Consciousness, Culture, and Community in Bali, Indonesia

January ("J") Term 2018

The Course will be divided into three parts. Attendance is mandatory for all three parts.

**Part One: “Preparation”**

Class November 10, 2017…6:30-9:30pm
Class December 1, 2017…6:30-9:30pm

**Part Two: “The Bali Experience”**

“Participation” including daily classes
January 1—January 12, 2018

**Part Three: “Yeasting”**

“Yeasting”…Reflection on experiences

Final paper due March 16 and final class March 23, 2018
At the Osgood’s home

**Credits:** 3 Credits - HLTH 108

**Prerequisites:** Instructor Permission (Please call or e-mail the Osgood’s at (802) 999-8310 or dosgood@uvm.edu

**Instructors:** Carla Osgood EdD and David Osgood Ed.D, M.P.H

**Target Audience:** Graduate & Undergraduate students, professionals, and other individuals interested in participating in a transformative travel opportunity.

**Maximum Enrollment:** 12
Overview

This course will provide opportunities to develop intercultural communication skills including cultural awareness, cultural adaptation, cultural empathy and non-evaluative listening. In addition students will have opportunities to develop skills in the domain of consciousness or transcultural communication. Some of these skills include: being fully present, reflective awareness, tolerance for ambiguity and not knowing, tolerance for different perspectives, holding multiple perspectives, and meditative and altered states of consciousness.

We will form a learning community with working guidelines. This community will operate within the larger Balinese community which will allow students 1) to become more at ease with the intercultural and transcultural skills, 2) to deepen their sense of community, and, 3) to learn how to balance their own needs with the needs of others. There will be numerous opportunities for students to interface with Balinese families, teachers and traditional healers.

Our home base will be in Tebesaya, a quiet, traditional, Community banjar close to Ubud. Accommodation will be in Balinese ‘home stays’ permitting close contact with extended families including the full range of generations from babies to grandparents. In this community, where the arts are important primary or secondary activities, participants can feel connected to how the Balinese approach daily life at work and relaxation, socially, organizationally, and ritually.

After we have settled in Tebesaya for a few days, we will travel to the Nirarta Center (www.awareness-bali.com) which is in the rice fields and green hills of rural east Bali. There we will take time for meditation and reflection recognizing the rural roots of the Balinese way.

We will:
* Consider some of the key frames that shape Balinese holism, as we explore the emergence of polarities, their resolution, and integration
* Encounter the spirit of Balinese prayer and offerings, with an opportunity to create the latter
* Enjoy a visit to, and blessings from, a high priest in the village
* Possibly see village weaving, a local school, and
* Visit a Balinese master healer with an opportunity to observe and experience his work.
Balinese psychiatrist, healer, and activist, Prof. Luh Ketut Suryani will join us with her rich experience combining both traditional and contemporary approaches to what she calls bio-psycho-socio-cultural-spiritual well being.

**Why Bali?**
It is easy to assume that our own cultural biases are universal. Even when we recognize that cultural conditioning is relative, we may be unaware of how our usual context is skewing our interaction with the world.

Western education and thinking tends to emphasize the rational mind. Categorization, analyzing and splitting, are prominent elements in the foreground of our awareness.

In contrast, Balinese tradition, as with many Asian societies, tends to emphasize feeling, intuition, relationship, sensitivity to background context, complexity, balance, and a capacity to embrace change, while maintaining its core. In Bali the arts, healing, spirituality, and community are interwoven in daily life in a way that is unique in the modern world.

The Balinese perspective provides a compelling contrast to our own, but one that is complementary, with profound implications for the maintenance of individual and collective well-being and the resolution of imbalances in our societies.

Our time in Bali will test and refine our assumptions, not just as an interesting cultural backdrop, but also as a profound difference through which we can probe deeper dimensions of well being and inter-being.

**SEMINAR OBJECTIVES:**
1. To develop intercultural communication skills
2. To develop transcultural communication skills
3. To deepen understanding of the physical, mental, spiritual, and social health challenges of the Balinese people.
Working Guidelines for Our Learning Community

1. We will work on non-evaluative listening, suspending judgment, categorization, and labeling.

   This process can be particularly challenging because our minds hear ideas, perspectives, and feelings different from our own. The mind then tends to evaluate the new, incoming data in terms of ‘how is that like my thought?’ or ‘how is that unlike my thought?’ The mind wants to immediately label, categorize and analyze the new data. Non-evaluative listening requires two responses, 1) acknowledgment of what the mind is wanting to do, and, 2) suspending that tendency. Instead the challenge is to be fully present, deepening our capacity to observe. After observation and pause there will be ample time to allow our cognitive processes to engage.

2. We will be present for all group meetings. If for some reason we need to be absent we will communicate that to the group

   Once the group has come together, each person will be aware of each member of the group. Even one person will be missed. In fact the group will function as a kind of small learning community. The expectation is that the community members will maximize their learning through their commitment and responsiveness to one another. In other words, much of the learning happens in relationship with others.

3. All sharing within the group that is of a confidential nature will remain within the group.

   With this agreement members of the community can feel safe to share. With this feeling of emotional safety comes an increased willingness to explore parts of oneself that otherwise might be over-looked.
4. We will work on asking for what we want and need from the group.

At times members of the group may have difficulty being in the group. At this time it is important that problems get communicated. Needs can then be articulated and solutions explored.

5. We will work on speaking from our own experience honoring our own perspectives, feelings, thoughts, values, and attitudes.

Often in our everyday lives we are challenged to focus on events in the external world. In this group there will be ample opportunity for participants to reflect on inner process as well. This paves the way for our inner clarity to impact and inform our choices in the external world.

Implicit in these working guidelines is a respect for the evolving awareness of each member of the group. Also, implicit in these guidelines is the knowledge that each of us will take full responsibility for our own learning and simultaneously support the learning of our fellow group members.

Requirements

Class participation: We invite students to enter into all class activities with a spirit of openness and flexibility, and, with a tolerance for ambiguity. We expect students to attend all class activities and to work in a collaborative way with their teachers and fellow students.

Required Reading

1. The Balinese People by Luh Ketut Suryani & Gordon Jensen
   Chapters 1, 2, 8, 9
2. Trance and Possession in Bali: by Luh Ketut Suryani & Gordon Jensen
   Chapters 3, 5, 6, 8
3. Practicing the Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle
4. Basic Concepts of intercultural Communication
   edited by Milton Bennett
“Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective”  
by Milton Bennett pp. 1-34  
“Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication:”  
by LaRay M. Barna pp. 173-190  
“Overcoming the Golden Rule: Sympathy and Empathy”  
by Milton Bennett pp. 191-214  
5. *Vagabonding* by Rolf Potts

**Required Writing**

**Daily Journal:** You will write daily in a journal about your own processes as you feel your way into contact with values, attitudes, and feelings that are different than your own. Part of this process will mean that you will track your own experiences, specifically clarifying your own feelings, attitudes, values, perceptions, and stumbling blocks as they emerge. The other part of the process will have to do with how well you think you are doing with understanding from a Balinese perspective. *This journal will be your primary resource for writing your final thesis*

**Possible Questions for students’ journal writing:**

1. *What was the challenge today? Was it or is it a new challenge for me?*  
2. *As I reflect on my experiences today am I being invited to let go of anything?*  
3. *Do my experiences of this day invite me to open to anything new or to add something to my life?*  
4. *Is there anything in my daily experience that is remaining in place or remaining the same over time.*
Preparation Questions Due Nov. 10, 2017

Because we want you to become acquainted with how Balinese understand themselves and their own ways of seeing and being, we would like you to read chapters from The Balinese People (Chapters 1, 2, 8, 9) & Trance & Possession in Bali (Chapters 3, 5, 6, 8) both written by Luh Ketut Suryani, a Balinese healer and psychiatrist, & Gordon Jensen

1. How do you think participation in Balinese ceremonies might help Westerners open to how Balinese understand the universe?
2. From your reading how do you think Balinese might understand or experience illness in ways different from our own?
3. How might you know if you are in or entering a meditative or trance state?
4. In developing relationships with Balinese people why might it be important to know the ways in which the Balinese experience and express emotions?

Rolph Potts in his book Vagabonding has shared many of his insights and suggestions about traveling with cultural awareness.

5. In his chapter “Meet Your Neighbors” what are six ways he suggests you might try to connect and/or interact with your host family and with your neighbors?

Preparation Questions Due Dec. 1, 2017

1. Larry Barna refers to six stumbling blocks in intercultural communication (p. 173 Basic Concepts). Can you give examples of how these stumbling blocks manifest in your daily life here in the U.S.?
2. Think of a person who has a communication style (p. 20 Basic Concepts) different from your own. Can you articulate what it is that is most problematic in your communication with that person?
3. As human beings we are almost continuously experiencing some kind of change. Frequently we are in some stage of transition. What are some of the clues that tell us that we are entering into or in fact within some phase of learning or some stage of transition.
4. What kind of perspective is required if one is to operate from ‘the Platinum Rule instead of the Golden Rule’?
Final Paper
We expect you to write a twenty page thesis that will chronicle your personal experiences that address the course objectives. **First**, recall personal experiences that occurred before, during, and after the immersion period that contributed to your understanding of the Balinese people, particularly Balinese ways of understanding their lives and the universe. Such writing might require you to revive course readings, conversations and/or other activities that illuminated Balinese epistemology. **Next**, describe how you were able to apply the intercultural communication skills, articulating the situations or events which stimulated the use of the skills. Speak to the insights and challenges both intra-personally and interpersonally that emerged while applying these skills. Describe how the use of these skills impacted your communication both with your fellow students and with the Balinese people. **Third**, describe your participation in ceremonies and community and illustrate how these activities impacted your cultural awareness. **We must receive this paper by March 16th, 2018.**

Evaluation

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Journal Writing &amp; Questions</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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Class Schedule

Nov. 10, 2018 6:30-9:30p.m.
Introduction of members of the learning community
Guidelines for the Learning Community
An Overview of the Program: the expectations of the course, i.e. the reading assignments, the written work, and, class participation
Presentation and Practice of Non-evaluative Listening

Dec. 1, 2017 6:30-9:30p.m.
Orientation: What to Bring
The Bali Itinerary
Balinese Etiquette
More practice in Non-evaluative Listening

January 1, 2018—January 12, 2018 Classes will meet each day for about one and a half hours. We will use class time to process experiences and work on developing the communication skills that enable intercultural communication.

March 23, 2018 ... 6:30-9:30p.m.
One month of ‘yeasting’ – sharing your experiences of reentry
Sharing your experiences of writing from your own experience
A discussion of new meanings
Continued learning in intercultural and transcultural communication