
Welcome! This is the syllabus for your Winter Term course for International Service in 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 boarder 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.


- 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

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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.

GST 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
- use basic Chichewa vocabulary and everyday expressions
- understand the complex nature of international service learning

Cultural Awareness
Students will:
- Interact in whole and small groups with Malawians from a range of backgrounds
- Become acquainted with Malawi’s cuisine
- Critically evaluate your interactions with an array of local norms, customs and traditions
- Demonstrate a sensitivity to local norms and code of conduct
- Demonstrate flexibility and a growing ability to adjust successfully to the fluctuations in a developing country
- Reflect on the disparate individual realities that you will encounter as you make comparisons between different aspects of your lives and the lives of Malawians.
- Behave in a culturally sensitive/relevant manner in the service experience
- Recast familiar issues in light of the broader experience

Personal Growth
Students will:
- Become more self-aware
- Display a sense of intellectual curiosity and a desire to independently learn and know
- Develop interpersonal skills through interaction with the group
- Develop personal responsibility and self confidence
- Develop a sense of healthy risk taking and decision making in unfamiliar settings
- Develop tolerance for discomfort
- Become more open-minded and appreciative of differences

Service Project
We will be spending five (5) days in the Namasimba School in the village of Baluti. Ms. Lonelyn Nkhoma is the Principal. There are 3489 students in grades 1-8 (they call them standards not grades). There are 12 classrooms and 34 teachers. There are two sessions in the school day, 7:30-10:30 for 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7
standard students and 11:30-4:30 for 4, 5 and 8 standard students. There are about 200 children in a single classroom! This is a public city school in the Blantyre Urban District. Ms. Nkhoma identified literacy as one of their greatest challenges, mainly due to the large class sizes. Our service project will be to train older students in peer-assisted literacy strategies (PALS) (Fuchs, Fuchs, Kazdan, & Allen, 1999; Mathes & Babyak, 2001). We will teach the older children how to be peer tutors so that when we leave Blantyre these students will partner with younger students to share the same strategies. The PALS model is to have children working in pairs on reading activities intended to improve reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. The nature of the program is that paired students will read aloud, listen to their partner read, and provide feedback during various structured activities. Elon students will train the older students on how to teach the younger students to use the following learning strategies: passage reading with partners, paragraph “shrinking” (or describing the main idea), and prediction relay (predicting what is likely to happen next in the passage).

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?

Honor Code
Elon University’s Honor Code governs all of your conduct and academic work associated with this course. The Honor Code is grounded in four fundamental values: honesty, integrity, responsibility, and respect. In keeping with this Code, Elon students are expected to not cheat, plagiarize, steal, violate others’ property or facilitate others’ dishonesty. Students who are uncertain of the acceptability of their behaviors should consult in advance with the course instructor. The academic policies related to Elon’s Honor Code are posted on our Blackboard site under Syllabus & Policies, and students can learn more at http://www.elon.edu/honor where examples of potential violations are outlined along with possible sanctions. It is important that I communicate that I expect all work that you submit in this course to be wholly your own. I take the Honor Code very seriously and am committed to upholding its values.

In addition to this academic Honor Code statement your social conduct will be governed by the contours of the Social Honor Code statement which we composed collaboratively during our Fall STA preparatory course.

Instructors
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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 for Malawi**
Articles and book chapters will be assigned in Malawi. Hard copies of each will be provided to you in Malawi. Please bring a 3- ring binder (it is recommended that you bring the binder from the STA course including papers from the STA course) to keep your readings and reflections together. You should have about 75 sheets of blank notebook paper in the binder as well. A reading list will be provided at the end of the fall STA program.

**Course Reading for Post- return class session**

**Course Expectations**

**Before travel**
- Submit your research paper on Moodle by **December 28, 2014**. 10% per day late penalty.
  - Print a copy of your research paper and put it in your binder to bring to Malawi.

**During travel**
- All students lead a group discussion based on their research paper
- All students have a leadership role and contribute to the course organization and structure
- Active participation in discussions during daily class meetings, as well as appropriate, respectful and attentive conduct
- Guided reflection exercises
- Active and effective participation in the service project
- Safe, common sense behavior (keeping in mind that we’re in a different country with a different culture, we are an easy target for pick pockets, we live in a time of possible terrorist activities directed against American interests and we are subject to the laws of the country which we are visiting)
- Acting in a culturally sensitive manner
- Actively exploring and sharing findings with the group. Thinking how what you see is related to development in Malawi (directly or indirectly)
- Following the Elon Honor Code

In the past, in some study abroad courses, certain students have abused alcohol. Even though the legal drinking age is 18 in Malawi excessive drinking is not acceptable. It is against the law to disturb the peace. Excessive use of alcohol results in an inability to meaningfully participate in scheduled activities. It poses a risk to your own safety (be it through accidents or increased vulnerability), and to the safety of others. It also poses a risk to the integrity of the course as inappropriate student behavior may result in canceling of agreements with hotels, transportation companies, guides, guest lecturers, etc. The instructors must report all alcohol related incidents to the Isabella Cannon Global Education Center. The Center, in consultation with instructors, can bring the student back to the USA, resulting in an Honor Code violation, grade F for the course, and possible suspension from the University. By maintaining your registration in the course you are agreeing to abide by the Elon Honor Code, and understand that alcohol/drug abuse will not be tolerated.
After returning to Elon
- Final reflections \ assignments
- Participate in the group reunion: TBA
  - Read Culture at Work article before attending this class session
  - Share two of your favorite photos (send to your professors so we can put them in slide show). What is the cultural relevance of this photo? What cultural meaning does it have for you?

Grading Scheme & Assignment Descriptions
- Research Project (25%)
- Presentation based on research paper (10%)
- Quality of participation in course activities (15%)
- Readings and guided reflective writing (20%)
- Quality of leadership role & contribution to course organization and structure (10%)
- Final assignment (due February 10, 2015 on Moodle, 20%)

Research Project (please note various due dates)
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.

You will have prepared an initial outline of your research in the STA course and met with an instructor. You will have also completed an annotated bibliography. 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.

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.

Presentation based on research paper (various days while in Africa)
Each student will present their research to the class during a class meeting time in Africa. Topics will be schedule based on where we are in the course to more closely align the presentation with the current experience.

Quality of participation in course activities
See descriptions of course expectations during travel listed above.

Readings and guided reflective writing
Readings to support participation will be provided as hard copies during travel. You should carefully and thoughtfully read each selection before attending class meetings. Be prepared to address a writing prompt in class or out of 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, your current 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Reflection provides only a description or observation of the learning experience(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth and Breadth</td>
<td>Reflection is superficial lacking both depth and breadth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>No attempt is made to demonstrate connections to previous learning or experience.</td>
</tr>
</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

Quality of leadership role & contribution to course organization and structure
We will be using a functional leadership model for the winter term course. All students will select a leadership role and will be expected to work with other course members to support all aspects of the course. These roles will be discussed in the STA course and will be established before departure to Africa.

Final assignment (due February 10, 2015 on Moodle)
Refer back to your goals identified before departure. Address each goal and:
1. Provide evidence of your growth (or lack of growth) in each area. By evidence, we mean what thoughts, feelings or behaviors might indicate that you have grown in this area?
2. Give specific examples of how a reading/experience/conversation/etc. contributed to your growth in all areas.
3. How has this study abroad experience contributed to your professional growth? If it has not, what might we have done to help you reach professional goals with this experience?
4. As you keep thinking about your continued personal and professional growth, what might be a new set of academic, cultural awareness or personal growth goals you would have?
5. You identified a question in your research paper. What did you learn about your topic while in Malawi?
## Tentative Itinerary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Research Presentation at Class Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Jan. 3</td>
<td>Depart from US (likely on Ethiopian Airlines out of Washington, DC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun., Jan. 4</td>
<td>Arrive in Lilongwe, Malawi. Transfer to Gold Peacock Hotel (Full Board)</td>
<td>Malawian Government/Colonialism &amp; how it shaped Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Jan. 5</td>
<td>Visit with Kristof &amp; Stacia Nordin, lives in small village about 15 miles from Lilongwe. Their home is a permaculture Demonstration plot. Stacia has been working with the Ministry of Education on their school health &amp; nutrition (SHN) Programme; Lunch in Lilongwe; Afternoon City Tour including Banda Mausoleum and Central Market; Gold Peacock Hotel (Full Board)</td>
<td>NGOs in Malawi &amp; Africa/Reading for class prep: <em>Malawi and the Poverty Trap</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues., Jan. 6</td>
<td>Visit with Kristof &amp; Stacia Nordin, lives in small village about 15 miles from Lilongwe. Their home is a permaculture Demonstration plot. Stacia has been working with the Ministry of Education on their school health &amp; nutrition (SHN) Programme; Lunch in Lilongwe; Afternoon City Tour including Banda Mausoleum and Central Market; Gold Peacock Hotel (Full Board)</td>
<td>NGOs in Malawi &amp; Africa/Reading for class prep: <em>Malawi and the Poverty Trap</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed., Jan. 7</td>
<td>Transfer to the southern lakeshore area with stops at Mua Mission (Malawi’s only cultural museum) &amp; Dedza Rock Art Site; Breakfast and packed lunch included; dinner on your own; Fat Monkey’s Lodge, Cape Maclear, dorm-style rooms</td>
<td>Artsisans in Malawi: Music, Dance &amp; culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs., Jan. 8</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
<td>Cichlids/Food insecurity in Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri., Jan. 9</td>
<td>Boat trip Shire River. Transfer to Zomba, making connections at the Chancellor College, University of Malawi; Annie’s Lodge Near town center (breakfast only; lunch &amp; dinner on your own)</td>
<td>Tension between indigenous forests and agriculture/Reading for class prep: <em>The Collapse of Agriculture</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Jan. 10</td>
<td>Transfer to Liwonde Safari Camp. Sunset Game Drive; Mvuu Camp, ensuite tented chalet accommodation in Liwonde National Park. Full Board</td>
<td>Wildlife and Conservation in Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun., Jan. 11</td>
<td>Morning Game Drive; Mvuu Camp, Full Board</td>
<td>Ecotourism in Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Jan. 12</td>
<td>Boat trip Shire River. Transfer to Zomba, making connections at the Chancellor College, University of Malawi; Annie’s Lodge Near town center (breakfast only; lunch &amp; dinner on your own)</td>
<td>Tension between indigenous forests and agriculture/Reading for class prep: <em>The Collapse of Agriculture</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues., Jan. 13</td>
<td>Zomba; Annie’s Lodge (breakfast only; lunch and dinner on your own)</td>
<td>Blantyre &amp; Malawian Commerce/ Economic Growth in Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Jan. 14</td>
<td>Traveling through Thyolo to base of Mulanje Mountain</td>
<td>Likhubula CCAP House, Mulanje [situated just at the base of the mountain near to the Likhubula pools. Dorm style rooms]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs., Jan. 15</td>
<td>Tour of Tea Estates and Tea Factory; Thyolo/Muanje Forest Reserve; Likhubula CCAP House, Mulanje</td>
<td>Breakfast only included; lunch and dinner on your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri., Jan. 16</td>
<td>Day trip to Mulange Mountain, travel to Blantyre, Grace Bandawe Hotel</td>
<td>Breakfast and dinner provided; lunch on your own. late arrival into Blantyre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Jan. 17</td>
<td>City Tour (Blantyre) [Museum of Malawi], Meeting with AIDS group, Grace</td>
<td>Breakfast and dinner included; Lunch on your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun., Jan. 18</td>
<td>Meeting the children at Chimwimwe; Street Tour; Grace Bandawe Hotel</td>
<td>Breakfast and dinner included; Lunch on your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Jan. 19</td>
<td>Service Project</td>
<td>Breakfast and dinner included; Lunch on your own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues., Jan. 20</td>
<td>Service Project</td>
<td>Breakfast and dinner included; Lunch on your own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Jan. 21</td>
<td>Service Project</td>
<td>Breakfast and dinner included; Lunch on your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs., Jan. 22</td>
<td>Service Project</td>
<td>Breakfast and dinner included; Lunch on your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri., Jan. 23</td>
<td>Service Project</td>
<td>Breakfast and dinner included; Lunch on your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Jan. 24</td>
<td>Depart Blantyre, arriving in DC the next day</td>
<td>Breakfast only include, lunch and dinner on your own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun., Jan. 25</td>
<td>Arriving in Washington, DC around noon.</td>
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</table>