



ICP Project : Liberation Psychologies
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Project Overview

A new upper division psychology course called “Liberation Psychology” will be offered at LMU during Spring 2011. The course includes an “alternative break” research experience in Nicaragua. This is a discipline-based course that connects strongly to the mission of the university. Students have the opportunity to apply their training to the “gritty reality” of the world, and to reflect on their vocation in this context.

Details

- This subfield of psychology was founded by Ignacio Martin-Baró, S.J., chair of the Department of Psychology at the University of Central America (UCA) in El Salvador at the time he was killed in 1989.
- Martin-Baró’s translated work, “Writings for a Liberation Psychology” is one of the texts for the course.
- For the research project, LMU psychology undergraduates will work with their counterparts at the University of Central America (UCA) in Managua on social justice issues related to children/adolescents (e.g., HIV, neglect, violence, prostitution).

Indicators of Success

- During registration, the cap for the course had to be lifted from 15 students to 20 students due to higher-than-expected demand, despite the additional cost of the alternative break trip.
- LMU is providing scholarship support for students who could not otherwise afford to take the class.

Challenges

- The course requires a lab fee of about \$1500 to cover the cost of the trip, which is a significant additional expense for students, in addition to their regular tuition.
- To ensure equity in access for students, the university committed substantial resources towards scholarship assistance for students needing aid to participate. The university also picked up the travel cost for two faculty leaders. Total commitment about \$10,000.
- Had to create infrastructure as we created the course, laying out processes for providing financial assistance, coordinating travel, and working out project details with three organizations (Center for Global Education, LMU, and UCA-Managua).