

RSSW 390 – Community Service 2 Spring 2012

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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 Supervisor Evaluation and signed Log of Hours (documenting 100 hours) in order to receive a passing grade.

Additional Grading Criteria:

20% Learning Contract
14% Supervisor Course Evaluation
36% Discussion Questions (12% each)
30% Critical Essay

****For due dates for all assignments see page 3****

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. 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. You will also want to use the "check browser" feature on Blackboard's home page to ensure your internet browser is compatible with blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS and OBLIGATIONS

1. **COMMITMENT AGREEMENT** – Each student will review the course syllabus and acknowledge awareness of course requirements by completing the commitment assessment on Blackboard. This assignment **must be completed** in order for you to pass the 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. Grading rubric available on Blackboard. (worth 20%)
3. **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 three questions which are tied to required readings and should reflect your service experience. You are also required to respond to at least one post of another student. (12% each for a total of 36%)
4. **CRITICAL REFLECTIVE ESSAY**. Please follow the format on page 5. Will include development of thesis, and tie in readings and service experience. Grading rubric available on Blackboard. (worth 30%)
5. **SUPERVISOR EVALUATION** – Due on the last day of classes. (worth 14%)
6. **COURSE EVALUATION** – Completed and turned in by the last day of class for the semester **must be submitted** in order for you to pass the class.
7. **LOG OF HOURS** – Signed by your supervisor and turned in by the last day of class. The log **must be submitted** in order for you to pass the class.
8. **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY** – All written work must be original and all citations and resource information must be appropriately cited. This includes postings on Blackboard.
9. **Maintain a copy of all documents submitted to the CPSP program for your records.** This is VERY important!!! We have up to 700 students per semester and things get misplaced/misfiled. **PLEASE KEEP COPIES.**

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

Assignment	Due
Commitment Agreement*	Monday February 6*
Learning Contract Due **	Thursday February 16**
Discussion Question 1	Thursday February 23
Discussion Question 2	Thursday March 8
Discussion Question 3	Thursday March 29
Critical Reflective Essay	Monday April 16
Course & Supervisor Evaluations	Monday May 7
Log of Hours	Monday May 7

* If you register after Jan 31 you have one week to complete Commitment Agreement after permission number has been given. This assignment is completed on Blackboard.

** Both student and supervisor's signatures required. If you have a delayed start to your volunteer hours please contact the instructor to negotiate revised due date.

All assignments are due by the dates listed above in the CPSP office or posted on Blackboard (Discussion Questions only). If the office is closed you can slide your paperwork under the door. Late assignments will have points deducted. **Grading rubrics are available on Blackboard.** (A **rubric** is a scoring tool for subjective assessments. It is a set of criteria and standards linked to learning objectives that is used to assess a student's performance on papers, projects, essays, and other assignments.)

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

Learning Contract
Your Name Student ID#
RSSW 390, Semester & Year
Telephone number and Active e-mail address
Date

Name of Organization:

Organization's Mission Statement (include or attach)

Purpose of the Organization (or the part of the organization where you are volunteering) - summarize in your own words

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: identifying a skill you would like to acquire (ex. Become proficient with a video camera, be able to develop and work with a spreadsheet in Excel, understand how to develop rapport with a client), 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. To develop 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 the experience develop professional skills?
 - 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: (header does not count as part of total essay page length, should be single spaced, and only on the first page. Page numbers with student's last name and first initial can be on the header or footer of all pages.)

Your name
Student ID #
Name of organization
RSSW 390, Semester & Year
Your telephone & 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. The purpose is for you to identify some of the salient issues and tensions that exist in the field in your area of interest drawing on what scholars have said for support. You are required to draw from at least 3 sources in your essay. You may use the assigned readings, choose from the supplemental reading list, or include outside sources. **Please cite the authors using the appropriate format for your major/discipline.**

Please use headings for each part and clearly identify your thesis statement.

The following is the required 3-part framework for your essay:

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

1. Citizenship and service in the USA
2. Fostering the empowerment and strengths of individuals/groups/community
3. Power and privilege related to race, class and gender
4. Social capital in the 21st century, what does it look like?
5. Hand out or a hand up?
6. Tutors & mentors: responsible, participatory or transformational?
7. Any social issue, civic engagement topic or public service concern of your choice

Part II – Discuss the issue in depth drawing from at least 3 sources. Supplemental readings are available in Blackboard. Consider the following to help you organize your work:

- How do the readings support your thesis?
- What are the authors' positions on the issues?
- Do the authors' opinions differ from yours? From each other?
- Explain the issues through the use of real world examples
- Cite the authors including direct quotes when appropriate

Part III – Critically analyze the issue through the lens of your experience as a student volunteer worker in an organization. (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?
- If you had the ability to effect change in the organization, based on what you've learned in the course, would you make changes? If yes, describe what the change would be, why it's needed and what effect you hope it would have.
- Strong conclusions are important. Summarize your thesis topic, explain how your plan, idea or thoughts will somehow make the world a better place.

3. Minimum requirements for a satisfactory paper:

- 5 – 7 pages (does not include header)
- Typewritten, double-spaced with a 12 pt font (Times New Roman or similar size), 1 inch margins
- Please make sure to check thoroughly for grammatical, typographical and spelling errors.
- References and quotes from readings and sources are appropriately cited
- Reference/Bibliography Page
 - Acceptable citations styles: APA, Chicago, or MLA
 - Use the same style for your essay and reference/bibliography page

4. You may submit your essay by posting it to Blackboard or dropping it off at SS112. If the office is not open, you may slide your assignments under the door.

Basic Essay Structure

1. Introduction: A good introduction requires several elements:

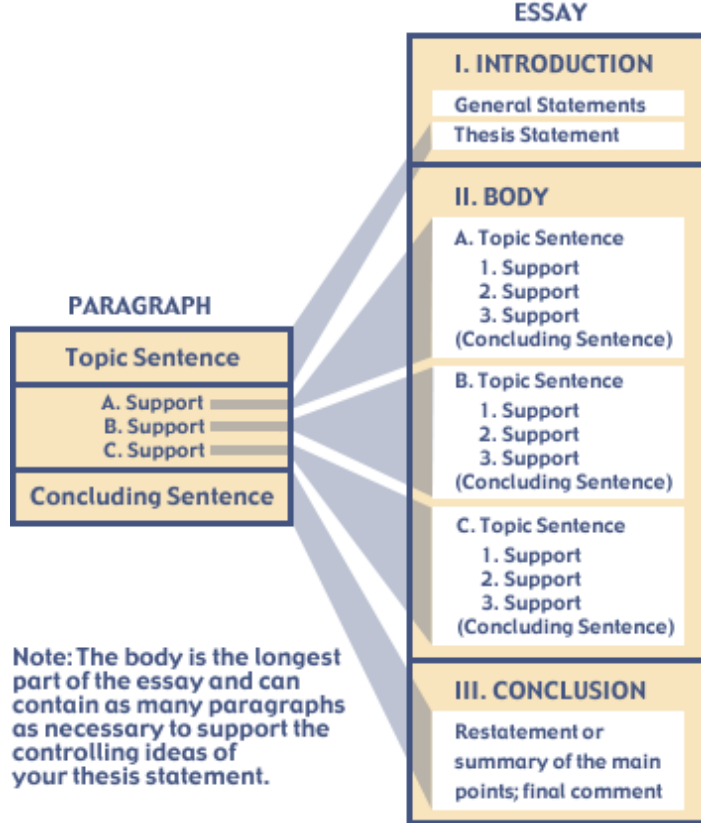
- Opening sentences introducing the topic of the essay
- Background information on the topic (gradually leading to the analyzed aspect of the theme).
- Literature techniques to grab the reader's attention.
- A strong **Thesis statement** defining and stating the point the author is making in the essay, the paper's main argument.

Thesis Statement for Essay

The main task of the thesis statement of any essay is to show the reader the author's position on the discussed topic. It is the argument of the highest priority for the essay due to the fact that it is the thesis statement that is to be proven or supported throughout the paper. In the thesis statement the author makes his own point in the context of the essay topic and delivers it to the reader by means of a logical chain. It is usually presented in one single sentence.

Essay Structure

<http://www.jcu.edu.au/tldinfo/writingskills/essay/structure.html>



2. Body paragraphs

- a. Body paragraph 1
 - b. Body paragraph 2
 - c. Body paragraph 3, etc.
- The body of a basic essay may have as many body paragraphs as it is necessary to prove the author's argument of the thesis statement.
 - It is vital to keep in mind that each paragraph is supposed to have one main argument to analyze and has to reveal it in one solid thought in a sentence called the **topic sentence**. Therefore the amount of the body paragraphs equals the amount of topic sentences.
 - Each body paragraph must be connected to following one with a logical link.

3. Conclusion

- It is usually written in one solid paragraph.
- The conclusion always deals with summing up the essays arguments revealed in the topic sentences and the therefore present substantial evidence to prove the thesis statement.
- It is also important to mention the importance of the general conclusion of the essay.

READINGS

(all are available on Blackboard)

Required reading:

- Duncan, D., & Kooperud, J. (2008). Becoming good citizens. *Service-Learning Companion* (pp. 39-67). 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*, 2, 19-32.
- Loeb, P. R. (2010). Introduction to the new edition. *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times* (pp. 1-19). New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

Supplemental Readings:

- Children's Defense Fund. (2007). *America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline Report Chapter 1* (pp. 12-21). Washington D.C.: Children's Defense Fund. Retrieved from <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/cradle-prison-pipeline-report-pt1-ch1.pdf>
- Frazier, I. (2008). Hungry Minds. *New Yorker*, (May 26), 56-65.
- Gutierrez, L. M., Lewis, E. A., Nagda, B. A., Wernick, L., & Shore, N. (2005). Multicultural community practice strategies and intergroup empowerment. In M. Weil (Ed.), *Handbook of Community Practice* (pp. 341-359). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Halperin, L. (2002). Franchisee leadership profile: Rosanne Hagerty, Ben and Jerry's. *Franchising World*, 34(1), 27-28.
- Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. L. (1997). Introduction. *Building Communities from the Inside Out* (pp. 1-11). 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. doi:10.1093/cdj/bsm015
- Martell, D., & Avitabile, N. E. (1998). Feminist community organizing on a college campus. *AFFILIA: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 13(4), 393-410.
- Matarasso, F. (2007). Common ground: cultural action as a route to community development. *Community Dev J*, 42(4), 449-458. doi:10.1093/cdj/bsm046
- Minkler, M. (2005). Community organizing with the elderly poor in San Francisco's Tenderloin District. *Community Organizing and Community Building for Health* (2nd ed., pp. 272-287). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). Thinking about social change in America. *Bowling Alone* (pp. 15-28). New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Saleebey, D. (1997). Introduction: Power in the people. *The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 3-19). New York: Longman.
- Wofford, H. (2005). Quo Vadis: What Can Students Do for American Cities? *National Civic Review*, 94(2), 66-71. doi:Feature

IMPORTANT INFORMATION, TIPS AND HINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE

BE A CRITICAL AND REFLECTIVE LEARNER: 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 or can be found on the CPSP web site by following the "Forms and Documents" link. Please give it to your supervisor toward the end of your service, at least a week before the last day of class. Your supervisor can mail/fax it to the CPSP office, the address/fax is on the top of the Supervisor Evaluation.

ENJOY YOUR EXPERIENCE! If you have any suggestions for additional information that should be on this page please send them to your instructor of record found on the first page of this syllabus or on Blackboard.