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Conference



Katherine Borland
Associate Professor of
Comparative Studies
The Ohio State University

Good Works in Central America: Interrogating North American Voluntary Service

Thursday, May 3 - Friday, May 4, 2012
Mershon Center for International Security Studies
1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

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Keynote presentation by Father Fernando Cardenal

"Priest in the Revolution: A Lifetime of Service to Youth in Poverty"

Thursday, May 3

4:30 - 6 p.m.

Open Forum on International Service

Friday, May 4

2 - 5 p.m.

We invite students, faculty and staff contemplating or experienced in international volunteering to contribute their insights and uncertainties to our conversation. Beginning with a "thought experiment" on hosting and volunteering, we will facilitate an open discussion/reflection on concepts of dependency, sustainability, risk, cross-class and cross-cultural interactions, and empowerment.

Organizers

[Katherine Borland](#), Associate Professor of Comparative Studies at The Ohio State University

*Please register for the keynote presentation by visiting [Eventbrite](#).
To RSVP for the conference, email Kyle McCray at mcclay.44@osu.edu*

Overview

Short-term delegations to Central America for the purpose of providing material aid, assisting with grassroots development, or offering direct service have proliferated in the last four decades.

This conference critically examines travel-for-service and the micro-politics of encounters between privileged visitors (professionals, politically motivated groups, service-learning programs) and impoverished third-world communities they visit, as well as the larger implications of poverty relief efforts organized outside of and sometimes in opposition to existing national and international institutions. Such projects promise solutions to seemingly entrenched problems in poorer nations through virtuous vigorous action. Yet in actuality, the dynamics of cosmopolitan interaction are complex.

This conference will provide an opportunity for students and faculty interested or already engaged in international service to reflect upon their motives, practices, and experiences and to consider not only their immediate accomplishments but the longer-term implications of the kind of citizen-diplomacy they aspire to enact.

The keynote speaker, Nicaragua's Father Fernando Cardenal, has committed his life to direct service to the poor within the framework of a religious vocation and training, more specifically, liberation theology. In 1980, he directed Nicaragua's National Literacy Crusade, an internationally acclaimed voluntary effort to teach reading and writing to rural and underserved populations, organized through the revolutionary state as a nationalist project.

The academic speakers come from a variety of positions within the university but share a concern for reflection and the identification of "best practices." They have all either volunteered with or facilitated volunteer missions/delegations.

Program

Thursday, May 3, 2012

9 a.m. -- Katherine Borland (Comparative Studies, Ohio State),

Welcome: A Social History of International Volunteering in Central America

9:50 a.m. -- Steven Jones (Civic Engagement, U of Scranton), *Service as Praxis: Integrating Service Learning with Study Abroad*

10:40 a.m. -- Walter Hull (Medicine, Ohio State), *Medical Missions: Embracing the Public Health Challenge*

11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. -- Lunch Break

1 p.m. -- Irene King (Center for Social Justice, Villanova University), *Alternative Spring Break*

1:50 p.m. -- Abigail Adams (Anthropology, Central Connecticut State), *Voluntary Mission as Pilgrimage*

2:40 p.m. -- Closing Remarks

3-4:30 p.m. -- Break

4:30-6 p.m. -- Father Fernando Cardenal, *Priest in the Revolution: A Lifetime of Service to Youth in Poverty*

Friday, May 4, 2012

9 a.m. -- William Westerman (American Folklife Center Green Fellow), *Hospitality and the Fabric of Solidarity: The Lessons of Sanctuary*

9:50 a.m. -- Ellen Moodie (Anthropology, U of Illinois), *Untellable Stories and the Limits of Solidarity in a Sister Community Relationship in El Salvador*

10:40 a.m. -- David Muñoz (Engineering, Colorado School of Mines), *Seeking Community; Colinas de Suiza, Honduras*

11:30 a.m. -- Jefferson Boyer (Anthropology, Appalachian State), *International students and volunteers amidst rising violence: challenges from Honduras*

12:20-2 p.m. -- Lunch

2-5 p.m. -- Open Forum on International Volunteering

5 p.m. -- Dinner and conversation

Sponsors

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