

First-Year Florida Teaching Guide for Mountains Beyond Mountains

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Value of College

- MBM: During his first semester in college, Farmer did not get A's. How did Farmer's background affect his transition into college? (explore his sense of "home," encountering wealth, joining an "all-white" fraternity, getting away from his father whom he desperately tried to please p. 55)
- Application: How has your background influenced your transition to college? In what ways have you found or are you finding help with your transition? What differences/similarities have you found between college and your home environment?
- MBM: Farmer was often criticized for creating a healthcare system in Cange that was not replicable, specifically due to his spending, free services, personal attention to patients, and holistic approach. How do you think Farmer's values influenced his decision to continue these costly forms of treatment? (Explore his belief in social justice, America's contribution to Haiti's poverty, how poverty could be solved if the wealth was re-distributed, all suffering is not equal, liberation theology)
- Application: How do your values influence your decision to come to college or how you spend your time while in college (i.e. values of education, family, faith, social justice, taking care your whole self)?

Finding Your Path



- MBM: What values did Paul Farmer learn while at Duke? (explore philosophy learned from Virchow, majored in medical anthropology, interest in Haitian culture pp. 60-63)
- Application: Who or what has influenced your major? What experiences have influenced your personal philosophy and/or career goals?
- MBM: What influenced Farmer's decision to study abroad in Paris and also become active in migrant labor issues for local farm workers? How did these experiences affect his career goals? (Explore Farmer's quote about not being outraged by what was going on in the world, just curious because he believed the truth about what was going on in the world lay hidden from most Americans. See page 62-63) How does this play into his understanding of global issues?
- Application: Are you interested in studying abroad? What experiences might influence your decision to study abroad? What issues are you passionate about and why? Do you feel that the truth of what is going on in the world is hidden from you? Why or why not? Are there parts of our world that you feel unexposed to? Where do you get your information about "the truth" of what is going on in the world? How would you evaluate those sources of information?
- MBM: What sacrifices has Farmer made to pursue his goals? Do you think the sacrifices are worth it? (Explore Farmer's loss of relationship with Ophelia Dahl, leaving his family in Paris, commitment to global issues v. Cange, personal health and safety).
- Application: What sacrifices have you made to pursue your academic, personal, and professional goals? What sacrifices are you willing to make for your goals? How do you prioritize your values when you are considering what to sacrifice? Have other people in your life made sacrifices to make college (or other experiences) possible for you? How does this influence the way you think about making sacrifices for others?

Identity and Relationships



- MBM: Farmer emphasized the belief that “the only nation is humanity.” If Farmer does, in fact, identify as a human first, how does this influence his relationships to his family, friends, lovers, work? How does this influence his interaction with the people of Haiti?
- Application: Do you agree with Farmer that the “only nation is humanity?” Why or why not? How does your identity influence your interactions with friends, family, lovers, and/or personal and professional aspirations?
- MBM: Farmer identified first as a Catholic, but his social activism changed his views from Catholicism to Liberation Theology because in liberation theology he found a call for immediate action in this lifetime as opposed to the idea of seeking happiness in the afterlife. Also he believed faith was important because it was so important to the poor. Do you agree?
- Application: Is faith important to you? Why or why not? Have your experiences changed your faith? How so? Have you been exposed to other peoples’ faith traditions? What might you gain from such an experience?
- MBM: The people of Haiti believed that sorcery was the cause of Tuberculosis. Farmer and others believed that most voodoo rituals which have been seen as grotesque by the outside world are healing ceremonies developed as an important response to the lack of proper medical care. One woman in the book told Paul Farmer that Haitian beliefs were “complex” in that many Haitians believed in both sorcery and science (medical care). Do you think someone can believe in both science and religion? What other complexities do you see in identity playing out in the book (i.e. Paul as Father, Husband, Friend, Doctor, Scholar, Teacher, American, and “blan”)?
- Application: What are some ways in which your identity (faith, family influence, geographic origin, race, etc.) is complex? How do you negotiate the complexities of your identity? Can you think of any examples of things you believe in that might seem contradictory to others but are part of the complexity of who you are?

- MBM: The Haitians identified one of Paul's African-American colleague as "blan," which means "little white man," and even thought him and Paul, despite the difference in "race," were brothers. What does this tell you about racial identity in Haiti? How does it differ from US formations of racial identity?
- Application: How did your understandings of race or ethnicity form? How did they change/are they changing in your transition to the University of Florida? Do you feel that there are distinct differences between races or are we all, as Paul says, "one human race?"

Civic Engagement/Active Citizenship

- MBM: For some people seeing that changing the world is an uphill or even losing battle would make them give up and focus only on themselves and their own success. How do you understand why Farmer is able to keep going and working for the good of the people of Haiti despite his belief that there are "mountains beyond mountains" of problems?
- Application: How do our beliefs about the world affect our choice to serve and the way in which we serve our local, national, and international communities? Do you feel that Americans have too much wealth and should spread our wealth amongst the poor? What issues most move you to activism? What suffering have you seen and how has it influenced your civic engagement, service and leadership thus far in your life? How do you think this might change over the course of your time in college?
- MBM: Farmer believed that it was "redistributive justice" to "borrow" drugs and lab services from his hospital in Boston for use in the clinic in Cange. Do you believe that this is ethical?
- Application: How have you given back to your community? What are some areas that may merit "redistributive justice" in the Gainesville community? What role do ethics play as you become an active citizen of the UF community and The Gator Nation?