Many students are eager to expand their cultural competence by engaging in cross-cultural service and immersion. While traveling and volunteering can be worthwhile and beneficial in multiple ways, it is critical to consider issues associated with travel and volunteering in order to develop optimal cross-cultural connections and understanding. Furthermore, an enrichment of cultural competence emerges as one engages in reading, observation, reflection and discussion that relate to culture, social-historical-political forces, and contexts that influence our development and interaction.

This course is a 10 credit, faculty-led study abroad and service-learning experience. Students will participate in both classroom and applied learning opportunities that include pre-trip orientation, group instruction, reading, writing and critical reflection assignments, learning from and with indigenous knowledge sources, cross-cultural service and immersion activities, and action projects for positive social change in the student’s local community.

Course Objectives:

- To provide worthwhile and meaningful service while engaging with the children and educators of the primary school Brillo de Sol. The school was started by a Guatemalan speech therapist to meet the diverse learning needs of children in the San Gaspar Vivar community outside of Antigua, Guatemala;
- To develop a broader understanding of global citizenship and ethics of “voluntourism”;
- To learn about projects being conducted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating throughout Guatemala;
- To explore the history, politics, cultures, and social issues of Guatemala and neighboring countries in Latin America;
- To expand cultural competence and integrate this knowledge and skill with evolving professional knowledge and skill
  - Discuss and define what is meant by the terms/concepts culture, cultural practices, cultural and linguistic diversity
    - Develop cultural sensitivity through ethnographic observation and interview
  - Review and discuss professional standards for service learning

Course Readings:

Numerous articles and links to online readings will be emailed throughout the spring/summer quarters.
Student Responsibilities and Course Grading:

You are responsible for completing course readings and related reflections in your journal prior to class discussion of the readings. The instructor will provide prompts (in class/via email) for reflection and discussion. You will be required to provide additional prompts. You also are expected to facilitate and participate in class discussions. Other assignments include ethnographic observations; oral presentation on a topic related to exploring Guatemalan history, politics, social issues, health and/or education; essays regarding volunteerism and ethical travel; Guidelines will be provided for all assignments and evaluation of the assignments.

Assignment contribution to grade:

- Pre-trip presentation 10%
- Class participation 10%
- Service-learning fieldwork:
  - Professionalism, participation, and contribution 30%
- Journals
  - Reflections, responses to readings and observations 20%
- Adherence to group rules and guidelines 30%

Grading:

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Retreat: All students who register for this course will commit to attending a one day, on campus retreat during spring quarter (May 19, 2018). Reading assignments related to that retreat will be posted via e-mail.

All WWU policies regarding academic honesty, and personal integrity and conduct apply to this course. See Western’s alcohol and drug policy and student code of conduct website for explanations and expectations.

Preliminary Schedule:

Pre-trip retreat: May 19, 2018

- Greetings and Introductions
- Orientation to the trip
- Service learning philosophy; international service learning;
- Language immersion; Spanish language tutorial
- Overview of Guatemala: history, politics, culture, social issues (review resources)
- Cultural competence exercises and discussions
- Medical/vaccination issues related to travel in Guatemala
• Requirements and expectations
• Develop guiding principles and code of conduct

**Five-week summer session: June 26-July 30**

On campus course sessions: Tuesday June 26 – Friday June 29

• Trip overview; Review of guiding principles/code of conduct;
• Medical and safety orientation;
• Ethnographic observations;
• Readings-based discussions and exercises:
  o Globalization; global ethics; ethics of travel; voluntourism; social issues
• Plan activities/lesson plans for ANA service;
• Spanish language activities (survival Spanish);
• Journal writing: what do I expect to learn? What are my goals?;
• Guatemala presentations

In country class sessions: Sunday July 1 – Monday July 30

• Student and faculty meetings (variable per week)
• Discussions re: student and faculty generated prompts regarding readings, service learning experiences, language immersion experience, daily living in Antigua, excursions
• Student-led discussions re: social-political-cultural aspects of Guatemala
• Assignments: Ongoing readings from texts; journal reflections; ethnographic observation
• Excursions: Antigua tour; Camino Seguro; Pacaya volcano climb; Lake Atitlan and surrounding villages; other local and national trips as time and planning permit
• Final week in-country: Reflection and discussion based on retreat and week one topics;
• Assignments: essays regarding volunteerism and ethical travel; final reflections on service, language immersion, and travel/cultural immersion experiences; final reflections on overall experience.