

Community Service 1

Community Service-Learning

Course Outline and Syllabus

Fall 2009 – Tuesdays

Thank you for enrolling in the Community Service 1 - Community Service-Learning course (Com S 1). The time you spend on community service-learning activities can be some of the most rewarding time you will commit to a class while at Fresno State. The following information will help you understand why community service-learning can be such an important and enriching experience. You will also find enclosed the Community Service 1 course outline. This document specifies course requirements and should give you a greater appreciation of the benefits of community service-learning. Please read this information carefully! Your grade and, more importantly, the value of your service experience, will depend heavily on this material.

For further information on the Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning (Richter Center) or any of the Community Service courses you can contact the Richter Center staff at:

Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning
California State University, Fresno
5241 N. Maple, TA 120
Fresno, California 93740

(Office located in the Thomas Administration, Room 107)

Phone: (559) 278-7079 Fax: (559) 278-7634

Email: mjessen@csufresno.edu

*Web Page: <http://www.csufresno.edu/cesl>

*The Richter Center Website contains valuable information on service opportunities, course requirements, forms and more.

Mission and Philosophy of the Richter Center

The Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning is dedicated to promoting the value and importance of service and involvement in the community. We are dedicated to improving the education and development of our students and helping create a better community through service and learning. The Com S 1 course is just one of the many initiatives sponsored by the Richter Center. The program was developed on the belief that, as part of a complete educational experience, community engagement and service-learning can foster students' personal, academic and career development, strengthen their sense of community, and build leadership skills. The Richter Center is committed to fostering a life-long service and civic ethic in our students, which will stimulate and enhance their educational experience.

Why Should You Get Involved In Community Service?

Research shows that service has a unique way of developing an individual's leadership skills, sense of community, civic ethic, self-esteem, and other personal characteristics. In terms of career growth, many service activities provide students with the opportunity to explore possible careers, experience their chosen career field, develop professional skills and contacts, build their resume, and put into practice the information they have learned in academic settings. Research further shows that learning, as measured by G.P.A., retention and graduation rates, improves when students are involved in community service-learning (Astin, 1996).

Every service activity benefits a specific individual or group. Whether its building homes for the poor, serving victims of chronic or terminal illness, tutoring children, addressing environmental needs or any other service,

there is a person or group who ultimately benefits from your time. Without volunteers these services would not be provided and the lives of those people receiving the services would not be as enriched. In addition, when you help one person, there is a ripple effect that ultimately results in benefits to the larger community. Finally, the organizations where you conduct your service work benefit enormously. Nonprofit agencies and government programs have significant limits on their financial and personnel resources, yet client needs continue to expand. Volunteers can make significant contributions to these agencies in their attempt to deal with the complex and growing needs of society.

Capitalizing On Your Service Opportunity

As mentioned above, community service provides a great opportunity to enhance your educational, personal, and professional development. Like any opportunity **it is up to you to make the most of this experience**. It is up to you to choose the service placement that best matches your goals and interests. It is also up to you to put forth your best effort.

The following are guides that can help you find and complete a service activity that will provide you with the most meaningful experience possible.

- **Explore several different opportunities before choosing a service site.** With over 700 nonprofit agencies in Fresno alone, your options are incredibly numerous. Don't necessarily do the same service you have done before. Try something new... and start searching today!
- **Find a service opportunity that relates to your academic major and/or career interests.** This is a great opportunity to understand how the theory you learn in the classroom applies to problems in the community and in the work environment. It is also an excellent opportunity to explore new careers, build your resume, and to develop your network of professional contacts.
- **Look for a service opportunity that addresses an issue you care about.** Are you concerned about the environment, at-risk youth, crime/violence, the elderly, the poor, disadvantaged communities, education, health or any other societal issues? Use your service hours as a way to become involved in an issue that interests you.
- **Treat this opportunity like you would an important job.** As a volunteer, your responsibilities to the agency and the people served make this an extremely important commitment. Perform your work to the best of your abilities and abide by all agency rules and regulations. If you perform your work poorly it will negatively reflect on you, the university and the Richter Center. However, if you do well in your service work, it may be a springboard to future opportunities, including references, job referrals, part-time work or full-time career opportunities. More important, your service can benefit or potentially harm others. It is up to you which one it will be.
- **Regularly discuss your volunteer work assignment(s) with your supervisor.** If you wish to be involved in specific activities at your agency, ask. If your service work is not what you envisioned, talk to your supervisor. Many times they will be willing to involve you in new projects if they know you are interested. Students should read the handout "*A Student's Guide to Successful Service-Learning*", or visit www.csufresno.edu/sl/student_resources.html.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE 1 - COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING
COURSE SYLLABUS**

Course Instructor

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Class Schedule

Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., Science 2, Room 110.

Instructor Office Hours

Meetings with the instructor or Richter Center staff are on an appointment basis. Drop-in appointments are allowed when the instructor/staff are available. Please phone the Richter Center to arrange an appointment. You are also encouraged to communicate with the instructor using E-mail.

Course Description and Desired Learning Outcomes

The Community Service 1 course is designed to provide a community service-learning experience where students apply their academic knowledge and skills to community based issues and needs. This hands-on experience will be combined with a series of lectures and discussions that cover issues related to students' community service-learning. Films, readings and class projects will be used to acquaint students with a variety of topics related to their service activities. In addition, students will take part in regular reflection activities where they will critically analyze their personal service experience from a number of different perspectives.

Through the course, students will gain a greater understanding and appreciation of a variety of community service-learning related topics. Each student's service experience will provide a unique set of learning opportunities. The following is a list of some of the major learning outcomes of this course.

Understanding Social Issues: What are some current social issues experienced by our community? An understanding of these issues should include: an awareness of the issues; the service delivery systems which address those issues; some of the root causes of those issues; the role volunteers play in addressing those issues; and how, as an individual, you can have a positive impact on those issues.

Professional and Service Ethics: The critical role of confidentiality, referral, and legal obligations of individuals involved in service activities will be covered and students should be able to appropriately apply these concepts to their own service setting.

Leadership: What does it mean to be a "leader?" Different forms of leadership will be discussed. Techniques for the development of personal leadership skills and how service is related to leadership will be covered.

Diversity Awareness: We live (and serve) in a highly diverse world. Understanding and being sensitive to aspects of gender, culture, ethnicity, socio-economics, and age is an important outcome of the course.

Communication Skills: Establishing effective communication is important to all human interaction. Students should understand how to apply key components of effective personal communication in a service setting.

Career Development: The relationship between service and career will be covered. Students should gain an understanding of the career development process, career exploration through community service, and the role of community service in resumes, cover letters and interviews.

Personal and Professional Development Through Service: Gaining an understanding of how service can be a valuable tool in personal and professional development will be a major focus of the course.

Service-Learning in Education: The unique role service-learning can play in educating and helping students develop will be covered. Students should be able to describe how service-learning differs from general volunteerism or other experiential-based learning approaches.

Civic Ethic and Civic Engagement: From the course and their service experience, students should be able to discuss some of the characteristics of what constitutes citizenship and civic engagement. A greater understanding and internalization of the terms “service ethic”, “civic-ethic”, “civic engagement” and “advocacy” is a goal of the course.

Various writing and reflection activities will provide students with opportunities to relate their service experiences to the information covered in classes, with the goal of improving service and learning outcomes.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is required. Please use professional courtesy by arriving and departing from class at the proper time. Your grade will reflect attendance and participation in class discussion. Each student is allowed two absences. After that, **any** absence will result in 20 points being deducted from the student’s grade. **One** absence can be made-up by completing an additional 3 hours of community service work, on top of the minimum course requirements. Two tardies of more than 5 minutes each will equal one absence. **The final two class sessions are required and must be attended by all students.**

Required Readings/Text

There is not a required text for the Community Service 1 course. From time to time the instructor will distribute selected written material. Students will be required to read this material and be prepared to discuss the content.

Instructor Policies

Students are expected to complete all course requirements by the deadline indicated. Barring catastrophe, no late papers will be accepted. It is the responsibility of each student to personally turn in all required forms and papers. Please do not ask or allow other students or your agency supervisor to turn in papers. Additionally, students should be sure to keep copies of all completed forms and papers.

Incomplete grades will only be given when two-thirds of the course requirements have been completed prior to the end of the semester. Students must request an Incomplete in writing, prior to the last day of the class and should personally discuss this option with the instructor at least two weeks before the end of the semester.

Course requirements and schedule are subject to change by the instructor in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Grading

All students are graded on a Credit/No Credit basis. Letter grading is not an option.

Academic Integrity and Protocol

The University has a policy on Cheating and Plagiarism as well as a policy regarding student conduct. These policies may be reviewed in the California State University, Fresno *Catalog* or the *Schedule of Courses*.

Students with disabilities that may affect their work in this course should meet immediately with the instructor so that reasonable accommodations for learning and evaluation within the course can be made. The Office of Services to Students with Disabilities is located in the University Center, Room 5. They can also be reached by phone at 278-2811. Staff of this office can assist you with arrangements and special services.

Community Service 1 Units

Community Service 1 credits can be used as elective units and, therefore, may help fulfill graduation requirements. Students can sign-up for 1, 2, or 3 units of credit per semester. Students may only enroll in one course section, 3 units maximum and may not repeat the course.

Course Requirements

In addition to attending the weekly seminar, students are required to perform a minimum number of hours of unpaid community service with an approved nonprofit agency. These hours must be performed during the semester in which the student is enrolled in Com S 1. All hours must be completed by the last week of class.

1 unit of credit requires weekly class meetings plus 15 hours of service.

2 units of credit require weekly class meetings plus 30 hours of service.

3 units of credit require weekly class meetings plus 60 hours of service.

Please note: Com S 1 credits and service hours do not count towards any major requirements, internship requirements or independent study credits in other departments, unless approved in writing by the department in question. You may not count service hours for other courses towards the requirements of this course or vice-versa.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

All students in Com S 1 are graded on a Credit/Non-Credit basis. In order to receive credit the student must finish the course with a minimum of 70 points (equal to a “C”). Any paper or assignment turned in after the deadline will automatically have one-half the total possible points deducted for that assignment.

Service Hours (includes required Service Site Justification Form and Learning Plan, completed evaluation and verification form) = 33 points

Celebration Paper = 20 points

In-Class Reflection Journal = 15 points

Advocacy Assignment = 10 points

Assorted “Mini-Assignments” = 2- 5 points each (total of 12 points)

Feedback Letter to Agency = 10 points

Total Possible Points = 100*

*** Remember that 20 points will be deducted for any absences in excess of two. Lack of participation will also be considered towards your attendance.**

Course Deadlines

There are course deadlines that you must follow in order to receive credit. These deadlines are listed in the "Tentative Weekly Schedule" portion of this outline. Any assignment turned in late will have one-half the total possible points deducted. Assignments for which there are deadlines include:

- ◆ **February 17:** Community Service 1 Learning Plan and Service Site Justification Form due. *You may not begin your service hours until the Learning Plan is completed and submitted to the instructor!*
- ◆ **March 3:** Asset Mapping and Needs Assessment assignment due.
- ◆ **March 24:** Outline/Draft of Advocacy Assignment – submitted via email to mjessen@csufresno.edu by 3:00 PM. You should submit this draft as soon as you have decided what to write on and not wait until the deadline!
- ◆ **April 14:** Draft Agency Feedback Letter due.
- ◆ **April 28:** Final copy of Advocacy Assignment due.
- ◆ **May 5:** Celebration Paper, Final Agency Feedback Letter, Student Evaluation of Service-Learning Placement Site, and reflection journal due.
- ◆ **May 19:** Verification of hours and agency evaluation of student due by 12 noon. Submit to the Richter Center, Science Building, Room 136.

Finding a Volunteer Service Position

If you work as a volunteer (unpaid), your activities are service oriented, and the agency you serve is a nonprofit or government organization, you should be able to count the hours for class. You are encouraged to select a service assignment that will provide you with the best experience possible. **(Carefully read the section “Capitalizing On Your Service Opportunity” that appears earlier in this outline.)**

Don't be afraid to "shop around" for the best opportunities. You must arrange your service experience by the fourth week of the semester. Agencies often have waiting lists for volunteers, or it simply takes days or weeks to reach the correct person in an agency. **Start contacting agencies right away!**

A website which provides a searchable database of local service opportunities is available for your use. This database is updated regularly, is growing and is the best resource in the region for finding volunteer opportunities. The website address is <http://www.volunteerfresno.org>. All students should visit this site.

The Richter Center maintains *Community Service Information Binders* with information on a variety of service opportunities throughout the area. This resource can be found in the Richter Center, Science Building, Room 136. Remember that there are literally thousands of different volunteer service opportunities available. There are major related opportunities available in virtually all fields, from Anthropology to Zoology. There are even a number of unique and rewarding opportunities for service right here on campus.

Please note that there are a few types of service activities that are not eligible for Community Service 1 credit. While we do not discourage students from being involved in these types of activities, you may not use these types of service work to earn Com S 1 course credit. These types of service include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Paid work of any kind;
- ◆ Volunteer work for a private, for-profit company;
- ◆ Work for any private individual or family not directly associated with a nonprofit agency;
- ◆ Work for a political candidate or campaign. You may work for an elected official but you can not work on any individual's campaign or election effort or other partisan political efforts.
- ◆ Work for a Church or religious organization that specifically includes evangelizing or proselytizing. (Completing your service work with a religious organization is allowed, however, that service cannot include the above activities.)

A minimum of 80% of your service hours should be completed with a single organization or on a single community issue. Also, you may not count hours for this course that you have volunteered prior to the start of the Com S 1 class.

Feedback Letter

Nonprofit representatives have repeatedly told us how helpful feedback from volunteers is for their organization. These letters are used by agencies for program development, grants, volunteer recruitment and more. **All students must write and send a formal feedback/thank you letter to their volunteer supervisor.** In writing this letter, consider what you would want to hear from volunteers who worked for you. If you have suggestions for change, word them in a constructive and positive fashion. This letter should be written in the most professional manner possible. You will be provided with guidelines for this letter towards the end of the semester. The deadline for this assignment is May 5, 2009. (Draft due April 14.)

CELEBRATION PAPER

In order to help students reflect on their service assignment and better synthesize their experience, students are required to write a “Celebration Paper”. For all students in Community Service 1, the Celebration Paper must be approximately 3 pages in length (minimum of 600 words).

It is called a “*Celebration Paper*” because students should use it to celebrate their experience and learning. This celebration of learning, or *reflection*, can deal with all aspects, positive and negative, of your service work and the course. (Remember, you can learn just as much from negative experiences as you can from positive ones.) You should write about your personal reaction to your overall Com S 1 experience, but should concentrate on the service *experience*. Your in-class reflection journal and completed reflection compass can serve as useful resources in successfully completing the celebration paper.

You must address the following question as part of your Celebration Paper:

- (1) What core issue in the community did your service address? (Be specific.)
- (2) How effective were you at addressing the issue and at what level? (Did you address the impacts caused by the problem, the root causes, etc.? Put another way: describe the value of your service this semester.)
- (3) What were the most meaningful things (no more than three) that came from your involvement in this course?
- (4) How did your overall experience compare with your expectations prior to the start of the course/service?
- (5) Has this experience changed you? How? If not, why?
- (6) In what ways has this experience impacted your interest in volunteering in the future?

In writing the paper, you can also consider addressing some of the following questions:

- How did this experience affect you emotionally?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn about others in our community?
- In what ways will this experience influence your professional life?
- Were there any particularly negative aspects of your volunteer experience? What did you learn from these?
- Is there anything you would change about your service work and/or the Com S 1 course?

Where appropriate, students are encouraged to note formal references. You may cite or quote any of the following, as long as you provide the appropriate citation: agency brochures or materials; newspaper or magazine articles; journal articles; textbooks or academic material from other college courses; other published material such as videos, agency supervisors or people you served through your volunteer work. Please remember the Cheating and Plagiarism policy discussed on page 5 of this outline.

Double space is acceptable, approximately 12 font print. Papers must be typed. Your paper must be of an appropriate length and quality and must address the required questions above (1-6) in order to receive credit.

Celebration Papers are due on December 8 at 11:00 AM

Tentative Weekly Schedule

<u>Class Date</u>	<u>Class Topic/Activities</u>	<u>Items Due</u>	<u>Reminders/Notes</u>
August 25 Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Altruism exercise to reinforce active nature of the course. ▪ Brief overview of course and syllabus; discuss high expectations; handout/review forms and assignments 		<i>Assignment: Attend Community Service Opportunities Fair, Wednesday, September 2, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., in front of the Kennel Bookstore</i>
September 1 Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Video: Brady's Kids ▪ Design perfect student/teacher/volunteer ▪ Discuss service site selection and placement 		<i>By the next class (9/8) students should have identified and approached specific agencies regarding their service hours.</i>
September 8 Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review site placement plans and pre-approval ▪ Introduce Reflection Compass ▪ West – the Past 		<i>Reminder: Com S 1 Learning Plan and Service Site Justification Forms are due next week!</i>
September 15 Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issues in the Community ▪ Asset Mapping ▪ Needs Assessment 	Due: Com S 1 Learning Plan and Service Site Justification Form	
September 22 Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statistics Scavenger Hunt ▪ Service ethic and the ethic of service 		<i>Reminder: Asset Mapping and Needs Assessment assignment due next week!</i>
September 29 Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Altruism ▪ Introduce Advocacy Assignment 	Due: Asset Mapping and Needs Assessment Assignment	
October 6 Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership and Service 		
October 13 Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflection Compass: South – the Present ▪ Service continuum, civic engagement and civic ethic 		<i>The semester is nearly half over: Are you making adequate progress on your service hours?</i>
October 20 Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversity and Service ▪ Introduce Agency Feedback Letter assignment 	Due: Draft Advocacy Assignment is due by 3pm on Monday, March 30. Submit via email mjessen@csufresno.edu an outline/draft of Advocacy Assignment. Draft should detail who/where you will submit this letter. (Must be a Microsoft Word document or in the body of the email).	
October 27 Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Class – Cesar Chavez Day 		<i>Make this a day “on” not a day “off” – engage in a local volunteer project!</i>

<u>Class Date</u>	<u>Class Topic/Activities</u>	<u>Items Due</u>	<u>Reminders/Notes</u>
November 3 Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Class – Spring Break 		<i>Reminder: Draft of Agency Feedback Letter due next week.</i>
November 10 Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Compass: East – the future Career Development – future service options Review Advocacy Assignment 	Due: Draft of Agency Feedback Letter	
November 17 Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interconnectedness and impact Review agency feedback letter 	If you are going to take advantage of turning in a draft of your celebration paper to the instructor for feedback, it must be received today!	<i>Final Advocacy assignment due next week</i>
November 24 Week 14 NO CLASS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection compass: North – infinite possibility Preview and initial work on group reflection project 	Due: Final Advocacy Assignment	<i>Due next week: Final Feedback Letter, Student Evaluation of Service-Learning Placement Site, and reflection journal</i>
December 1 Week 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class debate on mandatory service Finish work on group reflection projects 	Due: Final Agency Feedback Letter, Student Evaluation of Service-Learning Placement Site, reflection journal	<i>Check with instructor on the status of your grade. Due next week: Celebration Paper</i>
December 8 Week 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group reflection project presentations Course feedback Instructor evaluation 	Due: Celebration Paper	<i>Your Completion Verification Form and agency evaluation of the student are due next week.</i>
December 15 Week 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final. 	Due: Completion Verification Form and agency evaluation of the student. Turn into the instructor in Thomas Administration, Room 107 by 12:00 PM.	