

## **Gender Analysis for Winter Session Travel Courses**

Developed in Women, Gender, and Health 207:  
Advanced Topics in Women, Gender, and Health  
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### Public Health Skill:

Global health cultural competency for students.

### Appropriate HSPH Course:

International travel courses during the winter session (J term) Including GHP 296 Nepal, GHP 297 Chile, GHP 542 Brazil, GHP 543 Middle East, GHP 544 Mexico, GHP 547 Maternal Health.

### Background:

The HSPH winter travel courses are an important learning experience for many students and provides them the opportunity to participate in global research, fieldwork, or classwork. As these students enter countries all across the world, they are rarely prepared or trained for how their identity might fit into the community they will engage with and how that might impact them and their learning experience. The experiences that faculty members have collaborating with researchers globally doesn't always reflect the experiences that students have in this scenario, and students would benefit from additional training on how to navigate these new settings. Equipping faculty with a tool to help provide this additional support to students could help close this preparation gap. The purpose of this teaching example is to provide the space for discussions in the Winter session travel courses that address challenges women and other minority groups might face as they enter uniquely different social systems and potentially more restrictive gender norms and hierarchies. Furthermore, this teaching activity could help students build awareness that might prevent potential harms to communities, in addition to the students entering these communities.

### Rationale:

Multiple students have previously expressed facing challenges due to their identity when going on short global research/travel experiences that they felt they were not adequately prepared for, and this teaching example hopes to address this.

### Learning Objectives:

- To encourage students to consider how their identities are constructed by social contexts, and how changing that context may affect the way they are perceived & treated.
- To give students an opportunity to critically examine how their gender identity may affect their research or fieldwork in the country they will be traveling to.

- To illuminate how privilege operates to normalize some identities over others.
- Provide students with guidance on how to prepare for an unfamiliar social context.
- To help students learn about the cultural context they will be entering

### Teaching Methods:

- Discuss the purpose of the activity with students:
  - The purpose of this activity is to recognize that you will be working in a cultural context with which you are unfamiliar. Your identity is unique, and thus we recognize your identity will impact your experience as you do research/fieldwork in a community.
- Identity activity (included in appendix)
  - Give students 5 minutes to silently complete the Identity Wheel.
  - Disclosure: Participation is completely voluntary.
- Discussion questions: (20 minutes)
  - Discussion questions should be broad enough that students can opt to not talk about more vulnerable aspects of their identities while still leaving space for them to share if they wish.
    - Which aspects of your identity do you think the most/least about?
    - Which identities give you power or privilege?
    - How might these identities intersect and impact your experience of power or privilege? For example, how does your gender identity interact with these other identities?
    - Which identities will have the greatest effect on how others perceive you in the country you are traveling to? How might intersectionality affect this?
    - How do you think people in the countries/communities you are traveling to will perceive these aspects of your identity?
    - How often do you think about your gender identity? How do you think your gender identity may affect your research/fieldwork in the country you're traveling to?
    - How might you learn more about the perceptions and beliefs of people in the countries/communities you are traveling to?
    - How do you think your identity will affect your research/fieldwork?
- Introduce homework assignment: a complement to identity wheel activity
  - With the wheel, students are able to visualize their identities and how these may interact in the context and society of where they currently live in the United States. The discussion of this with other students will help them become more aware of how these identities operate for different individuals- and can help them become more cognizant of aspects of their identity that they may have not thought much about before.
  - After this discussion, we introduce students to the reality that this cultural context may look different in another country and that the mechanisms of how their identities operate in the US may not look the same wherever they're going and they will need to prepare for a context that may look different.

- The homework assignment is a mini literature review activity where students gather information about the country/area they will be traveling to.
  - Purpose: Give students a better sense of the contextual conditions (e.g political, social, gender, cultural, religious, racial, etc dimensions)- so that they understand how their identities in the US, particularly gender, translate to this different context. At the end of this assignment, students should be equipped with a heightened level of cultural awareness- in terms of social hierarchies and norms- as they prepare for their travel. This awareness will help students attain a level of “cultural humility” in their approach to their work.
- Follow up with students once they are on the ground (optional)
  - Ask students: Is there any way we can support you in your current situation?