

Self and Society, A Service Learning Externship

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Course Description

Most of what we know comes from experience, but do we notice how and what we learn? How often do we intentionally focus on events in our lives and carefully reflect on what they mean and how we will apply new learning in the future? Externship is an opportunity for students to develop an experiential project and to use that project as a vehicle for studying themselves as learners. This course asks you to depart from what may be comfortable and create an experience that is out of the ordinary for you. In order to do so, students will develop service learning projects at non-profit organizations in their locality. Students will generate projects based upon their interests, but all projects must serve disadvantaged populations and meet an identifiable community need. At the same time as we explore how we learn by doing, we will also draw connections between ourselves and our social context. Though each student's experience will be unique, all students will explore where they sit – socially, economically, culturally – and reflect upon inequality in our society. We will also explore ways to "see ourselves learning" as we participate in online exercises and workshops so that we can enhance your lifelong experiential learning skills.

Combining Service and Learning* At the School for New Learning

Service Learning

- **Connects** meaningful community service with academic learning
- **Offers** thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs
- **Provides** structured time for reflection on their service experience in light of learning goals
- **Extends** learning beyond the classroom or online learning environment
- **Stimulates** students' intellectual and personal growth

*For more information see Jane Kendall's *Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service*. Volume I and II (1990). Other information taken from materials developed by Portland State University's Center

for Academic Excellence Community-University Partnerships and Eastern Michigan University's Office of Academic Service Learning.

Essential Elements

Community Voice: Provide space for community partners to define their needs.

Reciprocity: The service learning experience must be valuable for both the student and the community organization. Service learning involves equal exchange.

Meaningful Service: Student service must meet an actual community need and link directly to the student learning.

Reflection: Intentional, systematic reflection enables students to situate prior knowledge within the new ideas and information generated by the service learning experience.

Development: The service-learning process occurs in stages. Be sensitive to the fact your service learning experiences will vary throughout the quarter.

The Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning at DePaul University

"Self and Society, A Service Learning Externship" is supported by the Steans Center:

"The Irwin W. Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning was founded to integrate the service concept into the University's curricula. DePaul's commitment to service is part of its Vincentian, Catholic, and Urban Mission: to foster through higher education a deep respect for the dignity of all persons, especially the materially, culturally, and spiritually deprived; and to instill in its students a dedication of service to others. The Steans Center engages students, faculty, and community organizations in relationships that seek to fulfill DePaul's mission and benefit the Chicago community. The Center is staffed to support community organizations, faculty, and students through a variety of service-learning projects."

Founded in 1998, the Steans Center serves faculty, students, and community partners and works with courses throughout DePaul's curriculum. The Center builds long term partnerships with community organizations, developing service learning opportunities that meet both community and student needs. Collaborating with more than 100 community-based organizations, Steans supports approximately 900 students per academic quarter in more than 40 courses.

All students in "Self and Society" will be supported by a **Service Learning Coordinator (SLC)** employed by the Steans Center. The role of the SLC is to act as liaison between community-based organizations and students, providing logistical support. The Service Learning Coordinator for this course will be available via email. (S)He is available to answer your questions and help you communicate with your service learning site, especially when difficulties arise. If you receive an email from your Service Learning Coordinator, please respond. SLCs are there to support you, but they can only help if students communicate with them.

For more information on the Steans Center and the services it offers students, visit:

<http://cbsl.depaul.edu/students.htm>

For more information about DePaul University's Vincentian Mission, visit:

<http://mission.depaul.edu/html/mission/index.html>

Placement Process: Choosing Your Service Learning Site

Students will either: a) select a service site partnered with the Steans Center, or b) develop their own service learning site. It is imperative that students are placed at their Service Learning sites by Week 3 of the quarter. The **Service Learning Coordinator** and course instructor are available to help facilitate this process for you. You are encouraged to begin this process **before** the beginning of the quarter.

Specific instructions for selecting a Steans Center sponsored service learning site and for developing your own placement can be found in the Course Resources section of the Course Web Page. The course instructor will also email these forms to students prior to the beginning of the academic quarter, so that students can begin to select their placement sites in advance.

Course Resources

Course readings can be found on E-Reserves, Course Resources, or on the World Wide Web. Follow the instructions in the Learning Activities section of each Course Module to locate required readings, instructional handouts, and service learning forms.

Additional Resources on Service Learning can be found on the World Wide Web. There are national service learning organizations that provide information, foster community, and advocate civic engagement. The websites of the three leading organizations are listed below. If you are interested in learning more about service learning, point your browser to:

National Service Learning Clearinghouse: <http://www.servicelearning.org/>

Idealist: <http://www.idealistoncampus.org/>

Campus Compact: <http://www.compact.org/students/index.php>

Course Competences

Competence	Competence Statement
L-10	Can reflect on the learning process and methods used in an experiential project.
L-11	Can critically reflect on personal and social beliefs about individualism and social inequality in light of an experiential project.

How the Competences will be Demonstrated in this Course

L-10: Externship - Can reflect on the learning process and methods used in an experiential project.

In order to demonstrate competence, students will develop an independent service learning project, committing to at least 15 hours of work during the quarter and a minimum of 5 visits to the community-based organization. The Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning will provide guidelines and support for students in identifying potential service projects and organization, verifying your placement at an organizations, monitoring your progress, and trouble shooting if difficulties arise. Students who reside in the Chicagoland community may do service work at organizations that are already partnered with the Steans Center.

The Externship Competence has five criteria that illuminate our learning goals for the quarter:

Can identify and explain one or more personal learning goals.

Two important components of experiential learning are goal setting and self assessment. Initially, you will begin to set their own learning goals as you plan your learning project, through a brainstorming exercise and online discussion. You will also

complete a Learning Styles Inventory and LSI Self Assessment. Also, you will revisit your learning goals at midterm and at the end of the quarter in order to reflect on how your experiential project is affecting your learning goals.

Can apply a model of learning from experience to reflect on, articulate and analyze what one learned from a particular experience.

There are multiple models of experiential learning developed by scholars. In this course, we will focus on one by applying the Kolb learning cycle to the service learning experiences. In online discussions and journaling assignments, we will use the cycle as a model for critical reflection, retelling experiences, exploring personal reactions, contextualizing experiences in course readings (making generalizations based on academic learning and experience), and considering how this new learning (about themselves as learners and about social privilege and oppression) might be applied in your experiential project.

Can identify potential applications of what one has learned to new circumstances.

Throughout the quarter, we will reflect upon the broader implications of our learning experience. Course exercises will ask you to reflect upon what your project has taught you about how to consciously learn from experience, asking: What have I learned from this experience that might be applied in my work place, personal life, ongoing academic study, etc? What changes would I make when designing future projects?

Can compare and contrast learning styles and strategies used for the project against one's learning preferences.

Throughout the quarter, we will do exercises that help us explore various learning styles, identify our preferences, and apply them to our projects.

Can assess the method(s) used in terms of its strengths and weaknesses for achieving one's learning goals.

In online discussions and journaling exercises, we will examine the methods we have employed to examine our learning experiences, including reflective journaling, dialogue with fellow students and staff at community-based organizations, "doing" service, etc.

L-11 Can critically reflect on personal and social beliefs about individualism and social inequality in light of an experiential project.

This competence asks us to explore our place in society, within a web of social relations and hierarchies, varying by race, gender, culture, socio-economic class, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. Depending on the service learning projects developed, you may analyze one or more of these social forces.

Criteria:

Can reflect upon personal assumptions and beliefs about social inequality.

Can reflect on the role of service in a democratic society.

Can apply learning from service in a project that takes action.

In order to demonstrate competence, you will analyze course readings and materials that define social oppression and privilege as well as provide models for placing personal experience in social context. The competences ask us to draw connections between what we learn about ourselves in our experiential projects and what we learn about others. Additionally, you will demonstrate competence by participating in online discussions that ask you to link your learning projects to course readings. In order to

provide everyone with the opportunity to apply your learning, you will draft a project proposal that addresses a social problem or issue at your service site.

Course Structure

This course consists of 10 modules. The estimated time to complete each module is 1 week.

To view the course schedule, click on the **Schedule** link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.

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Assessment

Percentage distribution of Assessments

Learning Goals Brainstorming Exercise	70 pts
Student Information Sheet and Guidelines Form	10 pts
Service Learning Contract	10 pts
Journal Entries 1-3	100 pts each 300 pts
Final Self Assessment	100 pts
Signed Quarterly Time Sheet	10 pts
Discussion Boards Participation (20 pts each)	40%

Course Grading Scale

Externship is designed as a Pass/No Pass course. In order to pass the course, students must earn at least a **C Average** on class assignments. Students must also turn in all assignments, complete the service learning requirement, and participate in all required discussions. Missing assignments or an incomplete service obligation will result in an automatic No Pass for the course.

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

SNL Grading Policy for Lifelong Learning Courses

In certain SNL courses in the Lifelong Learning Area of the BA curriculum, instructors regularly use the pass/fail grading system. However, SNL also offers students the

opportunity in several of these courses to select a "Grading" option where grades A through C- represent passing performance. The faculty member and the individual student together decide which system will best promote the student's learning in that particular course. With no exceptions, a student must obtain permission from the instructor to use the grade option by the beginning of the third week of the quarter. After the third week of the quarter the assessment style agreed upon, whether pass/fail or grading, cannot be changed. The instructor is required to provide the student the specific assessment criteria by which a grade will be determined prior to the student officially selecting this option. Grading criteria shall appear in the syllabus along with pass/fail assessment criteria.

Lifelong learning courses that already employ a grading system such as *Quantitative Reasoning* and *Collaborative Learning* will continue to use this system. The Lifelong learning courses *Learning Assessment Seminar*, *Foundations*, and *Summit Seminar* will continue to employ the pass/fail system exclusively. This policy applies to the other lifelong learning competencies and courses including, *Academic Writing for Adults*, *Critical Thinking*, *Research Seminar*, and *Externship*. The pass/fail policy and procedure of the university found in the student handbook should be followed where a student wishes to seek this option for a graded course.

General Assessment Criteria for All Writing Assignments

All written assignments should follow the accepted practices of standard English grammar and usage. Be careful to cite appropriately any words or ideas you borrow from another writer, using APA format. All papers and journals must be word-processed, double spaced, with one inch margins, and a 12 pt typeface.

Papers must be submitted as attachments in the Assignments area of the course website. Word is the supported word processing software. If you do not use Word, then you must save your files as .rtf (rich text format). When you post them as attachments the files MUST include your last name as part of the file name: e.g. RappJournal1.doc or RappJournal1.rtf

Word is the standard word processor. If you do not use Microsoft Word, please save you work as a .rtf file.

The assessment will strive to embody four qualities: clarity, integrity, flexibility and empathy.

Assessment Criteria for your Major Assignments by Competence

Journaling: The Service Learning Journal will carry the most weight, compared to the other assignments required in the course.

What is a service learning journal?

*Your journal is where you reflect on your service experience, connecting it to issues raised by the course and examining your process of experiential learning.

*It is important to write an entry in your S-L journal as soon as possible after you do your service work, so that your impressions and reflections will be as fresh.

*Each journal entry you turn in should relate to one service visit.

*The length of each entry in your S-L journal will vary. They should be at least 3 pages or 750 words.

Format

1. **Doing** (Concrete Experience)

First, write an account of the events of the day. Don't evaluate, just write the facts. Describe what you did. This should be the shortest section of your journal entry, no more than 1/2 page (150-200 words).

2. **Reflecting** (Reflective Observation)

Next, describe your feelings and perceptions about what happened during the day. This is your subjective account. What catches your attention? What gets you angry, upset, what piques your curiosity? Talk about your impressions, ideas, feelings. What makes you feel satisfied, disappointed, hopeful?

3. **Thinking** (Abstract Conceptualization)

Analyze how you are learning from experience. Draw connections between your experiences, personal reactions, and the issues raised by the course. This is where you generalize from your service experience and draw conclusions about the social meanings of what you have learned. Consider the following questions to get you thinking:

How does your service experience resonate with class topics/readings? Where might your previous assumptions regarding service or the issues raised in the course be shortsighted or faulty? Given your experiences, do you have any critiques of the theories/issues in the readings/class discussions?

4. **Applying** (Active Experimentation)

This is where you step outside of yourself and observe yourself learning. You can draw on the exercises we do in the course Discussion Boards about your learning styles or profile. Think about what you are learning and how you are learning it. How has this service learning experience helped you understand the way you think and approach learning? How has learning from service affected your understanding of the issues we study in class? How will you apply what you have learned as you continue your service learning project?

Journaling: Rubric for Assessment

Journal entries will be assessed based on the following rubric. Comments and feedback will refer to the levels of reflection described below. Journal entries are integrative and process oriented. In writing reflective journal entries throughout the quarter, students will develop and practice the skills identified in both the L-10 and L-11 Competences.

Levels of Reflection in Service Learning Journals

Experiencing (Description of the Service Experience)

1. The journal entry describes and summarizes significant events the student experienced while doing community service.
2. The journal entry describes, in detail, the events the student experienced while doing community service. The entry may spend a disproportionate amount of time and space summarizing events without selecting them according to their significance.
3. The journal entry inadequately describes the events of the service learning experience. The entry may be incomplete or unclear.

Reflecting (Personal Reactions to the Service Experience)

1. The journal entry explores how service work has stimulated the student's feelings and personal growth, exploring the implications of their personal reactions by considering the people (s)he has encountered, the social issue (s)he is confronting, the possible impact of the service work, etc.
2. The journal entry alludes to the student's feelings about the service work, mentioning that the service work has affected them, without exploring more deeply the roots of his/her personal reactions or neglecting to consider the social issue or people (s)he encountered.
3. The journal entry does not describe or explore the student's personal reactions to the service experience.

Thinking (Analyzing the Service Experience by Drawing Connections with Course Readings/Themes)

1. The journal entry identifies a main argument or issue presented by an author and takes a position on whether the argument resonates with the service experience, providing specific examples. The journal has a speculative tone that hypothesizes as to causes and connections, reflects on questions and dilemmas, and/or draws general conclusions about the issues raised by the course and the service experience.
2. The journal entry identifies connections between the course readings and the service experience, and may list how they are similar or different. The journal entry refers to the readings rather than analyzing them.
3. The journal entry does not refer to the readings or draw connections between course issues and the service experience.

Applying (Active Experimentation)

1. The journal entry applies what the student has learned at the service site and from course readings/discussions by speculating on problems or issues that are raised by the service experience and exploring ways to address these problems. The entry also examines the student's attempts to change their behavior or interactions with those at the service site, exploring the impact of his/her actions on others as well as the impact of the experience on the student.
2. The journal entry explores what the student has learned from his/her service work by pointing to problems or issues raised by the service experience and may explore what actions the student can take to address these problems.
3. The journal entry does not discuss how the student is applying learning to his/her service work.

Self Assessment(s)

Throughout the quarter, students will be asked to assess themselves as learners, based on the Learning Styles Inventory they complete at the beginning of the quarter, which develops that L-10 competence. Self Assessment requires more than completing assignment forms. Students will be graded on:

- a. The level of reflection in their self assessments: self assessment involves description, personal reflection, examining assumptions and expectations, as well as analysis of the service learning experience in light of course readings/discussions
- b. The ability to generate and adapt learning goals based on the service learning

- experience
- c. The ability to experiment and apply new knowledge about oneself as a learner over the course of the quarter

Online Discussion

Assessment Criteria for Online Discussion Participation

In the online discussions your responses will be assessed on whether one or more of the following are present:

1. Offering up ideas or resources and inviting a critique of them
2. Asking challenging questions
3. Articulating, explaining and supporting positions on ideas
4. Exploring and supporting issues by adding explanations and examples
5. Reflecting on and re-evaluating personal opinions
6. Offering a critique, challenging, discussing and expanding ideas of others
7. Negotiating interpretations, definitions and meanings
8. Summarizing previous contributions and asking the next question
9. Proposing actions based on ideas that have been developed

The above list was adapted from Gilly Simpson's book *E-Moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*. London: Kogan Page: p.143 (2000).

Online Participation Guidelines for this course

A significant part of your online learning experience involves learning with and from your classmates and the instructor in the online discussions and group assignments.

Active participation means sharing information and resources and posting your ideas and critiquing and expanding on the ideas of others in a collegial fashion. This discussion is informal in the sense that it is meant to encourage interested discussion. You are expected to follow accepted standards of English spelling, grammar and usage.

These discussions are for you to exchange your reflections with your classmates and instructor about what you are learning. The discussions will be organized into forums around the particular topic you are studying each week.

You may be asked by the instructor to take leadership in a certain group for a certain time of the course. You will receive further instructions from your instructor if this occurs.

You should contribute your responses to the particular assignment for that particular discussion heading which will be posted.

For each Discussion Board, you are required to make at least one original contribution to each topic and respond to one classmate's contribution.

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Policies

Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and

the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university from taking further punitive action including dismissal from the university.

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-7290 (phone) or 773-325-7296 (TTY); or call PLuS at 773-325-1677.

Incomplete Grades

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume

that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve "interactions" – interviewing and or observing other people – discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s).

As such, these activities qualify as "research" with "human subjects" and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning's Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no "harm" – physical, mental, or social – does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
 - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an "informed consent" document. For information on creating an "informed consent document" see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>

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Course Expectations

Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are **not** self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least **FOUR** times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact your course instructor immediately.

Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours over the weekend.

Your Role as a Student

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

You will learn with and from your classmates in the online discussions and group assignments, sharing information and resources and posting your ideas and critiquing and expanding on the ideas of others in a collegial fashion. You are encouraged to bring your questions to the online discussions and respond to each other – do not always wait for the instructor to answer questions.

If events arise in your life that will prevent your attendance in class for one week or more, it is your responsibility to make sure that your instructor is advised at the first possible opportunity. You, or a friend or family member can do that by email, postal mail or phone. Someone could also send a note to snlonline@depaul.edu. This will allow your instructor to assist you to make up missing work. If these events occur early in the quarter and you wait until the end of the quarter before informing your instructor, do not expect to receive an Incomplete.

Credits

This course was designed and produced by Ann Rapp and staff of SNL Online at DePaul University.

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