

Spring 2010

**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE
COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM
<http://www.albany.edu/cpsp>**

RSSW 390 – Community Service 2

Instructor: Sharon Stevens

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Sharon's Office Hours: Monday 10-11 and Wednesday 1-2 or by appointment

CPSP Office Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 – 4:30.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Community Service 2 is a service course that builds on prior community service experience by asking students to think critically about their community service experience through the lens of scholarly literature. Each student is required to engage in 100 hours of service at a not-for-profit or public organization. Each student is also required to read selected articles and reflect on their experience by responding to discussion questions and writing a critical reflective essay (Pre-requisite: RSSW 290).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The primary objective for all Community and Public Service courses is to promote community engagement activities via university and community partnerships. Students have an opportunity to gain insight into how civil society and the public sector operate in a democratic society. The goal is for participants to understand the impact of their service on meeting community needs as well as to explore the meaning of democratic citizenship in a multicultural society. The purpose of the course is to foster a lifelong commitment to service and democratic civic engagement.

The requirements of RSSW 390 emphasize critical analysis of some of the scholarly literature on civic engagement and social welfare. Student achievement should be commensurate with the requirements of an upper level course. Students are able to select their volunteer service in areas that often benefit their future educational and employment goals by offering opportunities for field exposure, career exploration, and experience building.

Individual learning goals are developed with the agency supervisor.

COURSE GRADING

Students must complete all required hours (100) and turn-in: Commitment Agreement, Learning Contract, Course Evaluation and signed Log of Hours (documenting 100 hours) in order to receive a passing grade.

Additional Grading Criteria:

20% Learning Contract

20% Supervisor Course Evaluation

30% Discussion Questions (10% each)

30% Critical Essay

Grading Scale

A	94-100	B	83-86	C	73-76		
A-	90-93	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	F	59 and below
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-69		

Due dates are listed on page 3. Please contact the instructor **before** the due date if you anticipate a late assignment otherwise, there is a 10% deduction for late assignments. Point distribution guidelines for all assignments are available on Blackboard.

BLACKBOARD LEARNING SYSTEMS

Class assignments, forms and articles will be available on the Blackboard Learning System. Please log in and make sure your email address is current and active. BLS access can be found on the My UAlbany web page. If you haven't used Blackboard before there is a tutorial you can work through in order to become more familiar.

ASSIGNMENTS and OBLIGATIONS

1. **COMMITMENT AGREEMENT** – Each student will review the course syllabus and acknowledge awareness of course requirements by completing the commitment form. This form is due to the CPSP office one week after registering for class.
2. **LEARNING CONTRACT** – Each student will create a Learning Contract following the format on page 4. It must be signed and dated by the student and her/his supervisor. It should be turned in by the end of the second week of service.
3. **ASSIGNED READINGS** – Complete 3 required readings. These readings will be incorporated into your discussion questions and final critical reflective essay. Articles can be found on Blackboard. Supplemental readings in assorted subject areas are provided for students who want to deepen their knowledge.
4. **DISCUSSIONS ON BLACKBOARD** – Three (3) discussion questions will be posted on Blackboard over the course of the semester. You are required to respond directly to each of the 3 questions; you may also wish to respond to the posts of other students. The questions will be tied to your service experiences in relationship to the readings.
5. **CRITICAL REFLECTIVE ESSAY**. Please follow the format on page 5. See chart on page 3 for the assignment deadline.
6. **COMPLETE VOLUNTEER HOURS** by the last day of class for the semester. The CPSP does not expect you to volunteer on University observed holidays or during school breaks however you are responsible for working out scheduling details with your supervisor in advance. Some volunteer sites might expect you to be present if it is part of your schedule. Please address this issue prior to beginning your hours.
7. **TURN IN SIGNED LOGS** by the last day of class for the semester.
8. **TURN IN YOUR COURSE EVALUATION** by the last day of class for the semester.
9. Maintain a copy of all documents submitted to the CPSP program for your records.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

Assignment	Due
Commitment Agreement	Within 1 Week of Registering
Learning Contract Due *	Within 2 Weeks of Starting Volunteer Hrs*
Discussion Question 1	Monday Feb 22
Discussion Question 2	Monday March 22
Discussion Question 3	Monday Apr 19
Critical Reflective Essay	Tuesday May 4
Course & Supervisor Evaluations	Tuesday May 4
Log of Hours (all hours completed) *	Tuesday May 4

* Both student and supervisor's signatures required

ALL assignments are due by the dates listed above **in the CPSP office or posted on Blackboard**. If the office is closed you can slide your paperwork under the door. Late assignments will have points deducted.

LEARNING CONTRACT: *complete in outline format as shown below*

LEARNING CONTRACT
YOUR NAME
STUDENT ID #
RSSW COURSE NUMBER, SEMESTER & YEAR
DATE

Name of Organization:

Include or attach the organization's mission statement

Purpose of the Organization (or the part of the organization where you are volunteering) - summarize in your own words and identify if the purpose reflects the mission.

Name of Supervisor:

Job Description: Please describe the activities you will perform and the responsibilities you will have.

Schedule of Volunteer Hours: (This should be the days of the week and hours that you will be volunteering such as: Monday 3 – 7 pm, Wednesday 2 – 5 pm.)

Learning Objectives: List at least three objectives that you have developed and agreed on with your supervisor. These are individual learning objectives, not organizational goals. These objectives are things you would like to accomplish over the semester. Examples: learning new skills, learning about a new population, understanding how organizations function, etc.

Signatures: Both you and your supervisor sign and date this contract.

Submit the Original to the CPSP Office, SS112. Keep a copy for yourself and give one to your supervisor.

Some suggestions for successfully writing your Learning Contract

1. Make an appointment with your supervisor to discuss the contract.
2. Ask your supervisor to describe your job, or to give you a written job description. This does not replace your Learning Contract, but it is information that you can use when writing it yourself.
3. Agree on a schedule that includes the days and times that you will complete your volunteer service.
4. Discuss your learning objectives. Ask questions like:
 - How can I best assist the organization in achieving its mission?
 - How will the experiences I have here apply to a potential career?
 - How will my service impact the organization's constituency?
 - How will my work enhance social capital in the community?
 - How will my work strengthen my understanding of democracy, civil society or multiculturalism?

CRITICAL REFLECTIVE ESSAY REQUIREMENTS – RSW 390

1. A header that includes the following:

Your name
Name of organization
Course number (RSSW 390), Semester & Year
Address (including city, state and zip code) where you can be reached after May 4th
Your telephone number where you can be reached after May 4th
Active e-mail address
Date

2. The Critical Reflective Essay encourages you to consider your service experience through the lens of the scholarly literature on civic engagement and social welfare practice. The purpose is for you to identify some of the salient issues and tensions that exist in the field drawing from what scholars have said. In addition, you are to analyze these scholarly issues based on your experiences during the semester as well as your own critical thinking about the issues. You are required to draw from 3 readings from the course bibliography into your essay. You may use the assigned readings or choose new ones. Please cite the authors using the appropriate format for your major/discipline. **The following is the required 3-part framework for your essay:**

Part I – Overview of issue to be addressed in paper including a thesis statement. Some possible issues/topics include: (up to 1 page)

- Social service versus social change
- Fostering the empowerment and strengths of individuals
- Power and privilege related to race, class and gender
- Factors influencing organizational effectiveness
- Social capital and community building
- Assets approaches to community building and development

Part II – Discuss the issue in depth drawing from at least 3 sources from the course bibliography (approx. 2-3 pages). Attending to some of the following components may be helpful to you in your essay writing:

- What are the authors' positions on the issues?
- Explain the issues through the use of real world examples
- Cite the authors including through direct quotations

Part III – Critically analyze the issue through the lens of your experience as a student volunteer worker in an organization. Include some critique and analysis of the issues/scholars/experience (approx. 2-3 pages)

- How does your experience as a volunteer relate to the issues you/authors have identified?
- Are the theories, positions or ideas true to your experience?
- What issues have the authors left out or overlooked?
- In what ways might the organization benefit from incorporating the perspectives of the authors?

3. Minimum requirements for a satisfactory paper:

- 5 – 7 pages
- Typewritten, double-spaced with a 12 pt font
- Please make sure to check thoroughly for grammatical, typographical and spelling errors.

4. You may submit your essay by dropping it off at SS112 or faxing it to 518-442-5684. If the office is not open, you may slide your assignments under the door.

READINGS

Required reading: Choose 2

- Duncan, D. and J. Kopperud. (2008). "Chapter 3: Becoming Good Citizens" in Service-Learning Companion. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Morton, K. (1995). The Irony of Service: Charity, Project and Social Change in Service-Learning. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 19-32.
- Putnam, R.D. (2000). "Thinking about social change in America" (pp. 15-28) In Bowling Alone. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Supplemental Readings: Choose 1

- Children's Defense Fund. America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline – A Children's Defense Fund Report. October 2007. Forward, pp 1-11 and Chapter 1 – Overview, pp 12-21.
http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/DocServer/PPP_report_2007_lowres.pdf?docID=5222
- Frazier, I. (2008). Hungry Minds. New Yorker. May 26.
- Gamble, D.N. and Hoff, M.D. (2005). "Sustainable community development" in Weil, M. (Ed). Handbook of Community Practice. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Gutierrez, L., Lewis, E.A., Nagda, B.A., Wernick, L. and Shore, N. (2005). "Multicultural community practice strategies and intergroup empowerment" (pp. 341-359) in Weil, M. (Ed.) Handbook of Community Practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Halperin, L. (2002). "Franchisee Leadership Profile: Rosanne Hagerty, Ben and Jerry's." Franchising World, 34(1), 27-28.
- Kretzmann, J.P. and McKnight, J.L. (1997). "Introduction" in Building Communities from the Inside Out. Skokie, IL: ACTA Publications.
- Manteaw, B. (2008). From tokenism to social justice: rethinking the bottom line for sustainable community development. Community Development Journal, 43(4), 428-443.
- Martell, D. and Avitabile, N.E. (1998). Feminist community organizing on a college campus. Affilia, 13(4), 393-410.
- Matarasso, F. (2007). Common ground: cultural action as a route to community development. Community Development Journal, 42 (4), 449-458.
- Minkler, M. "Community organizing with the elderly poor in San Francisco's Tenderloin District," in Minkler, M. (Ed.) (2005). Community organizing and community building for health, 2nd Ed. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. W. (2001). "Building capacity in an empowered organization" (pp. 189-214). Community Organizing and Development (3rd Ed). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Saleebey, D. (Ed.) (1997). "Introduction: Power in the People" in The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice, 2nd Ed. New York: Longman.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION, TIPS AND HINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE

BE A CRITICAL, REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER: Do your readings early in the semester (we encourage you to read more than just 3 articles!) Consider the issues over the course of the semester as you are engaging in your volunteer work. Keep a journal or take notes on your observations and ideas for the final paper.

BE DEPENDABLE: Develop a realistic schedule that you can meet. Be on time, be pleasant and don't leave early. Discuss University holidays up front. Be very clear about your availability. Call your supervisor if you will be late.

Call your supervisor with as much notice as possible if you are sick. Make up any missed hours as soon as possible. Students may work during University breaks but you do not have to, as long as you work it out in advance with your supervisor.

DON'T LET PROBLEMS LINGER! If you have concerns or questions bring them to your supervisor right away. If you need any assistance in addressing a concern contact the CPSP staff. We can assist with any situation.

BIAS: Report any instance of harassment (sexual, racial, religious, etc.) to the CPSP office immediately. University guidelines are available at www.albany.edu/affirmative_action/

DRIVING--STUDENTS CANNOT DRIVE ORGANIZATION VEHICLES OR TRANSPORT CLIENTS IN THEIR OWN CARS unless the organization carries liability insurance for this purpose. Because students' auto insurance would not cover them, we do not permit students to drive agency vehicles or their own vehicles WITH AGENCY CLIENTS IN THE CAR. You might be asked to run errands in your own car. This is up to you, and if you agree to help in this way, you may ask to be reimbursed for gas, parking, etc.

INCOMPLETES: The expectation when a student registers for RSSW 390 is that they will complete their hourly commitment by the end of the semester in which they registered for the course. That being said, there are occasionally extreme situations that preclude this from happening. Incompletes must be requested in writing before the end of the semester. Please use the form available on the web site. All required course documentation must be turned in, except for the log of hours, and a minimum of 1/2 of your hours need to be done in order to be considered for an incomplete. This is in keeping with the UAlbany grading policy.

EMAIL CONTACT: The majority of our communication with you will be via email. Please check your email regularly.

BLACKBOARD LEARNING SYSTEM: Course information will be available on Blackboard. Emails will be sent to provide updates and/or reminders so please make sure your email address is current on Blackboard and also that you check your UAlbany email account or have it set to forward emails to your primary email account.

STUDENTS CANNOT GET PAID WHILE COMPLETING THEIR VOLUNTEER SERVICE.

BY UNIVERSITY DEFINITION OUR PROGRAM IS NOT AN INTERNSHIP. Internships are programs administered within specific Schools of the University and are supervised by instructors within that School, or as UNI courses. Our program is available to students in all academic disciplines. It is important that we use the correct terminology. By definition, this is a volunteer program, all service is performed free of charge.

SUPERVISORS ARE ASKED TO COMPLETE EVALUATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS. A copy is attached. Please give it to your supervisor. At the end of your service your supervisor can mail it to the, University at Albany, 1400 Washington Ave, CPSP Office, SS112, Albany, NY 12222 or fax it to (518) 442-5684.

ENJOY YOUR EXPERIENCE! If you have any suggestions for additional information that should be on this page please send them to sharon.stevens01@albany.edu