

**Brock University, Faculty of Education**  
**F 22**  
**EDUC 4P36/5P98: Global Education – Field Experience: Guatemala**

**Instructor:** Dr. Michael O'Sullivan      **Email:** mosullivan@brocku.ca  
**Office:** WH 381      **Phone:** 905 688 5550 ext. 5345  
**Class time:** Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
**Dates of classes:** Jan. 13, Feb. 3, March 2, April 20  
**Class location:** WH 202  
**Office hours:** By appointment or after class.

---

**Calendar Description:**

Global issues (i.e., development, culture, gender, ecology, human rights, social justice) from the perspective of individuals within a particular geographical context.

**Extended Description:**

This course, and the particular field experience in Guatemala, will examine a number of issues that are simultaneously local and global. We will learn from Maya indigenous communities about their struggles to reclaim their culture after 500 years of colonialism and 36 years of genocidal civil war which took the lives of some 200,000 Maya and destroyed entire indigenous regions of the country. We will look at school settings in Maya communities as well as other forms of cultural transmission/recuperation, i.e., families, community groups, music, language acquisition.

**Specific Course Objectives:**

1. To expose student to the cultural richness of one of the few countries in the Americas in which 50% or more of the population are indigenous; and
2. To examine the impact of historic and ongoing models of colonialism and rampant racism directed at the Maya people of Guatemala; and
3. To come to appreciate the resilience and determination of the Maya peoples through the establishment of locally controlled primary, secondary or post-secondary institutions and how Maya informed curricula, often in contrast with that authorized by the Ministry of Education, is emerging and is an important tool in the process of cultural recuperation; and
4. To see the interplay between formal education initiatives and the often spontaneous cultural practices of Maya children, youth and young adults.

**Comment on Achieving These Objectives:**

This course quite possibly represents the first opportunity for the students enrolled in it to consider concepts such as colonialism, decoloniality and systemic racism. Clearly, with only 20 hours of class time prior to our trip and one class following the trip, this course must be

considered a very preliminary introduction to viewing the world through a post-colonial perspective. Some students will find the concepts compelling and may dig deeper in future courses or in extracurricular interests, others perhaps not so much. It is, however, highly likely that all participants will be moved by the field experience and impressed by the efforts of our hosts and by the people we meet to recapture and share the cultural values associated with their heritage.

### **Preparation for Each Class:**

Given that such a field experience, to be fully appreciated, requires as much preparation as possible, and considering that, in addition to “academic” preparation we will be using our pre-departure class time on practical issues related to the trip itself, students will be expected to come to class having viewed assigned videos (available on line) or having read assigned readings. This is necessary so that we have as much class time as possible available for the discussion of the issues raised in these materials and time to actually plan the trip.

### **Resources:**

#### **Videos:**

1. *Voice of a Mountain* (57 minutes). Watch and make journal reflections on this film for Class 1: *Voice of a Mountain*. Life after the 36-year civil war in Guatemala <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq7EDKgCZ-E> This 57 minute film speaks of the establishment of a Maya village in the late 1990s after the end of the civil war by people who had been affected by the war. It also puts the civil war and the current post conflict period into a historical context. To be viewed prior to class 1
2. *Mayan Renaissance* (59 minutes). Watch and make journal reflections on this film for class 2. (Watch Part 1 only). Deals with Maya struggles to be politically represented at the local and the national level. Begins with an overview of the achievements of the ancient Mayan society, references the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores and then focuses on Rigoberta Menchu, a Maya woman who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992 and ran for president on two occasions. To be viewed prior to class 2. <https://www.kanoy.com/en/brocku/video/79714/216535>
3. *Defensora* (40 minutes). Watch and make journal reflections on this film for class 2. This video deal with villagers who experienced extreme violence (murder, rape, permanent injury) at the hands of security officials of Canadian mining companies and their efforts, through a progressive group of lawyers in Toronto, to get Canadian courts to hear cases against criminal events perpetrated by Canadian mining companies in Guatemala because the local authorities and the courts won't prosecute those who are accused of these crimes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-1qQoUEeO8>
4. *Living the Language* (22 minutes). Watch and make journal reflections on this film for class 3 - *Living the Language: Guatemala. The Maya [Languages]* (22 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zn4ZtNdqY5M>

5. *The following short videos do raise issues but also give you images of Guatemalan Maya villages, homes and schools to help prepare you for what you will see once there and to prepare you, a bit, for the people with whom we will be inter-acting. View before class 1*

Education in Guatemala <https://youtu.be/DjxIRsJHSF0> (a 5 minute video on a Canadian supported school)

Bilingual education in Guatemala <https://youtu.be/uvLavr-D3Q> (a 3 minute video shot close to Lake Atitlan)

(Not) Going to School <https://youtu.be/ayTRujPD-14> (a 7 minute film on the issue of seeking to overcome the obstacles to school attendance for Mayan girls)

6. Death of a priest <http://crimedocumentary.com/father-stanley-rother-death-priest-1981/> (a 22 minutes about the murder of Fr Stanley Rowther in 1981 in Santiago de Atitlan, the parish priest. He was an American missionary priest in the Catholic church who was killed by a death squad for his charitable work with local parishioners. We will be visiting his church and the attached museum/memorial. Fr. Rowther is on the path to sainthood in the Catholic church). Watch prior to class 4.

## Readings

- Batz, G. (2018). The Ixil University and the Decolonization of Knowledge. Retrieved June 1, 2023 from [https://www.academia.edu/37715355/The Ixil University and the Decolonization of Knowledge](https://www.academia.edu/37715355/The_Ixil_University_and_the_Decolonization_of_Knowledge)
- Batz, G. (2023). Extractive Industries in Guatemala: Historic Maya Resistance Movements. Retrieved Oct. 13, 2023 from [file:///Users/mosullivan/Documents/Courses/Educ% 20P36% 20Spring% 202024/EDUC% 20P36% 20Spring% 202024/New% 20resources% 20for% 20the% 20class/Extractive% 20Industries% 20in% 20Guatemala:% 20Historic% 20Maya% 20Resistance% 20Movements% 207C% 20ReVista.html](file:///Users/mosullivan/Documents/Courses/Educ%20P36%20Spring%202024/EDUC%20P36%20Spring%202024/New%20resources%20for%20the%20class/Extractive%20Industries%20in%20Guatemala:%20Historic%20Maya%20Resistance%20Movements%207C%20ReVista.html)
- Böröcz, József, and Mahua Sarkar. "Colonialism." Encyclopedia of Global Studies. In Helmut K. Anheier, H.K., Juergensmeyer, M. & Faessel, V. (2012). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. pp 229-34. (5 pages). (QoSakai). Retrieved June 18, 2022 from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288839786 Colonialism](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288839786_Colonialism)
- Hallman, K., Peracca, S., Catino, J. & Ruiz, M. J. (2007). Assessing the multiple disadvantages of Mayan girls: The effects of gender, ethnicity, poverty, and residence on education in Guatemala. The Population Council. Retrieved June 18, 2022, from [www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/TABriefs/PGY\\_Brief16\\_Guatemala.pdf](http://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/TABriefs/PGY_Brief16_Guatemala.pdf) (available on line)
- Heidebrecht, L. & Balzer, G. (2018). Decolonial Experimentations in International Service-Learning Research: Learnings about reciprocity from Mayan Indigenous Host

Communities. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 26(1), 144 – 159. Retrieved June 10, 2022 from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-id?cc=mjcsloa;c=mjcsl;c=mjcsloa;idno=3239521.0026.109;rgn=main;view=text;xc=1;g=mjcslg>

Nolin, C. & Russell, G. (Eds.) (2021a). Canadian Mining in a Time of Violence, Corruption, and Impunity in the Aftermath of Genocides in Guatemala. In C. Nolin & G. Russell (Eds.). *Testimonio*. (pp. 1 – 13). Toronto. Between the Lines. Available on class site on Bright Space.

Nolin, C. & Russell, G. (Eds.) (2021b). Canadian Mining in a Time of Violence, Corruption, and Impunity in the Aftermath of Genocides in Guatemala. In C. Nolin & G. Russell (Eds.). *Testimonio*. (pp. 95 – 122). Toronto. Between the Lines. Available on class site on Bright Space.

O’Sullivan, M. (2008). Educational reform and democratic practices in Guatemala: Lessons learned from the communities in exile. *Revista Interamericana de Educación para la Democracia/Interamerican Journal of Education for Democracy*, 1(2), 167 – 184. <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/ried/article/view/131/217>

O’Sullivan, M. & Smaller, H. (2019). ISL Programs and Neo-Colonialism: The Response of One Nicaraguan Village. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 42(3). [file:///Users/mosullivan/Downloads/ojsadmin,+ed47-2-2%20\(2\).pdf](file:///Users/mosullivan/Downloads/ojsadmin,+ed47-2-2%20(2).pdf)

Rubin, B. C. (2016). “They Don’t Tell It”: Indigenous Social Studies Teachers Transforming Curricula in Post-conflict Guatemala. *Journal of International Social Studies*, 6(1). 114 – 127. <file:///Users/mosullivan/Downloads/theydonttellit2016internationalsocialstudiesjournal.pdf>

## Assignments:

**Journaling (Part 1: Pre-departure):** Prior to our departure on April 23, you will submit your predeparture journal (i.e., after class 4 so it is up to date but before we leave). It will be a reflective journal (not simply a summary of what you have read or viewed. In the first class we will have a session on writing a reflective journal). The journal will consist of your thoughts and learning from the videos and articles that we have viewed/read and the discussions we have had during the predeparture classes. It will also include reflections on your thinking/concerns about the trip as we prepare for it. This will be marked separately from the “in-country” journal. This section of the journal will be valued at 30% of your final grade.

**Journaling (Part 2: during and immediately following the field experience).** The journal will include your thoughts and learning acquired on the trip. It will be a reflective journal (not simply an account of what we did from day to day). As you will be strongly advised against taking a laptop to Guatemala, your journal will either be hand written each day we are in Guatemala or take the form of notes on your cell phone. Shortly after our return, you will hand in an edited word-processed reflective journal. You are encouraged to be as open and honest about the

experience as possible. This section of the journal will be valued at 40% of your final grade. Due date: two weeks following our last class.

**Final project:** Consult with the course instructor about what kind of final assignment you wish to produce. It can be a PPT, a video, a traditional essay, or creative art work. Due date: Same date as for the in country journal.

### **Class Schedule:**

In addition to the scholarly content of each class, time will be spent on a brief Spanish lesson, practical issues related to what to bring and what to expect once we are in Guatemala. To the extent necessary, we will also deal with any administrative matters associated with our travels.

Class 1 (Jan. 13): (a). **Prior to class 1**, view the video *Voice of a Mountain*. (57 minutes). Life after the 36 year war in Guatemala  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq7EDKgCZ-E> As you watch this film, take note of significant observations and be prepared to discuss them in class. This can take the form of the first page(s) of your journal.

(b). Also, **prior to class 1**, view the following short videos:

Education in Guatemala <https://youtu.be/DjxIRsJHSF0> (a 12 minute video on a Canadian supported school)

Bilingual education in Guatemala <https://youtu.be/uvLavr-D3Q> (a 3 minute video shot close to Lake Atitlan)

Take note of something in these films that strikes you as interesting or surprising, as perhaps being something that you'd like to know more about. Again, this can take the form of a journal entry.

Also, prior to class 1, read

(c). Rubin, B. C. (2016). "They Don't Tell It": Indigenous Social Studies Teachers Transforming Curricula in Post-conflict Guatemala. *Journal of International Social Studies*, 6(1). 114 – 127. (Sakai).

(d). Presentation by guest speaker(s) on reflective journal writing.

(e). Class discussion of the key points in the videos that you have viewed and the articles that you have read (e.g., *Voice of a Mountain*; O'Sullivan, 2008; Rubin (2016).

(f). Practical issues re: preparing for the trip.

Class 2 (Feb. 3) **Prior to class 2,**

(a) View *Mayan Renaissance*. (60 min). Deals with Maya struggles to be politically represented. Focuses on Rigoberta Menchu, a Maya woman who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992 and ran for president on two

occasions. As you watch this film, write down significant points and be prepared to discuss them in class. This can take the form of the entries in your journal.

- (b) View *Defensora* (40 minutes). Watch and make journal reflections on this film for class 2. This video deal with villagers who experienced extreme violence (murder, rape, permanent injury) at the hands of security officials of Canadian mining companies and their efforts, through a progressive group of lawyers in Toronto, to get Canadian courts to hear cases against criminal events perpetrated by Canadian mining companies in Guatemala because the local authorities and the courts won't prosecute those who are accused of these crimes.
- (c) Read: Böröcz, József, and Mahua Sarkar. "Colonialism." *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*. In Helmut K. Anheier, H.K., Juergensmeyer, M. & Faessel, V. (2012). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. pp 229-34. (5 pages). (Sakai). Retrieved July 18, 2018 from

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288839786\\_Colonialism](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288839786_Colonialism)

This article constitutes the framework of our discussion and experience. Colonialism both as an historical fact and the ongoing forms of 21<sup>st</sup> century colonialism will be the starting point of much of our learning in Guatemala. Again, make notes in your journal that reflect what you find interesting, noteworthy, or problematic in this article.

- (c) Read a brief 4-page article Assessing the multiple disadvantages of Mayan girls: The effects of gender, ethnicity, poverty, and residence on education in Guatemala. Retrieved June 3, 2023 from [https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1854&context=departments\\_sbsr-pgy](https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1854&context=departments_sbsr-pgy)
- (d) Class discussion of colonialism and the response to it by the Maya people (based on Böröcz & Sarkar, (2012); Rubin (2016); Mayan Renaissance).
- (e) Discussion of the situation facing Mayan girls
- (f) issues re: preparing for the trip.

Class 3 (Mar 3)

**Prior to class 3 read**

- (a) O'Sullivan, M. & Smaller, H. (2019). ISL Programs and Neo-Colonialism: The Response of One Nicaraguan Village. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 42(3). Retrieved June 5, 2022 from [file:///Users/mosullivan/Downloads/ojsadmin,+ed47-2-2%20\(2\).pdf](file:///Users/mosullivan/Downloads/ojsadmin,+ed47-2-2%20(2).pdf)

- (b) Heidebrecht, L. & Balzer, G. (2020). Decolonial Experimentations in International Service-Learning Research: Learnings about reciprocity from Mayan Indigenous Host Communities. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 26(1), 144 – 159. Retrieved June 10, 2022 from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?cc=mjcsloa;c=mjcsl;c=mjcsloa;idno=3239521.0026.109;rgn=main;view=text;xc=1;g=mjcslg>
- (c) Possible guest speaker: Dr. Spy Dénonmé -Welch: Guatemala through Anishinaabe eyes
- (d) Practical issues re: preparing for the trip.

Class 4 (April 20) **Prior to class 4**, read

- (a) Batz, G. (2018). The Ixil University and the Decolonization of Knowledge. Retrieved June 1, 2022 from [https://www.academia.edu/37715355/The\\_Ixil\\_University\\_and\\_the\\_Decolonization\\_of\\_Knowledge](https://www.academia.edu/37715355/The_Ixil_University_and_the_Decolonization_of_Knowledge)
- (b)
- (c) O’Sullivan, M. (2008). Educational reform and democratic practices in Guatemala: Lessons learned from the communities in exile. *Revista Interamericana de Educación para la Democracia/Interamerican Journal of Education for Democracy*, 1(2), 167 – 184. <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/ried/article/view/131/217>
- (d) Make journal entries, be prepared to discuss these issues in class;
- (e) Formal presentation (as required by Brock University) on travel issues. To be presented by Brock International or the FOE International Program staff.
- (e) Practical issues re: preparing for the trip.

Class 5 (TBA) This class, held about three weeks following our return from Guatemala will be devoted to sharing participant reflections on the trip. We will also be looking for guidance with respect to next year – what to keep, what to change. We could have this class on a Friday evening and turn the latter part of the evening into a despedida (a good-bye party).

### **Other Issues**

#### **Accommodations:**

“As part of Brock University’s commitment to a respectful work and learning environment, the University will make every reasonable effort to accommodate all members of the University

community with disabilities. If you require accommodations related to a permanent disability to participate in this course, you are encouraged to contact the Student Development Centre Services for Students with Disabilities (4<sup>th</sup> Floor Schmon Tower, ext. 3240) and also discuss these accommodation(s) with the professor/ instructor.”

## Academic Integrity

### 6.1 Academic Behaviour (Undergraduate and Graduate Students)

There is an expectation that all students shall act ethically and with integrity in academic matters and demonstrate behaviours that support the university’s academic values. These behaviours may include, but are not limited to:

1. Completing one’s own original work;
2. Asking for clarification to ensure an understanding of expectations;
3. Collaborating appropriately; and participating actively in group work situations;
4. Acknowledging the contribution of others (giving credit);
5. Ensuring one’s academic work is not used inappropriately by others (e.g., protecting access to computer files, research data or other academic work);
6. Acting ethically and with integrity while conducting research and in the reporting of research results;
7. Actively participating in the learning process; managing one’s time.
8. All Students are responsible for their behaviour and may face academic penalty under this policy should they engage in academically dishonest behaviours.

### Grading Criteria

<b>90 - 100 A+</b>	<b>80 - 89 A</b>
Exceptional paper in all respects Contains original creative thought Very well organized and expressed Sound critical evaluation Clear command of techniques and principles of the discipline Publishable Consistently exceeds expectations High level of synthesis New understandings Extension of content	Very good paper Well organized with few errors Shows clear understanding of concepts and evidence of critical thought Ability to discriminate and interpret relevant issues Analytic treatment of content Application of ideas Synthesis - able to make connections among disparate details or ideas Evaluation of ideas and content Manipulation and interpretation of data Concepts and understandings grounded in real applications
<b>75 - 79 B+</b>	<b>70 - 74 B</b>
Good paper Meets some of the above criteria	Adequate paper Constitutes baseline for graduate papers



Shows basic competence in synthesis and critical thinking Shows competent grasp of writing and reference styles Adheres to proper reference and grammatical styles Logically organized	Shows comprehension of course content and draws together information of the course in a coherent, understandable fashion Descriptive treatment of content Identification of key elements, recognition of basic facts, knowledge and recall Retrieval of information Grammatically correct writing Little integration of concepts
---	---

Expectations re: Pre-trip Journal (note written to 2019 students to clarify issues that arose about the pre-departure journals)

This, like the journal you will be doing in-country, is a reflective journal so, while it is impossible not to mention some factual details about what you viewed/read the main task is to comment on it, not repeat what is in the article or the film. What did you find interesting about the article/film; why did you find it interesting and/or how did you feel about it; what further details would you like; does this motivate you to find out more; and so on. These questions are just a guide so don't feel you have to follow them 1, 2, 3, 4. You might even want to say, hey, I didn't really like this article/film (and why) or I really liked it (and why).

The material you are viewing and reading is undoubtedly you first brush with Guatemala and are quite possibly a bit overwhelming: coming to understand that prejudice can convert a guerrilla war from one that has the restoration of democracy as its main focus to one that becomes a genocidal civil war; that entire villages were destroyed and, in many case, all their inhabitants from the youngest to the oldest were killed; and that 50% of the population can be rendered invisible by the national curriculum is far from the consciousness of most folks like us and thus becomes unimaginable. One issue that this brings to my mind is to what extent does our practice, both historically and currently, parallel the history of indigenous/non-indigenous people in Guatemala. This may or may not be a question you are currently in a position to address but it might well be one you keep in the back of your mind.

Remember, too, that going over films and journals is not the only thing we do in class – discussions about the preparation for the trip take place, you are getting to know new people and preparing for living with them at close quarters under particular circumstances; we will have guest speakers and fun and games. All of these can be commented on if you wish, some of them under the rubric of community building.

As for format – word processed and double spaced please – Times New Roman 12 is standard. Most students do a class-by-class commentary – as you become familiar with more literature and films you may want to start making references to something we have read or discussed in a previous class or something you have found on-line but the focus is on the materials we have gone over in class.

As for length – I'm not going to say no less than X words per class and no more than y. You might be able to deal with what we do in one class in a page or two or you might want to expand and take 3 or 4 pages – don't get too carried away – if each of you got overly loquacious and did five pages per class, I'd be facing 400 plus pages to read!! Please use your creative writing skills to express yourselves economically. The key isn't length, the key is your insights and commentary, your thoughts, and feelings.

Keep your journaling up to date. Our last class is April 20 and we leave 3 days after that. You need to do a section on that class. I will be asking you to submit your journals before you leave for the airport. Needless to say, I won't get to them until after the trip. .