

Pachaysana's SPRING 2021 Virtual Study Abroad Program: "From the Cracks"

Course Descriptions

Each course is an upper level 3-credit course. Credit and official transcripts are provided by Juniata College (PA)

Methodology-Focused Courses

Notes: 1) These courses are 70% synchronous and 30% asynchronous. 2) Asynchronous time may include two or three times during which participants are asked to work with small groups according to a schedule that best fits the participants' needs. 3) Teaching methods carefully monitor our developing relationship with the challenging themes, always seeking a balance between "intimacy" and "distance" and leaving space and time for processing and reflection. Trigger warnings are made when appropriate and participants are allowed and encouraged to take personal time or request alternate assignments when they feel it is necessary or beneficial.

Theatre for Social Change

This course is designed to lead international students and their community counterparts through the process of creating social change by practicing social change. Using exercises and activities that pull from the areas of Theatre of the Oppressed and Performance Activism, as well as traditional theatre tools such as movement and mask-making, we engage challenging concepts and conflicts by dialoguing via our performative work. Our exploration stretches from the theoretical foundations of structural & symbolic oppression to ongoing real-life events related to themes that are selected by the course participants (examples include: cultural identity, systemic racism, privilege, power, environmental justice and gender equality/equity). Each course participant chooses a thematic area and joins a small group with which they will apply learned methods to exploring their theme. Together, international students with local counterparts create short virtual theatrical projects to be presented to the whole cohort. Readings cover theory and methods in Applied Theatre, community-based case studies and articles related to the chosen themes. The readings are contextualized to the diverse lived realities of the course's participants as well as to our globalized society. The course concludes with final presentations, which can optionally be shared with the home communities of the local Ecuadorian participants.

Storying and Re-storying (Storytelling for Social Change)

When we consciously appropriate the power of stories to collectively reimagine our world, we turn the word story into a verb. We "story" our world. When our "storying" seeks to transform a system founded on unjust stories, we are "re-storying" our world. This course begins with our human ability, and need, to tell stories, examining how we use them for communication, as well as how we become empowered or disenfranchised by them. Based on the realities present in our communities (our local community of place, college campuses, cities, neighborhoods, spiritual communities, etc.), students work with their counterparts, combining theory with practice, to create and tell stories with the goal of identifying shared conflicts and inspiring change. Since stories are told in many ways, the course engages the "telling" through various methods: writing stories and poems, Spoken Word, coloring/drawing, mapmaking and moving our bodies. In each project, we implement the elements of storytelling, balancing distinct narrative traditions, such as myth and legend, with influences of the modern world. Readings look at a wide array of narrative theory and methods, focusing on storytelling as a form of creating and expressing knowledge. The course concludes with the interweaving of local and international stories into "our stories."

Content-Focused Courses

Notes: 1) The courses are 50% synchronous and 50% asynchronous. 2) Asynchronous time includes following lesson plans created by community-based educators from frontlines communities in Ecuador. 3) While the courses are delivered in English, they are co-designed between Pachaysana faculty and the local community-based educators. (Community-based educators include artists, organizers, activists and farmers.)

Identity and “Pacha” (Land-Based Knowledge and Re-imagining Community)

Pacha is a Kichwa word that is usually interpreted as “earth,” and *Pachamama* as “mother earth.” However, those translations come from a limited epistemological framework. According to indigenous Andean scholars, *Pacha* refers to the time-space continuum, or as the “everything around and inside us.” This course asks students to challenge their identities by broadening their epistemological and ontological lenses to see their individual and collective lives as they relate to *Pacha*. To synthesize this complicated process, we ask participants to examine who they are as related to the ever-changing ecology in which they live. For this course, ecology is approached broadly, referring to the Greek origin on the word, *oikos*, meaning *home*. We take advantage of our virtual exchange and examine *home* as an interconnection of how we relate to “place” and “space,” exploring our ecology is the triad of our immediate territory (*llakta* in Kichwa), our surrounding natural environment (*allpa* in Kichwa), and our global and pluriversal space (*pacha*). Throughout the course, we use an interdisciplinary lens to examine “who we are” as related to this diverse understanding of ecology, taking into consideration that our ever-changing environment includes an ever-changing human story. Readings are transdisciplinary, coming from the fields of Anthropology, Sociology, Human Geography, Gender Studies, Ethnic Studies, History, the Arts and Development Studies. Toward the end of the course, after examining certain theories and case studies, we will imagine the reconstruction of our identities contextualized to *pacha*, space, place, ecology, *oikos* and home.

Critical Interculturality and “Decolonizing” Education

An ever-growing number of students, scholars and activists criticize our educational institutions for upholding colonial structures, and via numerous movements are calling for “decolonization.” Any effort to decolonize our education must go well beyond the content of what we teach in the classroom. In addition to what we are learning, we must explore how we learn, where we learn and with whom we learn. We also must think about what “decolonization” means, taking into consideration the lands on which our campuses and communities are located. This course address decolonization through the lens of critical interculturality, referring to Catherine Walsh’s critique of multiculturalism as functional or relational interculturality. Bringing in readings from Indigenous and Latin American scholars and taking part in workshops facilitated by local Ecuadorian community members, we will use interactive methods to explore some of the most challenging concepts related to decolonization, including “Decolonization is not a Metaphor,” Epistemic Justice, Border Thinking and Embodied Methodologies. Those concepts will then be examined with regards to the realities on our college campuses and our communities, and we will begin to dream about moving from the “functional” to the “critical.” By the end of the course, informed by the readings and interactions with community-based educators in Ecuador, students will formulate clear questions and identify potential strategies for applying critical interculturality at their college campuses.

Independent Study

This optional course can be completed as an internship practicum, independent research project or independent creative project. The independent study can focus on almost any area in the social sciences, education, humanities and arts, including projects in the Applied Arts. In most cases, but not all, the student's advisor/evaluator is one of the two Pachaysana academic coordinators. In other cases, a part-time faculty member serves as the advisor/evaluator or the class can be taken in coordination with the student's home university, and Pachaysana shares advising responsibilities with a faculty member from the home university. The coordinators are qualified to evaluate in the areas of Sociology, Political Science, Education, Development Studies, Gender Studies, Ethnic Studies, Cultural Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, Spanish, Social Innovation, Humanities, and the Fine & Performing Arts, as well as several other areas. The internship and/or research project includes completing contact hours with the hosting organization (or documenting time spent in a research log), regular meetings with the adviser/evaluator and maintaining a reflective journal, which includes a final analytical component. (Virtual internships are offered for a select number of students.) The creative project uses a similar approach, however the final product can be a one of many options including but not limited to a collection of poetry, an extended monologue, a written short play, a choreographed dance, a series of visual artwork, etc.