

Special Topics in CSA: Service Learning Seminar

15:245:644:03

1.5 Credits

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Student Activities Center

Office Hours: By Appointment

Enrollment by special permission only

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide Alternative Break site leaders with the philosophical framework to successfully lead an Alternative Break trip. The course is designed to guide students through topics related to service-learning, culture and reflection. In addition, students will be given opportunities to critically think about themselves as leaders, what defines "success" when serving diversified communities and how to lead peers through an important service experience.

The course will focus on the origins of service-learning and examine the question of "why should we serve?". Students will be given opportunities to hear from a diversified panel of community partners in order to understand the important relationship between the university and non-profit organizations. Students will be given opportunities to focus on the importance of the group dynamics during service experiences. In addition, students will examine culture, stereotypes and privileges as they prepare to serve groups they may be unfamiliar with.

The role of civic reflection and the importance of being able to process the service will be explored to the extent that students will feel comfortable facilitating reflection workshops on their own. Students will also have an opportunity to explore the Active Citizen Continuum and ways to foster their own civic commitment, as well as the civic commitment of others.

Course Goals

- Students will be able to examine the interrelated issues that affect the lives of people in the economically and socially devastated communities across the United States.
- Students will be able to explore service learning and implications for the future.
- Students will be able to better understand his/her personal philosophy on and approach to social change, particularly as it relates to leading an Alternative Break trip; and to offer that same process to his/her trip participants.
- Students will be able to understand the importance of civic reflection and the role it plays in Alternative Breaks.

Required Texts

Cress, Christine M., Collier, Peter J., Reitenauer, Vicki L. and Associates (2005). Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service Learning Across the Disciplines. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus.

Selected Readings from: Davis, Adam & Lynn, Elizabeth (2006). The Civically Engaged Reader – a Diverse Collection of Short Provocative Readings on Civic Activity. Chicago: The Great Books Foundation.

Additional readings to be assigned.

Course Policies

Code of Conduct: All students are expected to abide by the University Code of Student Conduct, Policy Regarding Academic Integrity. The Academic Integrity Policy is available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>.

Notice to Students with Disabilities: Rutgers University recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional climate in which students with disabilities can thrive. If you have any type of disability for which you require special accommodations to promote your learning in this class, please register with Disability Support Services Immediately and notify the instructor. For more information, go to <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>.

Assignments¹

Final Paper - due December 5 (40 points)

The culminating project for this class will require students to reflect upon at least three readings from the course. They will critically reflect upon how they will incorporate what they learned in the class and through the readings into their particular trip. Students will reflect upon their role as the leader of the group and how their leadership style will play a role in the success of their trip. Students will be required to incorporate their learning outcomes into the paper and how they plan to achieve them. This paper should be 4-6 pages in length.

Community Partner Interview – due October 8 (30 points)

Each student in the class will be required to interview a community partner. This partner can either be local to New Jersey or can be the community partner the student will work with on their trip. Students will be asked to include biographical information on this person and will examine how they relate to this person in the role of leader. Other information to include: How did they come to the decision to work in the non-profit world? What advice can they give you that will help your trip be successful? This paper should be 3-4 pages in length. Please use questions on page 23 of “Learning Through Serving” as a guide for your interview.

Design a Reflection Workshop – due November 5 (20 points)

Students will be asked to select one reading from Adam Davis’ The Civically Engaged Reader. Based on their selected reading, students will construct a civic reflection workshop based on tips and strategies given in class. Students will also be asked to determine how they will facilitate the workshop and describe the role they will play in the reflection process. This paper should be 2 pages in length. To choose your selected reading, please use the “Resource Library” on the Project for Civic Reflection website – www.civicreflection.org.

Participation (10 points)

Each class is designed as a seminar, therefore leaving ample opportunity for students to share thoughts and stories with peers and ask questions that are critical to the learning process. The class will have a high participation component through article sharing and exercises directly related to the course topics.

Grading

90-100 points = A

85-89 points = B+

80-84 points = B

75-79 points = C

70 points and below = failure in course

Late assignments will not be accepted.

Course Schedule

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| Week #1 September 110 | Course Introduction & Setting the Foundation Learning Through Serving, Chapter 1: What is Service Learning? |
| Week #2 September 17 | Community Partners Reading: Learning Through Serving, Chapter 2: Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships |
| Week #3 September 24 | Being a Change Agent Reading: Learning Through Serving, Chapter 3: Becoming Community – Moving From I to We |
| Week #4 October 1 | Community Partner Panel Reading: Article - Helping, Fixing or Serving by Rachel Naomi Remin, M.D. |
| Week #5 October 8 | Understanding Groups Reading: Learning Through Serving, Chapter 4: Groups are Fun, Groups are Not Fun – Teamwork for the Common Good |
| Week #6 October 15 | The Role Culture Plays on Alternative Breaks Reading: Learning Through Serving, Chapter 5: Creating Cultural Connections |

¹ Including exams, papers etc.

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| Week #7 October 22 | Civic Reflection - Part 1 Reading: The Civically Engaged Reader - What We Don't Talk About When We Don't Talk About Service by Adam Davis |
| Week #8 October 29 | Civic Reflection – Part 2 Reading: The Civically Engaged Reader – The Lesson by Toni Cade Bambara |
| Week #9 November 5 | Balancing Service and Learning Reading: Learning Through Serving, Chapter 7: Failure with the Best Intentions |
| Week #10 November 12 | Fostering Civic Commitment Reading: Learning Through Serving, Chapter 9: Beyond a Grade & Chapter 10: Looking Back, Looking Forward |