from Minneapolis/St. Paul. Please see our website for full brochure and additional information.*

These Short-term Travel Seminars are open to the public. We would be happy to work with interested parties after the application deadline if spaces are available and there is enough time to complete necessary arrangements. The price for all Short-term Travel Seminars includes 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 prices from those cities may vary.

Staff News

CGE is pleased to welcome **Frederick Simasiku**, program coordinator and instructor at the Southern Africa site. Frederick will be teaching politics in addition to coordinating student internships. Frederick holds a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Namibia. He also holds an honors degree of environmental education from the University of South Africa and a master's degree in the same field from Rhodes University. Prior to beginning his work with CGE, Frederick served as centre manager and environmental educator for a Namibian NGO and has also tutored and lectured in environmental education at the Polytechnic of

Namibia and at Rhodes University. Frederick has also worked as a secondary school teacher.

Dulce Monterrubio is departing her position as program associate for academic programs abroad. She has served with CGE-Minneapolis for seven years and will foray her considerable student advising skills into her new work as academic advisor for Augsburg College's TRIO program. While we will certainly miss her, we are glad she is staying close by and will continue to be a member of the wider Augsburg College family!

CGE Blogs: Opening Windows (continued)

confidence blended with sensitivity. A group becomes dynamic when the questions do not cease and answers from inside are not withheld. A group becomes dynamic when they grab hold of each moment as one where learning can be had. A group becomes dynamic when they offer one another companionship deep enough that it results in terms of endearment. Dynamic, this group was.

And without these group dynamics, which provided support and encouragement for each individual, Cuba wouldn't have been Cuba for these students. During a visit to a school, I watched one student (at the invitation of the Cuban teacher) step to the front of the classroom and engage each child in the room—without a second of hesitation. At another school, I listened to an American University student eloquently and sensitively explain U.S. attention to the Cuban Five when a Cuban student asked her opinion. Yet another group member,

who plans to teach science in the future, utilized an early morning chat with our translator (professor at the University of Havana) to get his advice on the development of a classroom activity. They seized moments to interact with Cubans in a truly Cuban way—through conversation, dance, and song. I will never forget their joint rendition of “We Are the World” with Cuban high-schoolers. It was off-key, most of the words were missing, and I would never listen to it again by choice. But it is a beautiful memory for me.

Ultimately, as their CGE leader, when I asked them to jump, they said, “how high?” Not really. But when I asked them to push, they said “how hard?” And I said “hard enough to make our bus start up again!” We had a few bus issues, obviously. Even in those moments, frustrated by being stuck, they showed flexibility, compassion, understanding, and solidarity with our Cuban hosts.

NAMIBIA STAFF BLOG

November 23, 2012: Integrative Projects

Integrative projects are one of the CGE team's favorite times of the semester. It is an opportunity for students to present what they have learned throughout the semester both in and out of the classroom through a creative project. Guest speakers, internship supervisors, and other friends in Namibia are all invited to attend.

This semester's students produced a wide array of creative presentations ranging from board games about education to videos about self-reflection to a life-size version of chutes and ladders to demonstrate the ways development programs, government policies, and religion all influence HIV management in Namibia. One student of South-Sudanese origin wrote an open letter from South Sudan to Namibia comparing development and human rights between the two newest countries in Africa. The student said he was inspired through the friends he met at various Namibian spoken word events to try step out of his comfort zones and write an abstract metaphorical letter for his project. Another pair of students facilitated a focus group discussion about the complex challenges facing Namibians by handing out role-play characters to members of the audience while a different project assigned teams to build structures

using straws as a metaphor for developing a new country.

It is refreshing to see how much passion and thought go into the final projects. It is a moment when we see all the hard work of the semester pays off.



SOCIAL WORK STUDENT BLOG

May 10, 2012: Ministerios de Amor

I am looking out at the house full of children who I have bonded and lived with for the past two months and who I unfortunately need to say goodbye to tomorrow. Although I always have been aware of how my goodbye may affect the children at the house, I have little thought of how it will affect me. During my entire stay, any of my preoccupations have mainly been focused on the children: “Is he really grasping what I am trying to communicate to him?” “Can this self-esteem activity even make a difference with this kid?” “I wonder if she feels safe with someone in the house.” “How will the kids react to my short time here with them?”

I realize the grand importance and necessity of closure of the relationship that I have experienced with the children, especially considering their past experiences of abandonment; I have replayed and rehearsed how I will say goodbye to the children at least one hundred times, but I have yet to set time apart to think about how I will process the end of my relationship with my clients. I have experienced many goodbyes in my life, but nothing like this. I feel as if there is no way for me to emotionally prepare myself for goodbye rather than look forward to how I can use the valuable experience I had here with the *tias* and children in the future. Here at the orphanage I had the unique opportunity to work outside of my own language and culture, and that in itself was extremely empowering and affirmed my desire to work with the Latino population when I return to the United States. I will bring them with me in my future work. I look forward to see how they will help guide my work and continue to inspire me to serve populations in need.

CENTRAL AMERICA STAFF BLOG

October 3, 2012: Poem of Reflection

Our student Drew reflects on our visit to the Jesuit University, site of the 1989 killing of six Jesuit priests and two laywomen.

The Roses Smell of Revolution

On November 17th, 1989, my brother was born.
A vigorous new being in this world.
On November 16th, 1989,
700 soldiers surrounded a college campus in San Salvador.
6 priests
stirred from their sleep
At the snarling barrels of an elite force
forced onto the patio
For their radical sermons
to the people,
In answer
to the rising reflections of revolution
Of the repressed.
A people raped and murdered
Systematically
For control and cash
Visions of justice through broken glass
And economics that curl up at the corners,
Like the burnt scripture
And the fists of the fallen.
6 priests were murdered
Stripped from their beds like
Lice infested linen.
They were shot in the head.
I saw the faded photographs.
Burnt into my memory
Like they tried to do
With the evidence of their butchery.
But I saw the photographs,
Involuntarily embracing their holy earth.
Hands pressed into fists
Another deceptive ruse
to confuse the public
And manipulate them against the guerilla troops
For whom the fist is a mantra.
But it was not the guerrilla forces.
It was the government.
They were shot in the head
for this is what happens to those who think.
In a photo album,
Its cover worn from the fingertips of witnesses
A cerebellum strays from its proprietor
Grey matter splattering red
on the green courtyard.
The gardener of the college
Had asked the generous priests
To let his wife and daughter
Stay in the sanctity of the college,
For even the reaches of a civil war

Would hesitate to knock
At the doors of God.
But on November 16th,
The gardener's loved ones were slaughtered
in cold blood.
For what they could attest to.
I saw the photograph.
The mother protecting her child in her last breath,
Covering her in a mantle of unbounded love
As the orders of greed
Mandated from men in mahogany armchairs
Rained down through the bullets of ruthless puppets
Engulfing the life of innocents
In their torrential floodwaters.
I am in the patio now,
Where the gardener dedicated a rose garden
To the memories of the priests
And his family.
The roses are red and yellow.
They take root in the blood of injustice.
These roses blossom with the hope of the Salvadoran
population,
Even after over 70,000 of them
were lost in the conflict.
These roses smell of revolution,
The stinging sweetness of
Spilled blood.
I water these roses
With tears for the fallen,
for the oppressed,
And for the ignorance of the "informed"
in my own country
Who have no idea
That this couldn't have transpired
Without their tax dollars.
On November 16th, 1989
6 priests and 2 innocent women were assassinated.
They were shot in the head
For control and cash.
On November 17th, 1989,
My brother was born.
The roses have thorns,
And smell of revolution.



MEXICO STAFF BLOG

December 5, 2012: Thoughts from former student and pastor Dan De Leon

My name is Dan De Leon. I am a pastor of a United Church of Christ congregation in College Station, Texas called Friends Congregational Church. After five years of service at Friends, I was granted a sabbatical leave, six weeks I chose to spend studying at the Center for Global Education in Cuernavaca. Our group of eight college students and this 38-year-old pastor (who was fortunate enough to be embraced in unbreakable friendship by those eight people I am humbled to now call my friends) spent nearly a week in home stays at the indigenous village of Amatlán. When I returned to my home stay in Cuernavaca, I cracked open my laptop and typed out an email to my parents in an attempt to start processing everything we had encountered during those days in Amatlán. I offer that email as a blog post here so that it might offer some information and perspective about what one might encounter in a similar home stay through CGE; however, this is only a glimpse...*(letter excerpted for brevity)*.

Mom & Dad,

I'd like to tell you a little more about my stay in the indigenous village of Amatlán. The place where we stayed is tucked into an area of trees, many of which are fruit trees: plums, limes, etc. Every wall of the house is smoothed out cement with some walls painted and others not. While my roommate Zach's and my room had a door, every other door in the house was covered by a bed sheet, including the bathroom. Windows remain open all day and night to let in the cool air...burros, horses, goats, and cows roam the streets freely. You have to watch your step or you might walk in their waste, which I did at least once. The streets are paved with uneven cobble stones, and the roads are steep along the mountainous terrain. Minivans pass through town every now and then to transport people to the neighboring villages—a service I never tried for lack of time. People on the streets are anywhere from openly kind to stoic, but never cold.

Back to my home stay house: Our host was a woman named Maura, who appears to be in her 50s. She has two adult daughters who are married and live in other villages, and who have blessed her (her words) with two grandchildren respectively. She also has two teenage sons, an 18-year-old and a 16-year-old. Zach spent more time with them than I did. I spent my conversational time with Maura.

Maura and I spent the three mornings of my stay there at her kitchen table talking about her husband and her family over coffee made from homegrown, picked, and dried coffee beans from Maura's family's backyard. Her husband will be working in Chicago for another two to three years to pay off his debt and earn enough money to provide for his family, thereby making his travails worth it. He lives in an efficiency apartment with three other men. Despite all his struggles, the only picture I've seen of him depicts him smiling. There is a framed 5 x 8 pic of him in the living room. He's wearing a Chicago Cubs hat and he's standing at a stove working, no doubt a picture of the kitchen where he works now, and he's smiling as if he hasn't a care in the world. I've learned that here in Mexico smiles, laughter, and jokes cover a world of pain and injustice. How else can one cope? I told Maura on more than one occasion that I would keep her husband, her, and her family in my prayers.

The entire experience in Amatlán was something that I think every politician should go through, process in their minds, and then have an honest debate about in terms of immigration; and every American should be required by law to watch the debate televised live, followed by breakout sessions in homes throughout the country where people discuss the history of colonialism, capitalism, neoliberalism and their effects on the world. A slightly draconian methodology, sure; but this is just an impossible desire I've discovered since my trip to Amatlán.

We also visited a curandera while we were there. While I was raised to understand that 'curandera' means "witch doctor," such terminology is an offense to curanderas/curanderos in the indigenous

village. A witch is a 'brujo/a,' while a curandero/a is a spiritual healer. The curanderas use natural medicines from the elements of nature in their healing practices. The woman we visited, Leti, told us how the tradition of the curandera's spiritual, natural healing is handed down generation to generation, but that it is now a dying practice in the shadows of industrialization and colonialism. While she ascribes to Catholicism in her own life of faith, her largest lament is the Roman Catholic Church in her region, which vocally denounces curanderas as practicing anti-Christian witchcraft—a complete falsehood.

I have many other stories to share about the Amatlán experience, but basically what I can say is that the ultimate lesson for me is one in hospitality and humility. I have more possessions and money than Maura and her family (and her extended family) will ever see in their lives. But am I privileged? Am I better off? Am I in better shape than she? No. Her house, her



cooking, Maura's hospitality was biblical and pure, without bias or agenda. Now, what is my responsibility upon receiving that gift of hospitality which words cannot detail adequately? I have yet to answer that question. And humility? Let's just say that when I began praying in earnest for humility when I started seminary, I didn't think that God would be answering that prayer for me in powerful, eye-opening, life-transforming ways some 14 years later.

Center for Global Education

Augsburg College
2211 Riverside Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55454

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Cuba Semester Program: Off and Running!

And we really do mean running! The History, Culture, and Politics of Cuba program is shorter than our other semester offerings due to legalities and visa issues. Yet, the same amount of academic content is covered. And we know the students are making the most of their free time as well. Twelve students are participating in the inaugural program this spring. If you are interested in updates from our international resident assistant, Rebekah Menning (former IRA with Central America and former student in Mexico!), check out our Cuba blog.



The Center for Global Education at Augsburg College (CGE)
1-800-299-8889 centerforgloaleducation.org gloaled@augsborg.edu