



A M B R O S E

**BUS 304**  
**International Community Development:**  
**Travel Study in the Dominican Republic**  
**(3 credit hours)**  
**Spring 2014**

**Class Schedules**

Time: April 28 – May 13, 2014

Location: Maria Auxiliadora (La Vega), Dominican Republic

Cost: \$2800 (this includes flights, meals, accommodation, and in-country costs. This does not include vaccinations, mosquito nets, or overnight stays in airports.)

**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Randy Poon, PhD  
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Business Administration

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**Course Description**

This travel study course offers experience-based learning opportunities for students to see first-hand how international community development impacts individuals and communities abroad. Students will develop an understanding of a range of topics in the field, including: poverty and transformational development, key approaches used by development practitioners, issues associated with community development, and evaluation techniques like asset-based community development, as well as needs-based and learning process approaches.

The travel study builds on and draws upon DVST 210 International Community Development and focuses on observing the practical application of community development in an educational context. The trip will include activities such as: observing the operation of schools in the Dominican Republic, meeting with staff to learn about field operations, interacting with students to see how their lives are being improved, and meeting with local community and church leaders and other development organizations to learn about the economic, political, and cultural context of the region.

*Prerequisite: DVST 210 International Community Development, or permission of the department*

## Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The aim of this course is for students to develop practical understandings of international community development within the context of the Dominican Republic. Specifically, the course aims to achieve the following learning outcomes by having students:

- Understand the basic principles and definitions of community development
- Understand key approaches utilized by development practitioners in the field.
- Understand a variety of techniques for implementing community development, including asset-based community development, as well as needs-based and learning process approaches.
- Have a basic familiarity with best practices in the areas of health promotion, education, business development, environment and microfinance.
- Develop an understanding from the perspective of the poor of the challenges communities face through various meetings and interactions with the schools' staff and students
- Gain an appreciation for the similarities and differences in historical, cultural, social and spiritual aspects between the Dominican Republic and Canada
- Gain introspective insights about themselves and their own personal values, beliefs, life goals, career aspirations, etc., by travelling in a cross-cultural setting and living temporarily in a new group-based environment
- Improve skills in research, writing and presenting ideas both formally and informally

## Course Text & Materials

Corbett, Steve & Fikkert, Brian. 2012. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself*. Chicago: Moody Publishers.

Lanier, Sarah A. 2000. *Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot- and Cold-Climate Cultures*. Hagerstown, MD: McDougal Publishing.

Myers, Bryant. 2011. *Walking with the Poor: Principles & Practices of Transformational Development*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

A resource list will be also provided consisting of international community development related articles and on-line resources, including some basic country specific readings.

## Course Requirements

Course grading and evaluation will be conducted according to the following elements:

<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Date Due</b>
Take-Home Exam	20%	Thursday, April 24, 2014 (11:59 p.m.)
Personal Learning Journal	30%	Saturday, May 31, 2014 (11:59 p.m.)
Research Paper	40%	Thursday, July 31, 2014 (11:59 p.m.)
Participation (Blog and Presentation)	10%	

### Take-Home Exam:

Prior to the travel study, students will be required to answer a set of take-home exam questions relating to International Community Development based on the Corbett and Fikkert, and Myers textbooks. Further details will be provided prior to the trip departure date in April.

### Personal Learning Journal:

Each student will be required to hand-in a learning journal that describes and analyzes their personal experiences and aspects of learning throughout the trip. This will include areas such as:

- Insights on international community development, poverty alleviation, education development, sustainability, economic development, business and/or political insights gained from the various meetings and interactions with staff and students
- Aspects of cultural, social, spiritual and/or historical learning from your time in the Dominican Republic
- Personal observations and insights about yourself and your own values, beliefs, goals, habits, behaviors, etc., gained from travelling in a cross-cultural setting and living temporarily in a new group-based environment

The point of the journals is to focus on what you've learned in a variety of aspects and **not simply to tell about what we did each day and where we went** – instead of outlining the trip itinerary, your journal should highlight what you actually learned and reflected on through the trip. Students are encouraged to bring along a journal and make notes on their experiences throughout the trip to facilitate this assignment.

Please utilize the reflecting writing tips on the next two pages.

Journals should be brief (double spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font document, approximately 2500 – 3000 words) and can be typed or hand-written. The journals are due in Moodle by Saturday, May 31, 2014.

In addition to written journals, there will also be opportunities throughout the trip for group discussion and evaluation of learning experiences. Certain questions will also be provided during the trip that will require a response in the journals.

## **What is reflective writing?**

Reflective writing is evidence of reflective thinking. It involves:

- Looking back at something (an event, idea, or object)
- Analyzing the event, idea, or object (thinking in depth and from different perspectives)
- Thinking carefully about what the event, idea, or object means for you (particularly to your understanding of the people you meet in the Dominican Republic, your notions of poverty, and about the various approaches to international community development)

As such, reflective writing is more personal than other types of academic writing.

### **A possible structure for reflective writing (this isn't the only model):**

#### **1. Description (keep this short!)**

- What happened?
- What were the responses/reactions of others?

#### **2. Interpretation**

- What is most important/interesting/useful/relevant about the event, idea, or object?
- How does it relate to what you have read/learned (including author's names) about topics we have studied such as, transformational development, poverty, asset-based community development, etc.?

#### **3. Outcome**

- What have I learned from this? About yourself? International community development, poverty, education, microfinance, etc.? About the people you have met and the country?
- What does this mean for my future?

### **Other tips regarding reflective writing:**

- Reflective writing is an exploration and an explanation of events – NOT just a description of them
- It reveals anxieties, errors, weaknesses AND strengths and successes
- Reflect forward to the future as well as reflecting back on the past

## Vocabulary Aid

### Interpretation:

- For me, the most {meaningful/significant/important/relevant/useful} {idea/issues/elements} were learning {resulting from/that happened when} .....
- {Previously/initially/subsequently} I {thought/felt/knew/noticed/realized OR did not think/did not feel/etc.} .....
- Alternatively, this {might be/is probably} {because of/explained by/related to} .....
- This {reveals/demonstrates} .....

### Outcomes:

- Having {experienced/learned/applied} ..... I now {feel/think/realize/question/know} .....
- {Furthermore/most importantly} I have learned that .....
- I have {significantly/slightly} {developed/improved} {my skills/my understanding of/my ability to} .....
- {This means that/this makes me feel} .....
- This {knowledge/understanding/skill} {is/could be/will be} {essential/important/useful} to me as a learner because .....
- Because I {did not/have not yet/am not yet certain about/do not know yet/do not yet understand} I will now need to .....
- As a next step, I need to .....

### Research Paper:

Following the trip, students will be required to develop and write a research paper (double spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, approximately 3000 – 4000 words) on a topic of their choice that relates to an area of international community development in a Central American context. All topics must be approved by the instructor through submission of a brief topic proposal (**due Friday, June 6, 2014**). The paper will provide an overview and background to the topic, an in-depth discussion of community development and key issues, what impact the topic is having on key stakeholders (i.e. students, staff, the poor and their families, businesses, communities, developing countries, governments and public policy, international donor agencies, etc.) at various different levels (i.e. individual, community, organizational, national, regional and/or global), analysis and application to principles presented in the travel study activities and readings, and future direction or outlook for the topic. If appropriate, you are welcome to include anecdotal accounts from the travel study (in particular, results from conversations with local Dominicans) and results from the asset-mapping exercise that complement your topic. Students are encouraged to select a topic relevant to their own career or personal interests. **The research paper itself is due in Moodle by Thursday, July 31, 2014.**

### **Trip Participation & Code of Conduct**

Students are expected to participate in all aspects of the trip including group visits, meetings and discussions, and attend all events outlined in the trip itinerary. Failure to participate in one or more of the outlined activities, including pre-trip readings may result in deductions to the overall course grade at the instructor's discretion. In addition, if any student engages in personal behaviour that is deemed to be detrimental to the group or contrary to code of conduct expectations, academic penalties may be applied including receiving a failed course grade.