

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

RSSW 390 – Community Service 2

Instructor: Elisa Martin

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Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00-4:30

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Founded in 1970, the Community and Public Service Program (CPSP) has played an important role in facilitating student community engagement in the Greater Capital Region. Administered by the University at Albany's School of Social Welfare, CPSP offers students in all academic disciplines the opportunity to engage in community service while earning course credit.

Students volunteer at an area not-for-profit or public organization that they select from among the approximately 400 approved organizations on the CPSP web site: <http://www.albany.edu/csp>. Each student completes 100 hours of volunteer service for 3 credits in RSSW 390. (RSSW 290 is a pre-requisite for RSSW 390).

### **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 explore the meaning of democratic citizenship in a multicultural society. The purpose of the course is to foster a lifelong commitment to 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.

### **BLACKBOARD LEARNING SYSTEMS**

Class assignments and forms 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.

**ASSIGNMENTS and OBLIGATIONS**

1. **COMMITMENT FORM** – 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 3. 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 readings (one common reading and two chosen from the attached course bibliography). These readings will be incorporated into your final critical reflective essay. Articles can be found on Blackboard for this class.
4. **DISCUSSIONS ON BLACKBOARD** – Three (3) discussion questions will be posted on Blackboard Discussions 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 4. See chart below for the assignment deadline.
6. **COMPLETE VOLUNTEER HOURS** by the end of the semester (for exact date see chart below). 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 date listed in chart below.
8. **TURN IN YOUR COURSE EVALUATION** by date listed in chart below.
9. **ALL assignments** are due by the dates listed below **in the CPSP office**. If the office is closed you can slide your paperwork under the door.
10. Maintain a copy of all documents submitted to the CPSP program for your records.

**ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES**

<b>SESSION Summer 2009</b>	<b>LAST DAY TO ADD OR REGISTER</b>	<b>COMMITMENT FORM Please complete form &amp; submit</b>	<b>LEARNING CONTRACT DUE*</b>	<b>FINISH HOURS BY</b>	<b>SUBMIT LOG OF HOURS*</b>	<b>REFLEC TIVE ESSAY DUE</b>	<b>EVALUATION DUE FROM SUPV.</b>
<b>12 Week Summer</b>	Friday June 5, 2009	Within 1 Week of Registering	Within 2 Weeks of Starting*	Friday August 14	Friday August 14*	Friday July 31	Friday August 14

\*Both student and supervisor’s signatures required

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

LEARNING CONTRACT  
YOUR NAME  
YOUR LOCAL TELEPHONE NUMBER  
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS  
RSSW COURSE NUMBER, SEMESTER & YEAR  
DATE

**Name of Organization:**

**Purpose of the Organization** (or the part of the organization where you are volunteering)  
**Include or attach the organization's mission statement**

**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  
Your telephone number  
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 can 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 2 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:

Morton, K. (1995). The Irony of Service: Charity, Project and Social Change in Service-Learning. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 19-32.

### Choose 2 readings from this list:

#### Civic Engagement and Service

Coles, Robert (1994). "Chapter 1" in The Call of Service. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Putnam, R.D. (2000). "Thinking about social change in America" (pp. 15-28) In Bowling Alone. New York: Simon & Schuster.

#### Community Development and Organizing

Gamble, D.N. and Hoff, M.D. (2005). "Sustainable community development" in Weil, M. (Ed.) Handbook of Community Practice. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Kretzmann, J.P. and McKnight, J.L. (1997). "Introduction" in Building Communities from the Inside Out. Skokie, IL: ACTA Publications.

Martell, D. and Avitabile, N.E. (1998). Feminist community organizing on a college campus. Affilia, 13(4), 393-410.

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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

#### Non-Profit and Social Work Practice Issues

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.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. W. (2001). "Building capacity in an empowered organization" (pp. 189-214). Community Organizing and Development (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Saleebey, D. (Ed.) (1997). "Introduction: Power in the People" in The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York: Longman.

#### Issue Focused Articles

Children's Defense Fund. America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline – A Children's Defense Fund Report. October 2007. Foreword, pp 1-11 and Chapter 1 – Overview, pp 12-21.  
[http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/DocServer/ CPP\\_report\\_2007\\_lowres.pdf?docID=5222](http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/DocServer/ CPP_report_2007_lowres.pdf?docID=5222)

Frazier, I. (2008). Hungry Minds. New Yorker. May 26.

Halperin, L. (2002). "Franchisee Leadership Profile: Rosanne Hagerty, Ben and Jerry's." Franchising World, 34(1), 27-28.

Dalen, J.E. and Alpert, J.S. (2008). National Health Insurance: Could it work in the U.S.? American Journal of Medicine, 121(7), 553-554.

## 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/](http://www.albany.edu/affirmative_action/)

**DRIVING--STUDENTS CANNOT DRIVE AGENCY VEHICLES OR TRANSPORT CLIENTS IN THEIR OWN CARS.** 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:** Must be requested in writing before the end of the semester. Please use the format on the web site. Your learning contract and at least one-half of your hours must be completed in order to receive an incomplete for the course. This is in keeping with the UAlbany grading policy.

**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, in part, to avoid the confusion about getting paid. 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.

**WHAT TO WEAR:** Please check with your immediate supervisor regarding the organization's dress code.

**ENJOY YOUR EXPERIENCE!** If you have any suggestions for additional information that should be on this page please send them to Elisa Martin [elisa.martin01@albany.edu](mailto:elisa.martin01@albany.edu).