Welcome! This is the syllabus for your Fall Semester preparatory seminar for the Winter Term class to Malawi, Africa. If you are interested in cross-cultural experiences, meeting students from another country, learning about strategies to address issues facing a developing country (and in a modest way contributing yourself), learning about how history affects the present day, or exploring wildlife, this is the course for you!

GST 297 is a Winter Term study abroad course to Malawi, Africa, which includes a service-learning project. The service learning project involves Elon students in leading peer literacy training sessions for students in a public K-8 school. Elon students will work with older children to teach them how to work with younger children in literacy instruction and support. Elon students will gain the experience for literacy training during the fall preparatory course. NO EDUCATION BACKGROUND OR EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE.

Through close interactions with our partners, and through contacts with school children and teachers, Elon students will develop an appreciation for the lifestyle in Malawi, for the concerns and aspirations of the Malawian people, and for the development successes, needs, and strategies in the country. The importance of education to development will be examined, and a historical perspective on development will be augmented with visits to various sites around the country. Students will also explore local culture, history, political history and structures, effects of tourism, and the role of NGO's in the developing world.

Malawi, “The Land of the Lake” is a small African country in the southeast part of the African continent. It is bordered on the west by Zambia and on the east and south by Mozambique. The northeast portion of the country is bordered by Tanzania. Few countries are so dominated by a single geographical feature as Malawi. Lake Malawi follows the dramatic contours of the Great Rift Valley for a distance of 585km and is up to 100km wide in parts. It covers more than 15% of Malawi’s surface area.

Malawi is also known as “the warm heart of Africa’ not only because of its climate and lush vegetation but the people of Malawi exude warmth and friendliness that might make you feel instantly at home. Some have even said that Malawi might be the most laid-back nation on Earth.  

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Quick facts about Malawi (http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/countries/malawi-facts/):
Population: 12,341,000
Capital: Lilongwe; 587,000
Area: 118,484 square kilometers (45,747 square miles)
Language: English, Chichewa
Religion: Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim
Currency: Malawian Kwacha
Life Expectancy: 39
GDP per Capita: U.S. $600
Literacy Percent: 63

ECONOMY
Industry: Tobacco, tea, sugar, sawmill products
Agriculture: Tobacco, sugarcane, cotton, tea; groundnuts; cattle
Exports: Tobacco, tea, sugar, cotton, coffee

Safety Concerns
The Global Education Centre actively follows the US State Department Travel advisory as it relates to traveling in Africa and advises the course instructors on appropriate actions in case of security incidents in the country. All participants in the course will be registered with the US consulate in Malawi.

Important dates
- Right away: apply for a passport if you do not have one or if you need to renew it. Your passport must be valid at least through August 2015. If you are not a US citizen, please talk to the instructors immediately
- September 8, 2014 – Deposit refund deadline
- September 29, 2014 - withdrawal deadline (written notification to IC-GEC)
- September 29, 2014: full payment deadline
- November TBA, McKinnon Hall - Travel Clinic- (vaccinations must be pre-ordered), This is very important if you wish to get vaccines while at school

STA 297, will meet on Mondays, 12:15 – 1:15, <room location TBD>
May MEETING: May 8, 2014, 4:00 – 5:00 PM Mooney 206

STA Course Goals
Academic Content
Students will:
- become familiar with Malawi geography, arts, history, politics, economics, health, environment and culture
- develop critical reflection skills and habits of mind
- become familiar with the ethnographic lens to inquiry as a way to organize, analyze, and communicate their understanding of the study abroad experience
- learn basic Chichewa vocabulary and everyday expressions
- develop familiarity with the peer to peer training model, specifically related to literacy development
Cultural Awareness
Students will:
- begin to develop an awareness of cultural context (including your own)

Personal Growth
Students will:
- begin to increase self-awareness through reflection
- display a sense of intellectual curiosity and a desire to learn and know
- develop interpersonal skills through interaction with the group
- begin to appreciate difference

Inquiry Learning
At the center of the course, students will use the ethnographic lens to inquire and examine the more subtle aspects of culture in Malawi. Questions, such as the following, might frame this unique experience:
- How do Malawians view the value of literacy? For whom?
- How do Malawians characterize their relationship with the land?
- How do Malawians describe their current (or evolving) culture?
- How do we, as developed western citizens fit into the bigger picture of this region? What are our responsibilities (if any) to regions similar to this?
- When is ‘helping’ helpful and when is it hurtful?
- How much is enough and what is considered enough for a “good life”?
- Your ideas?

Eligibility
A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 was required at the time of application. Students must remain in good academic standing prior to departure. If a student fails to do so, the GEC reserves the right to dismiss the student from the program. Please note that any student placed on preliminary suspension (or greater sanction) may not study abroad for one year from the date of the incident, even if the student has already been accepted into a program, and even if the deposit refund deadline has already passed.

Instructors for STA 297 in Fall 2014:

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Dr. Tomasek has worked with Elon students who engaged in an alternative break service learning experience to develop this course.
Course Readings, Selections from (not inclusive):
- Health and Disease in Malawi (Chapter 2)
The World Bank (2002) Voices of the Poor from Many Lands (Malawi).

Book Club (You will choose one of the following books to read):
[Michael L. Buckler draws readers into the challenging, yet rewarding world of the Peace Corps. Inspired by his journals, the book recounts his life as a Peace Corps teacher after a heartbreaking divorce and a demanding legal career prompted him to make a change. Assigned to a village school in Malawi, Buckler opens his tiny home to three boys, embarking with them on a journey of cross-cultural discovery, personal sacrifice, and transformative growth. Determined to help his village, Buckler collaborates with community leaders to build a boarding school for girls. As momentum builds, a powerful bureaucrat tries to shut down the project and Buckler becomes discouraged. As he agonizes over whether to leave, the village takes matters into its own hands in a moving display of the persistent, courageous spirit of Malawi.]
[Very Religious. Annie Chikhwaza grew up in Holland. In struggling to come to terms with her abuse as a child, she tried to commit suicide but was dramatically converted through the ministry of Brother Andrew. She then began to minister, first to the poor and marginalized on the streets of Amsterdam and then in the volatile townships of South Africa during the height of the apartheid era. She eventually moves to Malawi and begins to work with orphan children where she works to develop a large support center for them.]
Griffin & Block (2013). In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez. Orbiz Books.
[Religious aspects. In this book, chapters alternate between Paul Farmer (Partners in Health) and Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez (a Dominican theologian from Peru). Farmer has credited liberation theology as the inspiration for his effort to do social justice medicine, while Gutierrez has recognized Farmer's work as particularly compelling example of the option for the poor, and the impact that theology can have outside the church. This book is a mix of anthropology, sociology and theology.]
[This will be the common reading at Elon in 14-15. William Kamkwamba was born in Malawi, a country where magic ruled and modern science was mystery. It was also a land withered by drought and hunger. But William had read about windmills, and he dreamed of building one that would bring to his small village a set of luxuries that only 2 percent of Malawians could enjoy: electricity and running water. His neighbors called him misala—crazy—but William refused to let go of his dreams. With a small pile of once-forgotten science textbooks; some scrap metal, tractor
parts, and bicycle halves; and an armory of curiosity and determination, he embarked on a daring plan to forge an unlikely contraption and small miracle that would change the lives around him.


[This is a book of the stories of street children from all over the world and their own voices as collected by author David Maidment from many organisation members of the British charity, 'Consortium for Street Children'. It is not an academic book, nor a treatise for practitioners, but is a vivid account in a series of essays and stories of what it is like to be a street child in the 21st century in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and even in the United Kingdom.]


[This is a book about the birth and growth of Room to Read, an international nonprofit that builds libraries and stocks them with books. You will read about the growth of an NGO alongside the growth of school libraries around the world. If you think about it, where is literacy without a book to read! Read this book and find out what it means to be a GSD person.]

Other Resources to Consider


Ewert, A.W., Mitten, D. & Overholt, J. (2014). Natural Environments and Human Health


Useful Internet Resources


Grading Scheme & Assignment Descriptions

- Assigned readings/activities, seminar discussions, and short written responses (25%)
- Quizzes (25%)
- Guided reflective writing (20%)
- Research paper outline, annotated bibliography and meeting with professor (15%)
- Pre-departure goal setting assignment (15%)

Assigned readings/activities, seminar discussions (attendance), short written responses (25%)/Guided reflective writing (25%)

Attendance and participation in the pre-departure class is important for you to learn about Malawi as well as to come to know the others in our course. Readings to support participation will be located on Moodle (either eReserves or course documents). You should carefully and thoughtfully read each selection before attending class. Be prepared to address a writing prompt in class related to each reading assignment. You should be able to describe the main ideas from the reading as well as make a connection to previous learning/experiences or offer questions. The reflective writings will be read by an instructor and evaluated in the following manner:
**Assessment Rubric for Student Reflection/Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Levels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Reflection provides only a description or observation of the learning experience(s).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection demonstrates attempt to analyze the experience but analysis lacks sufficient depth or robustness; in other words, there is some analysis but it is superficial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection moves beyond simple description of the experience to a robust analysis of how the experience contributed to student understanding of self, others, and/or course concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth and Breadth</td>
<td>Reflection is superficial lacking both depth and breadth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is some depth or breadth but not both. The complexity of the issue is acknowledge but not described. Alternative points of view are lacking or superficial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are reasons behind conclusions. Questions the reasoning raises are anticipated and answered and/or describes complexity of the issue. Considers alternative points of view or how someone else might have interpreted the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>No attempt is made to demonstrate connections to previous learning or experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some attempt is made to demonstrate connections between the learning experience and previous other personal and/or learning experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection demonstrates connections between the experience and many other places including personal goals.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This is what we mean by **analysis**: to examine and then break down an experience to describe how that experience helped you ‘make meaning’. So we are not just looking for a description of what happened but also an explanation of what you learned about yourself, about others, or about course concepts. Or maybe the experience has left you with more questions (about yourself or about other)? Maybe the experience forced you to consider an aspect of yourself that before had been unexamined? Hopefully not, but maybe the experience left you completely dry, then explain why you think that happened and what you could do about making sure your next experience does not have the same outcome. Make inferences and use evidence from your experience to support your ‘new understanding’. Examine or reconcile any dissonance that arouse because of this experience.

This is what we mean by **depth and breadth**: You should be answering the question, “why is this so?”. What are some of the complexities here?, If you are stating a conclusion give your reasons for that conclusion. Would this look the same from the perspective of....? Is there another way to interpret what this means?

This is what we mean by **connections**: to make connections between or among your experiences in Malawi and (1) your life, (2) things you have read, (3) ideas/concepts you have learned or been exposed to in other course work or our own course work, and/or (4) the world (news, politics, etc).

In general, here is a good model to follow:

**Step 1: Gather Data from Experience**
- What did I observe in this experience and what were the key events and features?
- What did I observe about the physical surroundings, about my behavior/actions, and those of others?

**Step 2: Reflecting**
- How does this situation touch upon my own values or personal history?
- What emotions and thoughts does this experience trigger in me?
- What assumptions am I making about this situation or the people involved, including myself?
- What does this experience point out to me about my own attitudes, biases, or preferences?
• How do I evaluate my own effectiveness in this experience?
• What behaviors (both verbal and non-verbal) enhanced or diminished my effectiveness?

Step 3: Identifying Relevant Knowledge [you don’t need citations in your reflections but if you remember the name of an article/reading include it]
• What course work or reading have I done that is relevant to this experience?
• What principles, theories, skills, or information have I learned elsewhere which relates to this experience?
• How is the experience consistent or inconsistent with my academic knowledge?
• How does my academic knowledge help me to organize, understand, make sense of, or develop hypotheses about this experience?

Step 4: Articulating Learning [Major lessons you will take away from this experience (skills, knowledge, insights into self or others, deeper understanding of ethical principle or culture)]
• What are the major lessons learned?
• Did I meet course learning objectives (academic, cultural, personal growth)? Personal learning objectives?
• What did I learn about myself? About others? About the world around me?
• What knowledge, wisdom, or insights did I gain?
• What skills did I acquire?
• Why does this learning matter?

Step 5: Developing a plan (Now what?)
• Where do I go from here in my learning?
• What gaps do I recognize in my knowledge and skills?
• How might I modify my approach to similar experiences in the future?

Adapted from Pam Kiser’s Integrative Processing Model

Quizzes (25%)
Quizzes will be used to hold students accountable for assigned readings. They may be announced or unannounced. They may be short answer, essay or selected-response.

Research Project Outline, Annotated Bibliography and meeting with professor (please note various due dates- 15%)
The purpose of the paper is to help you prepare for traveling to Malawi and to help you develop a deeper understanding of a specific topic which you will share with the group in Malawi. Topic suggestions will be shared with the class. The final paper should be 5- singled spaced pages in 12 pt. font plus a bibliography page. Proper citation of all sources is required (Elon Honor Code applies). High quality, well-structured writing expected. Have a colleague proofread your paper.
• A two paragraph description of your research plans and a list of 3 referred sources will be due on October 6th.
• During the week of October 6th or 13th you will meet with one of the professors to discuss the direction of your research.
• An initial research outline and annotated bibliography (at least 3 refereed sources-you can also have additional web sources) will be due on November 3rd.
• The last page of your paper should have an additional section titled, “Inquiry in Malawi”. In this section provide one or two paragraphs on what you would like to investigate in Malawi related to your research. Describe how you plan to try to gather information. The final paper will be due on December 28, 2014 and will be part of your GST grade.
• You will need to bring a copy of your research paper to Malawi because you will be sharing your research with the class during class meetings in Malawi.
Pre-departure goal setting (15%)
After participation in the STA preparatory course, you should be well positioned to be thinking about your academic, cultural and personal goals for the winter term course. Please reflect on the feedback you have been given during the entire semester and review your personal reflections and assignments to develop three types of goals. First, what are your academic goals for the winter term course? In other words, what do you want to learn more about? (knowledge) AND what types of cognitive skills to you want to continue to develop? Second, what are your cultural awareness goals for the WT course? Third, what are your personal growth goals? This paper is due during the last class session.

Elon Honor Code
Elon’s honor pledge calls for a commitment to Elon’s shared values of Honesty, Integrity, Respect and Responsibility. To be clear about what constitutes violations of these values, students should be familiar with the Judicial Affairs policies in the student handbook, including violations outlined at http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/handbook/violations/default.xhtml.

Students with questions about the specific interpretation of these values and violations as they relate to this course should contact this instructor immediately. Violations in academic-related areas will be documented in an incident report which will be maintained in the Office of Student Conduct, and may result in a lowering of the course grade and/or failure of the course with an Honor Code F. Violations specifically covered by academic honor code policies include: plagiarism, cheating, lying, stealing and the facilitation of another’s dishonesty. Multiple violations will normally result in a student’s temporary suspension from the University.

Elon Writing Center
Elon’s Writing Center is staffed by trained peer-consultants who can help you with all of your writing projects (for any class or major and for any extracurricular, personal, or professional purposes), so take advantage of this excellent academic resource and include a visit to our Writing Center as part of your own writing process.

In one-on-one, .45 minute sessions, our consultants will work with you on any kind of writing (such as research or analysis papers, PowerPoint or poster presentations, resumes, or job applications) at any stage of the writing process (such as understanding an assignment; brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing; developing a research question or starting your research; or writing in-text citations and bibliographies/works cited). Through our “Librarian Connection” program, we can also introduce you to a librarian if you’d like additional research assistance.

The main Writing Center, located in 108 Belk Library, is open extensive hours:
M-Th 10am-10pm
Fri 10am-4pm
Sun 2pm-10pm

The Writing Center also staffs satellite Writing Centers in the Multicultural Center (Moseley 221-B) and in the Business School (see The Writing Center website for more details). If you have questions, please contact The Writing Center Director, Dr. Paula Rosinski, at prosinski@elon.edu or X5842. http://www.elon.edu/writingcenter

Religious Holidays Policies
In supporting religious diversity, Elon has a policy and procedures for students who wish to observe religious holidays that are in conflict with the academic calendar, allowing students an excused absence.
Students who wish to observe a holiday during the semester must complete the online Religious Observance Notification Form (RONF), available at the following website within the first two weeks of the semester. [http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/religious_life/ReligiousHolidays.xhtml](http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/religious_life/ReligiousHolidays.xhtml) This policy does not apply during the final examination period. Students are required to make prior arrangements with the instructor for completion of any work missed during the absence. Once the completed RONF is received, the Truitt Center will confirm the excused absence with notification to the instructor and the appropriate academic dean, along with a copy to the student. Students may contact the Truitt Center staff with any questions (336-278-7729).