Overview

Although it takes time and effort to make your global health experience a success, the rewards are invaluable. Participation in N489 is a life changing event—something you will carry with you throughout your life. The skills you gain will greatly support any area of nursing that you choose. Since 2008, students have traveled to every corner of the world in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the southern Pacific and Europe.

Course Description

Practice in global health care settings is the course focus. Students participate in a reflective experience that provides the context to integrate classroom and experiential learning into an evolving professional identity.

Course Objectives

1. Provide patient or community centered care, demonstrating integration of basic and specialty knowledge and skills, with attention to cultural influences and the life experience of a diverse population.

2. Explain the roles and functions of the health care team within the context of the global health care setting with a particular focus on how the professional nurse interacts as a member of the team.

3. Develop interpersonal and interdisciplinary relationships that foster team work and communication between all members of the healthcare team and the patient and their family.

4. Describe the development of a professional identity focusing on the actions observed, the actions taken, and the interactions engaged in as you provide care in your setting.

5. Analyze use of self in selected interactions, exploring how a proactive approach, goals, self-management, interpersonal relationships, communication, and cooperation influence your achievement of desired outcomes in the selected setting.

6. Demonstrate application of informatics competencies through an in-depth analysis of the principles of process improvement or to a selected patient care or health systems issue.
Planning Your Experience

Length of time in-country has ranged from 15 days to 10 weeks. You are required to complete 84 hours in a clinical/health care setting. To accomplish that goal, it is recommended that you plan to be in-country for a minimum of 15 days. A shorter period of time may be feasible if you are working long hours each day. The course is designed in 3 modular units: Module 1 Pre-Travel, Module 2 In-Country and Module 3 Post-Travel. There is a required text book with readings that complement the assignments, including a review of health literature, group forums and a final reflective paper.

Be aware that Health & Safety compliance and course requirements require a great deal of up front work.

Students traveling during the summer may not depart the US until after May 25 and must return to the US by August 10-unless given prior approval by the course coordinator. Generally, travel at any time during June and July works well. Even if you plan to work in a hospital in the US for part of the summer, you must register for N489 instead of N487. To be clear: if you make ANY plans to volunteer in a health care setting abroad while identified as a UNC nursing student you MUST register for N489. All Module I course assignments must be completed at least one week in advance of departure, Module II while you are in-country and Module III, including the final reflective paper, within three weeks of leaving your clinical site. Mandatory course orientation (in May) and a wrap-up session (day before fall semester starts) in August are the only face-to-face meetings.

If you are traveling over winter break, travel plans should be finalized before fall break, compliance with OSA must be completed by November 1st and the Module I course assignments must be completed by December 1st. The course will remain open throughout fall semester. All course assignments must be completed before the first day of spring semester classes. Mandatory orientation and a wrap up session (TBD) are the only face-to-face meetings.

Choosing a Destination

Some students travel with UNC based organizations such as with Atlantis Project, Carolina for Kibera or UNC’s Malawi Project. Some students travel through SON faculty contacts. Watch for announcements about current opportunities. Other students travel through organizations specifically developed to support student travel abroad, such as International Service Learning (ISL), International Volunteer Headquarters (IVHQ) and Work the World (WTW). A list of groups such as these is updated each year by the Health Sciences Library and is included in the SON’s summer work experience site. Some students travel through personal contacts or their churches. However, do not try to develop an experience independently through a large hospital, university or school of nursing. We have found that direct contact with large governmental agencies- at a personal level- doesn’t work. Prior attempts have led to disappointment and last minute change of plans for students. Unless you are a very experienced global traveler, your safest and surest option is to choose one of the opportunities offered by VHQ or WTW; or a SON faculty supported arrangement.
Planning your summer global health experience should be based on two primary considerations: 1. the situation provides a good learning experience to meet course objectives and 2. your safety.

Students work as volunteers in hospitals, community health centers and with community based organizations such as orphanages, training programs for midwives, or faith based health and education centers. We ask that you identify a nurse who can serve as a mentor and help facilitate your experience. But you don’t have to work alongside a nurse 24/7. For the purposes of N489, you must complete 84 hours in your chosen site or be in-country for a minimum of 10 days. Your in-country supervisor will sign a Verification form confirming completion of the experience.

**Communicating with your Host Organization**

A document titled *Statement of Purpose* can be found at the SON’s summer experience site. A Spanish version is also available. It is printed on UNC SON letterhead and can be used to help explain the rationale of the experience to an organization with whom you are negotiating for your experience. Be sure to let your host organization know that you are covered for medical insurance, travel insurance (including emergency evacuation) and liability (malpractice) insurance. Also let them know that you are in compliance with all CDC requirements regarding vaccines, and that you have completed special health and safety training (OSHA) regarding protection against blood borne pathogens, TB control and prevention of HIV exposure. Finally, reassure them that you are solely responsible for all financial costs of the trip and that as the host organization, they bear no financial responsibility.

**Financial Support for Your Global Experience**

The UNC Global Education Center and the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship websites provide information about funding sources for travel abroad. The SON provides funding as well and information about the application process goes out early each spring. Students have received funding from their local churches or community groups, such as the Rotary Club and others have received significant donations from family and friends. Don’t feel apologetic about asking for funds to support your travel. The global experience represents a professional development strategy that will have a significant impact on your future nursing practice as you provide care to a very diverse population in North Carolina.

**Health and Safety Compliance**

Review the US State Department’s website early in the process [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov). If your country of choice appears on the State Department’s travel advisory or travel warning lists, get in touch with Bev Foster and/or Kathy Moore (OSA) immediately to make sure UNC hasn’t put a hold on travel to that country.

Once you’ve identified the country to which you will travel, check the State Department and CDC websites for health and safety information [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov). Also check the SON’s HSR website for clinical compliance requirements for NURS 489. **ALL students who elect to participate in N489 MUST have documentation of having had Hepatitis A vaccine, be up to date with all vaccines required by the**
SON-plus TB tests and OSHA/HIPAA training. They must also provide additional documentation of having consulted with a health care provider and received vaccines specific to the country of travel. An appointment with Kathy Moore in OSA must be made well in advance of departure to be checked off on all pre-travel requirements, purchase of UNC travel insurance and sign UNC’s Release to Hold Harmless (mooreka@email.unc.edu).

Planning and Information Sessions

Each fall, Dr. Foster holds a required general information session regarding both N487 (US based work experience) and N489 (Global experience). Optional information and planning sessions will also be held monthly specific to N489. Information about these sessions will go out via email. Orientation to the course will be held at the end of the semester prior to travel. Do NOT make plans for departure until you know the date of this meeting. A wrap up session is also held just before classes resume in the semester following travel. These are the only face to face course meetings. Otherwise, all course assignments are completed online.

Bev Foster, course faculty, is available for consultation by appointment: Bev_Foster@unc.edu

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