If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. 
But if you have come because your liberation is bound with mine, then let us work together. 
—Lila Watson, Aboriginal Australian

Course Description: This two-credit hour course allows participants in the December 2013 VIA programs in El Salvador, Colombia and domestic community partner sites to continue reflecting on their service immersion experiences. The class creates space for sustained inquiry into the conflicts and social justice issues that students encountered while they lived and worked in these communities. This course invites students to think about how help builds toward peace and integrate the lessons learned from the experience. This course is taught in partnership with University Ministry Vincentian Community Service Office. Through a collaborative model primarily based upon the Vincentians in Action themes of identity, vocation and social analysis, participants will develop practical outcomes based upon immersion experience, research and ongoing relationships with the Salvadoran, Colombian, and domestic community partners.

Following our January reunion, the students enrolled in this class meet for three additional sessions that will be three-hours each. This time will build upon the VIA reflections students experienced before and during immersions and create a space for students to continue to process your experience with the VIA community. This course fulfills two of four credits in PAX 250 that are required for a PAX major.

Objectives: Individuals successfully completing this course will accomplish several of the University Learning Goals & Outcomes (see “Learning Goals of DePaul University” p. 7 of this syllabus):
1) Students who participate in Vincentian Community Service Office (VCSO) programs will demonstrate their Vincentian responsibility in systemic change at individual, community, and global levels (ULG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
   ➢ Students who participate in fighting injustice (direct service, advocacy, activism) will acknowledge different approaches to systemic change and will articulate their role as Vincentians in Action/Vincentian responsibility.
2) Students who participate in Vincentian Community Service Office (VCSO) programs will articulate their own faith and/or spiritual growth in relationship to serving alongside the marginalized (ULG 3, 4, 5, 6).
3) Students who participate in VIA Common Learning and Formation will describe a connection between their lives and the Vincentian legacy (ULG 3, 5, 6).
4) Articulate concrete steps to integrating the experience of the Salvadoran & Colombian reality into everyday life and action (ULG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).
5) Learn a process of social analysis (ULG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).
6) Articulate through written and oral expression critical engagement with various perspectives from la realidad en El Salvador and Colombia (ULG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).
Course Texts:
El Salvador, Colombia, and Domestic Immersions – la realidad (reality)
Articles posted to D2L as PDFs or emailed
Other texts as necessary for projects
Recommended: Remaining Faithful: How Do I Keep My Experience Alive?

Grading:
First short paper (2 pages) 15%
Second short paper (2 pages) 15%
VIA Integration & Action Plan 20%
Research paper & Outline Presentation (6 pages) 30%
Class participation 20%

Assignments:
First short paper: A two-page paper on a person you met during the immersion experience. Choose someone you encountered who formed you as a Vincentian. If you have a photo of them, bring it in. In the paper, describe your encounter and describe the person in some detail, noting their background, personal characteristics, and activities (job, volunteer work, etc.). Discuss how you were formed as a Vincentian through this encounter - what did you learned about how to live out this mission. Consider this person’s role in social change and/or in your own transformation. As you write, draw on your memories, journal notes, what you learned about this person from your fellow students and any research materials that helped you to understand this person or their work.

Second short paper: A two-page paper on a sacred place you visited or event your group learned about during the immersion experience. Recall a place where you felt most fully alive, connected, or curious. Again, feel free to begin with a photo or sketch. How did this place or event help to deepen your reflection on the experience? What questions or concerns did it inspire? What do you feel you learned? How did it help you understand the context of your immersion location (neighborhood, city or country)? As above, this paper should include both description and reflection, and incorporate both your own observations and additional materials that you find relevant.

VIA Integration & Solidarity Plan: The journey of a service immersion experience just begins when returning home. Often, the hardest part of the experience is integrating the lessons learned and ways of living into one’s everyday reality. Creating space to listen to the call of the experience is critical. Students will create a Vincentian in Action integration and action plan that begins to name concrete ways to integrate the experience. This may include committing to spiritual practices, concrete action plans for integrating service and reflection into life, or ideas of how to engage in community. The plan will include concrete ways to celebrate, remember and honor those we witnessed in El Salvador, Colombia, or domestic immersion communities. The plan will also integrate awareness, dialogue, and solidarity into one’s daily life and vocation. Included in this plan may be drafting a personal mission statement. Concrete examples of specific actions are required.

Research Project: In consultation with me during our second session, identify a research topic that you would like to explore. If you wish, this paper can build on one of the two short papers. It should include a bibliography with at least five useful sources.

Your topic should allow you to deepen your understanding of the reality in one of the two countries or domestic immersion communities, including the reality of conflict and the process of peacemaking and/or an exploration of a pressing social justice issue. Apply the techniques of social analysis.
Explore the consequences of la realidad for the lives of our friends and partners in these communities. Sketch out an approach to healing and peace building that you find meritorious. This paper should demonstrate your research and writing skills.

**Class participation:** Class sessions will include both discussion of your experiences and discussion of our class readings. The final session will embrace a final class celebration with a presentation of final research paper outlines and VIA integration and action plans.

**Time Expectations and Thinking:**
Individuals are expected to spend two hours outside of each class session in preparation for class. This time includes reading, thinking, reflecting and writing. Taking time to think contributes a very important aspect of the learning process. Taking time to prepare better allows one to work both independently and cooperatively (see ULG 3). In line with the VIA philosophy there is the understanding that “Service without reflection is just work.” As Paulo Freire asserts, “Experience without reflection is not learning.”

**Syllabus Change:** This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be announced in class and/or posted on Desire 2 Learn.

**SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:** Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-1677 in Student Center #370, and/or The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. There are strong sanctions against plagiarism at DePaul. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course, formal notification of your college dean, and possible expulsion. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu) for further details.

**Course Outline**

**Session 1: Reunion Retreat: Where Are We Now?**

*Time to gather as a community, to enter into solitude, to celebrate and remember our experiences.*

**Session 2: Returning Home & Sharing Our Stories**

*Reflection upon the stages of returning home and remembering stories from the experience.*

**Assignments:**
- First short reflection paper due.
- Spend some time journaling with this prompt:
You Before and After - Lessons Learned: What are some of the lessons you learned about yourself and the world? How do you want to integrate that into your daily life? Do you notice any differences between how you were before or after your immersion experience? What is different? What is the same?

Session 3: Unpacking the Layers: Social Analysis & Social Change
Exploring the process of social analysis/circle of practice and begin to apply to the Salvadoran and Colombian context. Reflect upon the different roles of social change.

Assignments:
- Second reflection paper due
- Bring a recent article about a current event happening in El Salvador, Colombia, or your domestic immersion community that relates to something you learned about while there.
- Bring one or two ideas for the topic for your final research project
- Spend some time journaling with this prompt:

What social issues/concerns did you encounter? How do these social issues/concerns overlap with social issues/concerns locally? How do these social issues/concerns fit with your passions and interests as a person creating social change?

Reading:
- Social Analysis and Systemic Change (D2L)

Session 4: ¡Celebrar!
Each member of the class will give a 5 minute presentation based on their research paper outline and VIA Integration & Solidarity Plan. Included in the research presentation is a call to action for how we might respond to what you unpacked. We’ll finish the class and our experience together with a food and music! Your final research paper and finalized VIA Integration & Solidarity Plan is due one week after our final class meeting on D2L.

Some ideas about potential topics for your research paper – Colombia & El Salvador
(Note: Potential topics for domestic immersion participants will be explored in Session 2)
- Civil war (revolution, FMLN, FARC, death squads, military-oligarchy relations, etc.)
- Liberation theology, Oscar Romero, six Jesuit priests, Maryknoll nuns (what did they do, why did they do it?)
- Peace processes (truth commissions, purges, amnesties, retribution, prosecutions, reparations, historical memory)
- Human rights (human rights defenders, ombuds offices, women’s rights organizations, domestic violence, human trafficking)
- Social movements, political parties, elections, Mauricio Funes, Alvaro Uribe, Juan Manuel Santos
- Crime, policing, gangs, prisons, extortion, kidnapping
- US foreign policy, the Cold War, communism, drug war
- Environmental reality
- Emigration, displacement, refugees, deportation, TPS, remittances
- Free trade agreements, maquiladoras, labor rights, gold mining and environmental conflicts
- Socially responsible investments, ecotourism, alternative development, fair trade
Optional Readings that may be of interest:
- Leonel Narvaez *Political Culture of Forgiveness and Reconciliation*

Social Division, Revolution, the Cold War and its Legacies

Gold Mining in El Salvador
- *Like Water for Gold in El Salvador – The Nation*
- *First the Gold Rush, then the Lawyers*
- *Metals, Mining and Sustainable Development in Central America*
- *SHARE Anti-Mining Struggle*
  - Pacific Rim Mining Company Perspectives

Postwar Peace Agreements
- Marco Palacios, “A Historical Perspective on Counterinsurgency and the ‘War on Drugs’ in Colombia,” pp. 175-206 in Arnson; [PDF]

Drugs, Gangs, and (In)Security
- Matthew Bristow, “Colombia’s cocaine trail,” *Guardian*, February 16-18, 2010
  - Part 2: The labs
El Salvador Suggested Readings

Articles:
- Brackley, Dean, *Remembering the UCA martyrs: Ten Years Later*, Conversations, Fall 1999.
- Brackley, Dean. *Meeting the Victims: Falling in Love*
- Brackley, Dean. *El Salvador After the War: An Interview with Dean Brackley*
- Illich, Ivan, “To Hell with Good Intentions,” *National Society for Internships and Experiential Education*.
- Steves, Rick, “Resurrection in El Salvador, 2005,”

Movies, Films and Documentaries


*Romero*: Los Angeles, Calif.: Vidmark Entertainment/Paulist Pictures 1990.


*Voces Inocentes*, 2004

Suggested Books

- Benitez, Sandra, *The Weight of All Things*, 2002. [Thought these are fiction they offer a really good picture of what life during the war may have been like].
- Brackly, Dean, *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times: New Perspectives on the Transformative Wisdom of Ignatius of Loyola*
- Danner, Mark, *The Massacre at El Mozote: A Parable of the Cold War*, Random House: New York, New York and Toronto, 1994 (The chapter that describes the type of violence suffered by the people there is a powerful example of what the times were like.)
• Noonan, Judith. *The Same Fate as the Poor*. Orbis Books. 1995.
• Sobrino, John. *Witnesses to the Kingdom: The Martyrs of El Salvador and the Crucified*
• Brackley, Dean. *The University and Its Martyrs: Hope from Central America*. Centro
• Art at the Chapel of Archbishop Romero in the UCA: A protest against death, A plea for
  o life. May 2005
• El Salvador: A Spring Whose Waters Never Run Dry. UCA, 1990
• On your Own in El Salvador, 2001 (Travel Guidebook).

**Recommended Reading from Past Immersion Participants**

• William Blum's *Killing Hope* book series is good as far as U.S. involvement in El Salvador though it is a little liberal with accusations - but good as far as representing different types of literature.
• Hershberger, Laura. 2010. Laura Hershberger to the General Public. SHARE Foundation. [http://share-elsalvador.org/wp-content/uploads/Churchwomen-30th-Anniversary-Commemoration-Packet.pdf](http://share-elsalvador.org/wp-content/uploads/Churchwomen-30th-Anniversary-Commemoration-Packet.pdf) - This is a link to the pdf. The first page is a letter of address commemorating the work of the four US Churchwomen - who are often untaught when it comes to the civil war.

**Websites with additional resources:**

**Romero Trust**: Includes all of Romero’s homilies and writings

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**University Learning Goals and Outcomes**

**Goal 1: Mastery of Content**: This goal embraces the breadth and depth of ideas, theories, approaches, and information which DePaul students encounter through and beyond their studies. **Outcomes**: DePaul graduates will demonstrate and be able to apply: general knowledge of cultures, religions, science, the arts, history, and computational reasoning specialized knowledge and skills from within a specific discipline or field.

**Goal 2: Intellectual and Creative Skills** In order to fully engage with knowledge, whether for a specific purpose or for its own sake, DePaul students are encouraged to develop the ability to think critically and imaginatively, formulate their own understanding, and effectively communicate their ideas. This goal articulates specific skills that comprise these broader abilities. **Outcomes**: DePaul graduates will be able to: systematically access, analyze and evaluate information and ideas from multiple sources in order to identify underlying assumptions, and formulate conclusions; solve quantitative problems; create and support arguments using a variety of approaches; use existing knowledge to generate and synthesize ideas in original ways; communicate clearly in speech and writing.

**Goal 3: Personal and Social Responsibility** This goal honors the notion that knowledge reflects and contributes to the values of individuals and communities. DePaul students, in particular, are challenged to
consider their own values in light of the university’s mission. **Outcomes:** DePaul graduates will be able to: articulate their own beliefs and convictions, as well as others’, beliefs, about what it means to be human and to create a just society; articulate what is entailed in becoming a self-directed ethical decision-maker and living a life of personal integrity; evaluate ethical issues from multiple perspectives and employ those considerations to chart coherent and justifiable courses of action; benefit their communities through socially responsible engagement and leadership.

**Goal 4: Intercultural and Global Understanding**  This goal speaks to the likelihood that, in our diverse and increasingly interdependent world, the future depends on individuals being able to learn from each other and make the best use of finite resources. **Outcomes:** DePaul graduates will demonstrate: respect for and learning from the perspectives of others different from themselves; knowledge of global interconnectedness and interdependencies; knowledge to become a steward of global resources for a sustainable future.

**Goal 5: Integration of Learning**  Given the wide range of opportunities for learning at DePaul, it is important for students to develop the ability to consider relationships among individual experiences of learning so as to make meaning of their education in all its variety. **Outcomes:** DePaul graduates will be able to: relate their learning -- curricular and co-curricular -- to multiple fields and realms of experience; make connections among ideas and experiences in order to synthesize and transfer learning to daily practice; design, develop, and execute a significant intellectual project.

**Goal 6: Preparation for Career and Beyond**  This final learning goal builds on all the rest and calls on students to be ready to apply their knowledge and skills to the changing world that awaits them. **Outcomes:** DePaul graduates will be able to effectively: set goals for future work that are the result of realistic self-appraisal and reflection; articulate their skills and knowledge and represent themselves to external audiences; work toward goals independently and in collaboration with others; employ technology to create, communicate, and synthesize ideas; set priorities and allocate resources; apply strategies for a practice of life-long learning.