

DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

SYLLABUS

OT-GE 2171: Disability in a Global Context: Ghana

Accra, Ghana

Intersession, January 5-18, 2014

Accra, Ghana

3 Points

Anita Perr, MA OT, ATP, FAOTA

Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Occupational Therapy

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the implications of disability in global contexts with varying levels of industrialization. It examines how local civic and private sector arenas, including schools, hospitals, markets, or transportation systems affect the lives of people with disabilities. The students will explore and identify factors, which can influence a community's view of disability. Utilizes reflective teaching models and experiential learning. To enrich students' understandings of the impact of context, including enablers and barriers to participation in daily life especially for people with disabilities.

NYU students will learn traditional Ghanaian customs, traditions and lifestyles relative to health and disability. Students will learn about the arts and culture of Ghana. We will study the practices of the region and compare them with the practices and impact of disability in the US.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe life experiences of people living with disabilities;
2. Articulate the similarities/differences of assumptions of living in the US with a disability as compared with observations in Ghana e.g. address questions such as- "Is daily life of living with a disability in Ghana different from or the same as daily life with a disability in the US"?
3. Identify the principles, concepts and meaning of habilitation/rehabilitation;
4. Describe personal biases and methods to insure fair treatment and equality in clients and co-workers as well as explore reactions to the visit in Accra, Ghana

DISABILITY STATEMENT

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your coursework, please contact The Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities. They will work with you to determine what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. If your disability requires accommodation in Ghana or during travels, please discuss your needs early so arrangements can be made.

TEACHING & LEARNING EXPERIENCES

This course involves multiple experiences including class seminars, discussions with and presentations by local guest speakers, tours of medical and educational facilities, and visits to community gathering places including local neighborhoods and markets. Visits to historic sites are also incorporated including Elmina Castle (slave trading post). Through the use of in-class exercises, students are guided to explore environmental conditions, the prevalence of people with disabilities, and peoples' views of disabilities in Accra. Students are expected to be active listeners and participants in all course discussions and activities.

EVALUATION METHODS (including weight)

Paper: Impact of Culture on Health/Disability	50%
Journal	50% (Due - ongoing prior to and during the trip. The final entry is due Jan 25, 2014)
TOTAL:	100 %

Paper: Impact of Culture on Health/Disability: Students are required to reflectively examine their own beliefs as well as those of their families and cultural groups about health and disability. This course would culminate in evidence-based reflective paper that will compare and contrast the impact of culture on health and disability using the field observations in Ghana, course class discussions and required reading.

Journal: Students are required to document their trip. Students are recommended to set up a blog for their journal, but may choose to use either a blog or a wiki. Students may invite others, including family and friends to participate in or read the blog/wiki or they may keep the information private (although the professors will read entries). Entries can be any combination of media - text, photograph, video, sound. In addition to any topics the students choose to include in their journal, they must address the following:

- Reflection on disability/health in Ghana
- Response to field observations in facilities and within the community
- Reaction to cultural experiences in Ghana

Students are required to begin their journals prior to the trip. Document your experiences, expectations, and thoughts as you prepare for the trip and the course. Your reactions to Emmanuel's Gift and the book you choose to read should be included in your journal.

You are welcomed to continue your journal long after the trip but the assigned journal should include at least one entry after the completion of the course and include your reflections of leaving Accra and finishing the course.

Journal entries through Jan 25, 2014 will be reviewed as part of this assignment.

In order to prepare for the trip, students must complete the following assignments prior to the start of the course and reflect on them in their blog.

- **Watch** Emmanuel's Gift (BEFORE our class meeting in NYC)- on reserve in Avery Fisher Center, Bobst Library.
- **Read either** *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong child, her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures* **OR** *The Broken Cord*.
- **Go to** The Ghana Federation of Disability Website. Read through the content. URL is **<http://gfdgh.org/3.html>**
- **Try** the following to give you preliminary insight into disability
 - When walking through the NYU neighborhood and elsewhere in your travels in the metro area, make notes of the condition of road and sidewalk surfaces. For instance, does a scaffold block the curb ramp to the street? Are the potholes too big to roll a walker over? Do the restaurants you use have automatic doors, steps to get in, or wheelchair accessible bathrooms? Document your findings in your journal. Think about what life would be like in this neighborhood if you used a wheelchair.
 - Put two or three pairs of socks on your hands to remind you that you cannot move your fingers and you cannot feel the textures of the objects. In your apartment try getting a glass of water and drinking it (do not forget - you cannot use your thumbs!). Try going to the bathroom, what would it feel like if you had arthritis and your hands were very stiff and painful? What would it be like if you had MS and did not have any sensation in your hands?
- **Observe** life in three locations each for 20-30 minutes. What do you see? What type of people do you see? What are they doing? What are they doing that is common and expected? What is unusual? What is acceptable? What is unacceptable? What else can you say about them? Think about how you draw conclusions based on brief observations and how your observations may or may not be reflective of the lives of the people you observe.

REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS

CIRRIE Monograph Series: The Rehabilitation Provider's Guide to Cultures of the Foreign Born. There are eight monographs available. These monographs are available at the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE) at the University of Buffalo. All students are required to read the Muslim Perspective and two additional perspectives of their choice.

URL: <http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/monographs/index.html>

Summary of WHO Report on Disability

World Health Organization. (2011). WHO Report on Disability. Geneva, Switzerland: Author.
URL: http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/index.html
(Students are required to read the accessible summary report and look at the full report and find specific statistics on the prevalence of disability in Ghana.)

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED (fascinating but not required):

Mahama, J. D. (2012). *My first coup d'etat: And other true stories from the lost decades of Africa*. NY: Bloomsbury.
(This memoir, written by the current President of Ghana who took office in January, 2013, will help you develop a broad understanding of Ghanaian culture.)

READING LIST

- Fadiman, A. 1997. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Dorris, M. 1990. *The Broken Cord*. NY: HarperPerennial
- Kassah, AK. (2008, Mar). *Begging as work: A study of people with mobility difficulties in Accra, Ghana*. *Disability & Society*, Vol 23, issue 2, Mar 2008, p 163- 170.
- Linton, S. (1998). *Chapter 2: Reassigning meaning*. In *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and identity*. NY: NYU Press.
- Mji, G., Gcaza, S., Swartz, L., MacLachlan, M., & Hutton, B. (2011). An African way of networking around disability. *Disability and Society*, 26(3), 365-368.
- Reynolds, S. (2010). Disability culture in West Africa: Qualitative research indicating barriers and progress in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. *Occupational Therapy International*, 17, 198- 207.