

# Community Service 101 - Community Service Internship

## Course Outline

Fall 2009

Thank you for enrolling in the Community Service 101 course (Com S 101). The time you spend on community service activities could be the most rewarding time you will commit to a class while at Fresno State. The following information will help you understand the Com S 101 course requirements and give you a greater appreciation of the benefits of community service. Please read this information carefully! For further information on the Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning (Richter Center) or the Com S 101 class you can contact the Richter Center staff at:

**Address:** Jan & Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning  
California State University, Fresno  
5241 N. Maple Avenue, TA 120  
Fresno, California 93740-8027

**Instructor:** Chris Fiorentino

**Office Location:** Thomas Administration Building, Room 107 (NEW OFFICE AS OF 8/21/09)

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

**E-mail:** chrisf@csufresno.edu      **Web Page:** <http://www.csufresno.edu/cesl>

### 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, but we strongly suggest phoning the Richter Center Office to make an appointment. Students are also encouraged to communicate with the instructor using E-mail.

### Required Text

There is no text for this course, however, students are expected to read and abide by this Course Outline. Students should also read any material relevant to the agency where they will conduct their service work.

### Attendance Policy

Students must attend one of the initial Orientation Workshops and the semester end Reflection Workshops. If a student fails to attend an entire Reflection Workshop, the student will receive a Non-Credit grade for the course.

### Instructor Policies

Students are expected to complete all course requirements, including submitting required forms and papers in a timely fashion; completing the Reflection Project; and attending a Reflection Workshop. No late papers will be accepted without prior authorization from the instructor.

Incomplete grades will be given only when two-thirds of the required hours have been completed prior to the end of the semester. Additionally, no student will receive a grade of Incomplete unless they formally request such a grade in writing prior to the last Reflection Workshop. Students should personally discuss this option with the instructor at least two weeks in advance of the end of the semester.

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 paper work required for the course. Additionally, students should keep copies of all completed forms and papers.

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

## **Mission and Philosophy of the Richter Center**

The Richter Center is dedicated to *improving the education and development of our students and helping create a better community through service and learning*. The Com S 101 course is just one of the many initiatives sponsored by the Richter Center. Our efforts are based on the belief that, as part of a complete educational experience, community service-learning fosters student academic, personal and career development, and strengthens a commitment to community involvement. 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.

## **Course Objectives - What You Can Expect To Gain**

Community service provides a variety of benefits to the students, the community and to the organizations where students serve. It is very common that volunteers get much more out of their service experience than they expect. Also, the community gains resources and services that would otherwise be unavailable.

It is the objective of this course that students will:

- 1) Gain a greater understanding of themselves, their community and their role in the community;
- 2) Develop personally, professionally and academically through their service experience;
- 3) Apply their skills and knowledge to societal problems, thereby providing meaningful 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, service activities provide students with the opportunity to explore 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 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. So, when you volunteer the benefits positively impact you, the agency where you serve and the individuals served by that agency. This is a *win-win-win* scenario!

## **Academic Integrity and Protocol**

The University has a policy on Cheating and Plagiarism as well as a policy regarding appropriate student conduct. These policies may be reviewed in the California State University, Fresno *Catalog* or the *Schedule of Courses*. If any student is caught falsifying paperwork or involved in any other type of cheating or plagiarism, they will be given a Non-Credit grade and be reported to university officials. Questions regarding expected academic integrity or expected protocol may be discussed with the instructor.

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 can be made. The Office of Services to Students with Disabilities is located in the Library, Room 1202. They can also be reached by phone at 278-2811. Staff of this office can assist you with arrangements and special services.

### **Community Service 101 Credits**

The course is open to all Fresno State students, regardless of their year in school. Up to six units of Com S 101 can be used as elective credits towards graduation. Students can sign-up for 1, 2, or 3 units of Com S 101 per semester. Students may only enroll in one class section, 3 units maximum, per semester. (Please note: although only six units can apply towards graduation, all units earned will be reflected on your transcripts.) For each unit of Com S 101 credit, a minimum of 45 hours of community service must be performed.

**1 unit of credit requires 45 hours of service.**

**2 units of credit require 90 hours of service.**

**3 units of credit require 135 hours of service.**

**Students will only be graded for the number of units they enroll in and the subsequent requirements of that section. Students may not earn and will not be graded for a different number of units than which they enrolled in at the start of the semester.**

**Please note that Com S 101 credits do not count towards any major or internship requirements, or independent study credits in other departments, without the prior consent of the appropriate department personnel. You may not count service hours for other courses towards the requirements of this course.**

### **MINIMUM COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**All students in Com S 101 are graded on a Credit/Non-Credit basis. In order to receive credit, a student must:**

- ◆ **Fulfill and verify the completion of the appropriate number of service hours listed above.** (Use the Completion Verification Form.)
- ◆ **Complete a Reflection Project on your service experience.** (See Page 6 of this outline.)
- ◆ **Attend a semester end "Reflection Workshop".** (See Page 5 of this outline.)

**These requirements must be completed by the end of the last scheduled Reflection Workshop. (This is not the same as the last day of finals!) If you do not fully complete all of the above requirements by the appropriate deadline you will receive a Non-Credit grade for the course.**

### **Course Deadlines**

There are course deadlines you must follow in order to receive credit. These deadlines include:

- ◆ Attend a Com S 101 orientation workshop scheduled during the first two to three weeks of the semester. If you do not attend one of these workshops, you must meet in-person with a Richter Center staff member before the end of the fourth week of the semester.
- ◆ Submit your completed "Community Service 101 Agreement Form" to the Richter Center office no later than the end of the fourth week of the semester. If you do not submit an agreement form indicating the agency where you will volunteer, your hours may not be accepted as fulfilling course requirements!
- ◆ Complete the required hours, have your "Completion Verification Form" signed by your site supervisor, complete your "Reflection Project", attend a "Reflection Workshop" and submit the appropriate papers by the last scheduled workshop. (See pages 5 and 6 for details on the Reflection Workshops and Reflection Project.)

### **Finding a Volunteer Service Position**

There are virtually no limits to the types of service positions available. If you work as a volunteer (unpaid), your activities are community service oriented, and the agency you serve is a nonprofit, you may count the hours towards this course. There are several ways to access information on hundreds of volunteer opportunities.

You are encouraged to select a community service assignment that will provide you with the best experience possible. **Please refer to the section titled “Capitalizing On Your Service Opportunity” below.** Don't be afraid to "shop around" for the best service opportunities. However, you should be sure to arrange your service experience by the fourth week of the semester. **Start contacting agencies you are interested in right away! It may take several weeks to arrange your service assignment and begin your hours.**

A searchable, internet database of local service opportunities is available to help you identify possible service opportunities. This database is constantly updated, growing, and is one of the best resource in the region for finding volunteer opportunities. The website address is <http://www.volunteerfresno.org>

The Richter Center maintains *Community Service Information Binders* with information on a variety of service opportunities. This resource can be found in the Center office, Thomas Administration, Room 107. For personal guidance in selecting a volunteer position contact the instructor or a Richter Center staff member.

Remember that there are literally hundreds of volunteer service opportunities available to you. From Anthropology to Zoology, there are service opportunities that meet your academic and career interests. There are even a number of unique and rewarding opportunities on campus.

Please note that there are a few types of service activities that are not eligible for Community Service 101 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 101 credits. 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 volunteer for an elected official but cannot work on any individual's campaign or election effort,
- ◆ Work for a Church or religious organization that includes evangelizing or proselytizing. (Completing your service work with a religious organization is allowed, however, that service cannot include the above activities.)

Also, you may not count hours for this course that you have volunteered prior to the semester when you take Com S 101, unless you have made previous and specific arrangements with the course instructor.

### **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.** The hours you must put in are the same regardless of where you serve, so it is up to you to choose the service site 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 different opportunities before choosing a service site.** With over 700 nonprofit agencies in Fresno alone, your options are incredibly numerous. Don't automatically go back to the same service you have always done. Try something new – but start investigating opportunities now!

- **Find a service opportunity that relates to your academic major and/or career goal.** This is a great opportunity to understand how the theories you learn in classes apply to problems in the community. It is also an excellent opportunity to explore careers, build your resume, and develop your network of contacts.
- **Look for a service opportunity that addresses an issue that 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.** Your responsibilities to the agency and the people served make this an *extremely important commitment*. Just because you are a volunteer does not mean your obligations are decreased. Dress professionally, be on time, 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 volunteer work, it may be a springboard to future opportunities, including references, job referrals, part-time work or full-time career opportunities.
- **Regularly discuss your volunteer work assignment(s) with your supervisor.** If you wish to be involved in specific activities at your agency, ask to do so. If your service work is not what you envisioned, talk to your supervisor about your concerns. Many times they will be willing to involve you in new projects if they know you are interested. Students should read “*A Student’s Guide to Successful Service-Learning*” handout, or visit [www.csufresno.edu/cesl/sl/sturesources/index.shtml](http://www.csufresno.edu/cesl/sl/sturesources/index.shtml).

### **Reflection Workshop**

You are **required** to attend one entire Reflection Workshop during the final weeks of the semester. A discussion regarding the individual’s experiences and comments by the course instructor will take place. **Attendance at one of these Workshops is a major requirement for Com S 101 credit! It does not matter how many times you have completed the course prior to this semester. There are no exceptions.**

The following is a list of the dates and times that these workshops will be held. A variety of days and times are provided to accommodate all class members. **Please make plans now to attend one of these workshops so that work or other obligations will not interfere. You must attend the entire workshop.**

#### **Com S 101 REFLECTION WORKSHOP SCHEDULE – Fall 2009**

Wednesday	December 9 <sup>th</sup>	1pm-2pm	USU 311
Thursday	December 10 <sup>th</sup>	11am-12pm	USU 311
Thursday	December 10 <sup>th</sup>	5pm-6pm	USU 311
Monday	December 14 <sup>th</sup>	12pm-1pm	USU 311
Monday	December 14 <sup>th</sup>	3pm-4pm	USU 311

**(USU = University Student Union Building)**

Remember, attendance at one of these workshops is a course requirement. There will be no exceptions unless cleared with the instructor prior to the 1st Reflection Workshop. A significant alternative assignment will be required, if approved by instructor.

**Students are encouraged to turn in Reflection Projects (see page 6) during the Reflection Workshop that they attend, but they may be turned in at other times prior to the deadline. The deadline for all requirements is Monday, December 14th at 3 p.m. (last Fall 2009 Reflection Workshop).**

## REFLECTION PROJECT

### **Overview of Assignment Options**

In order to help you maximize your learning experience, you are required to complete a Reflection Project, which deals with your service experience. This project can take one of two forms; a written *Reflection Paper* or a *Portfolio Project*. Choose and complete either the Reflection Paper or Portfolio Project as described below:

**Reflection Paper.** There are specific requirements for the Reflection Paper, depending on the number of units of Community Service 101 you enroll in:

- ◆ Students in the **1 unit** section must write a 3 page paper (600 word minimum).
- ◆ Students in the **2 unit** section must write a 4 page paper (900 word minimum).
- ◆ Students in the **3 unit** section must write a 5 page paper (1,200 word minimum).

This paper provides an opportunity to reflect on all the aspects, positive and negative, of your community service. **Write about your personal reaction to your service experience.** In writing the paper, **all students should answer the first three questions.** To complete the remainder of the paper you may choose to address any of the remaining questions/prompts, or other points as you see fit.

- **What were the most meaningful things (no more than three) that came out of your service experience?**
- **What impact will this experience have on your future (how has this service experience changed you)?**
- **How effective was your service at addressing the basic or underlying problem(s) that exist and what could you do differently to have a more substantial impact in the future?**
- What challenged you the most about this assignment?
- Has this experience changed you? How? If not, explain why.
- What did you learn about a particular issue, your community, yourself or others that surprised you?
- In what ways did you impact a person, group of people, or problem in our community through your service?
- How has this experience impacted your interest in volunteering in the future?
- Are there things other than direct service, such as writing to an elected official, voting, speaking in public forums, etc., that you can do to help address the problems you dealt with in the community? (Describe)
- What would you change about your service experience if you could?

Papers must be typed. Double-spaced is acceptable, approximately 12 font print. If your paper is too short, or is poorly written, you will not receive credit for the paper or the course.

**\*Feedback Letter:** Nonprofit representatives have repeatedly told us that feedback from volunteers is very helpful. These letters are used by agencies for program development, grants, volunteer recruitment and more. **All students are encouraged to 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. This letter may be used as a substitute for one page of the Reflection Project requirement. A copy must be included with your Reflection Paper.

**Portfolio Project.** As an alternative to the reflection paper described above, this type of reflection activity is designed to give more flexibility in reflecting on your service. It can include things like a photographic portfolio of your service work; drawing(s), painting(s) or a crafts project; a video/DVD on your service work or some similar project that allows you to vividly represent your service *experience*. **Each portfolio must include a minimum two page explanation of your project and a Feedback Letter. Portfolios will not be returned. Students should be sure to produce a substantial project worthy of a credit grade in a college level course.**

**Please discuss this option with your instructor in advance.**

CESL: 7/27/09