ANTH 397.01, Service-Learning and Directed Research in The Gambia
St. Mary’s College PEACE program in The Gambia

Instructor of Record: Bill Roberts, director, PEACE program in The Gambia, wcroberts@smcm.edu

Fieldwork supervisor: Will vary from semester to semester

UTG/SMCM Academic liaison: Ansumana Darboe, Acting Director International Education, amldarboe@utg.edu.gm

UTG Faculty Associate:
Dr. Pierre Gomez, Acting Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, pgomez@utg.edu.gm

Coordinator:
Yamai Secka-Jack, PEACE program coordinator, yamayejack@yahoo.com

Description

The purpose of this course is to enable you to work with Gambians in areas of mutual interest by identifying a professional organization that works in an area that matches your academic or career interests. Once an organization has been identified and indicated their willingness to work with you during the semester, you will devote at least 6-8 hours per week applying and testing your knowledge, skills, energy and enthusiasm in a Gambian workplace environment. You will be challenged to use your language and intercultural skills in a Gambian workplace under the supervision of PEACE partners, including an on-site supervisor, who you will meet during or shortly after your orientation program.

The service-learning/directed research experience in The Gambia is an academic course intended to generate mutual benefits for everybody involved. For the student, it is an opportunity to apply your knowledge and skills in a professional setting and coordinate your efforts in cooperation with Gambians and others in ways that contribute to meeting the organization’s goals. In doing so, the student will benefit from knowledge and skills gained by meeting the new challenges from learning to work effectively in a Gambian workplace. These experiences should contribute to enabling the student to sharpen the focus of their academic, personal and professional aspirations for the future.

Required Reading

All students participating in the PEACE program in The Gambia are required to read the following books before arriving in The Gambia:

Spielman, Andrew and Michael D. Antonio 2001 Mosquito: a natural History of our Most Persistent and Deadly Foe.

NB – Required reading for the PEACE program changes from year to year, there will be new additions to the required reading list by spring 2012, mostly in the form of scholarly articles on Gambian languages, culture, history and politics.

In addition, students who wish to register for this course should also develop a preliminary bibliography of reading materials related to their service and research interests in The Gambia with the program director, Bill Roberts, prior to departure for The Gambia.

Once in The Gambia, students should browse the resources in the PEACE program office/library. Be sure to find and look through this small textbook:


*Doing Cultural Anthropology* provides good advice and examples for how to conduct ethnographic research, which helps all students learn about the culture and social organization of their workplace. Be sure to read the chapter on doing the ethnography of a workplace. There are other very useful chapters on participant-observation, life history, interviews, and so forth, that you can adapt to learn more, and more quickly, about the organization where you work and the people with whom you are working.

Finally, you are expected to identify and collect documents in The Gambia relevant to your research project. This includes annual reports, site visits, newsletters, webpages and other documents produced by or for the organization where you work. It also means making use of the electronic databases available through the University of The Gambia library (http://www.utg.edu.gm/download/UTGLibraryElectronicResourcesGuide.pdf). You should meet the UTG librarian, Ms. Isatou Sanyang-Njie, during your orientation or shortly after the semester begins.

Of course, one of the most exciting and interesting aspects of this course is collecting your own first-hand data, which will be the basis of your written paper or report on your experience.

**Grades**

Students are expected to devote at least 6-8 hours per week at their service site. This does not include additional time you might spend at the site for your own research, or when socializing with your colleagues from the work site.

There are two sets of papers required for this course. The first is a series of five reflection papers of approximately 750 words length each, which are due at specific times throughout the semester. The instructions for these papers are in a separate document. Although these papers are not graded *per se*, students will be assessed for turning the paper in on time, meeting the
length requirement, and the apparent effort in reflecting on the prompts. The reflection papers account for 25% of your final grade.

The research paper itself generally runs from 25 – 40 pages in length. The outline for the research paper is provided at the end of the syllabus. The research paper accounts for 50% of the final grade.

The final 25% of the grade is derived from meeting other requirements in a timely manner, including:

- writing a letter of introduction and resume for your service site before you leave for Gambia;
- submitting a preliminary bibliography for your project by your fourth week in country;
- completing and submitting your learning contract after you begin work at your service site;
- scheduling and meeting advising sessions with the program director by skype or with program faculty in The Gambia over the course of the semester;
- responding reasonably to constructive suggestions for your project from PEACE program staff supporting your service-learning/directed research project;
- gaining approval from the St. Mary’s College of Maryland Institutional Review Board (IRB) before you begin data collection for your research;
- submitting your paper outline and revised bibliography on time.

Summary of Grades

Reflection papers – 25%
Project requirements and participation – 25%
Research paper – 50%

Schedule

The majority of students who register for the service-learning/directed research course (ANTH 397.01) usually have a general idea, topic or area of interest they wish to learn more about while in The Gambia. You should discuss your ideas or topical areas of interest with program director Bill Roberts before you leave, and follow his suggestions for identifying preliminary sources for your bibliography that you can read before or while in Gambia.

You will also be expected to write a letter of introduction and resume before you leave for The Gambia that can be sent to an appropriate service-learning site(s) before your arrival. During the orientation period in The Gambia, efforts will be made to introduce you to people who you may work with over the course of the semester.
During the first month at your service-learning site, concentrate on trying to understand the structure and function (people, positions, and roles) of your workplace. Be sure to read the chapter on conducting a workplace ethnography in Michael Agrosino’s book, *Doing Cultural Anthropology*, a copy of which can be found in the office/library on Happy Camp’s ground floor. Think about what you can contribute to the workplace that will help meet specific goals of the organization. Of course you will be thinking about your research project, so that by the end of the first month, you should be able to write a description of a feasible research project with specific topics or questions relevant to your place of work and that might serve the interests of the organization. Your project and research methodology should be discussed with the PEACE program coordinator, a faculty member in Gambia (changes from semester to semester), and the program director Bill Roberts prior to its initiation.

You are required to write five reflective essays that respond to themes provided by the PEACE professor, Bill Roberts. You should turn essays in on time, with copies sent to Bill Roberts, Yamai Secka-Jack, the PEACE faculty member in country when applicable, Ansumana Darboe, and your academic advisor at your home institution.

A complete draft of your research paper is due prior to leaving Gambia. Generally, papers from service-learning and directed research projects run between 25 - 40 pages, double-spaced, in length.

**Due Dates**

Before departure submit letter of introduction and resume to Bill Roberts, and begin to collect a preliminary bibliography on the topic of interest.

**NB – specific due dates are provided on the syllabus for each semester, this is a generic syllabus.**

**First day of third week** – First reflection paper

**Weeks three – five** – settling into service-learning site, initial discussions with Yamai Secka-Jack, skype conferences with Bill Roberts

**First day of sixth week** – Second reflection paper

**Sixth and seventh weeks** – Complete learning contract and give original copies to Bill Roberts

**Last day of eighth week** – Third reflection paper

**Week nine** – Preliminary outline for research paper and updated bibliography

**Week eleven** – Fourth reflection paper

**Week twelve** – Preliminary draft of paper
Week thirteen – Fifth reflection paper

Week fourteen – Research papers and bibliography

Outline for Student Service-Learning/Directed Research Reports

Title Page
Name, date, ANTH 397

Table of Contents
Sections of your paper with page numbers, list of tables (tables should be numbered and titled), list of figures (maps, photographs, charts should all be numbered and have caption or title).

Abstract
250 word maximum, 4 key words that could be used for a subject index.

Introduction
This section should introduce the organization that you worked with over the semester and what the organization does. Describe how the organization’s work relates to the topic that is of particular interest to you. Also describe the academic and personal reasons you selected to work with this organization, and what your initial expectations were in terms of what you hoped to accomplish.

The introduction should contain a subsection in which you discuss any literature relevant to your topic, including any scholarly or popular literature (for example newspaper articles, websites or brochures about the topic or organization). This is to provide academic context for your own primary research.

Methodology
Describe the date you started working with the organization, how long you worked with them, and the approximate number or days and hours you spent there;

Describe your “average day” on site, and what you did to learn about and assist the organization;

Describe how you developed a focus or set of research questions for your project, and your approach to collecting information to answer the research questions or learn about the topic.

Results or Findings
Describe your findings on the topic of interest or specific research questions. This section might include photographs, tables, graphs, or quotes from individuals who helped you with your research project. Divide this section into a series of logically related themes or topics that help present the information you learned about the topic or research questions you formulated.

Discussion
What are the implications or what is the significance of your findings?
Do you think your findings will be useful to the organization with which you worked? In what way(s)?

In retrospect, was your service-learning/directed research project a success (be sure to state what your criteria are for a successful project)?

Discuss your plans to share your paper with those at the site where you worked.

Limitations
Identify and discuss the constraints you faced while completing your research project, and how these impacted your findings.

Discuss how your methods, sample, personal biases or other factors affect the extent to which you can generalize from your project findings.

Next Steps
Discuss how this experience has affected your future academic or career plans.

Would you recommend this organization as a future site for service-learning/directed research? Why or why not?

What suggestions do you have for the PEACE program staff or future students who might want to undertake a service-learning/directed research project with this organization that can make it a richer more rewarding experience?

Acknowledgements
A section that thanks the people and communities that helped with your experience(s) and project. Be sure to use correct spellings.

In this section, be sure to give the name(s) and contact information (phone numbers and email addresses) for those resource people who worked most closely with you.

Bibliography that includes Works Cited
Use American Anthropological Association format (the document will be made available to you, also see http://www.aaanet.org/publications/guidelines.cfm).

NB – Please make your papers as interesting and informative as possible – whenever possible I encourage you to use photographs or other figures to bring the paper and your experiences to life.