



GNST 1100

Division: Office of VP for Academic Affairs

Department: General Studies

Course: GNST 1100

Title: Introduction to Civic Engagement and Service-Learning

Catalog Description:

This course will provide students an opportunity to work with other students, community members, and community agencies in organizing and carrying out a service project that addresses an existing community issue or need. Students will learn the theory and philosophy behind service-learning as a teaching pedagogy as they become more aware and engaged in the community. This course is required of students seeking the Service-Scholar designation. This course is repeatable for credit.

General Education Requirements: N/A

Semesters Offered: TBA

Credit/Time Requirement: Credit: 2; Lecture: 2; Lab: 0

Clock/Hour Requirements: 0

Offered for Non-Credit: No

Credit/Clock Comments: A service project (lab) will be required each week outside of classtime

Prerequisites: none

Justification:

Service-learning is an experiential teaching pedagogy--an alternative to traditional classroom lecture and lab work. It is underused at Snow College, although many teachers and administrators here are interested in implementing the method because of the potential for learning while at the same time fulfilling a need in the community. Snow College is a member of the Utah Campus Compact, an organization dedicated to increasing the level of civic engagement, community service, and service-learning in academia. "Snow College is focused on developing the whole student and encourages student involvement in ... service learning opportunities." It is also the goal of the college to "enrich our communities through service learning, volunteer service, civic engagement..." (From the Snow College Mission and Roles Statement). This class is key to fulfilling this mission. It will introduce service-learning to students and thereby facilitate the implementation of service components into courses across the campus. Participants will become better citizens and better students as a result of their increased engagement in the community. Similar courses offered at other institutions include: College of Eastern Utah (GHUM 110 SL "Practice and Philosophies of Civic Responsibility," RECR 2988 "Service Learning," SLSC 2988 SL "Service Leadership"), Salt Lake Community College (Humanities 1900 "Service-Learning Seminar"), Brigham Young University (Student Development 214R Service), University of Utah (UGS 3025 "Service-Learning Scholar Seminar").

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students

- Learn the value of service learning as an experiential teaching pedagogy, via community service planning, action, and reflection.
- Gain awareness of current societal issues facing Snow College, Sanpete County, the United States and the world through lectures, texts, current newspapers and periodicals, and through community service projects that address a local issue.
- Improve public speaking skills through opportunities for oral presentation to the class and community members.
- Build an understanding of the importance of the individual in the community.
- Explore their value systems, pre-conceptions, and stereotypes of societal issues and volunteerism, through readings, service projects, critical reflections, guest presentations, and discussions.
- Find connections between the community and themselves and observe how their efforts as an individual can help to solve relevant community problems.
- Gain a basic understanding of varied approaches to recognizing needs in the community and addressing those needs.
- Learn, apply, and improve communication, leadership, and organizational skills.
- Explore their personal beliefs of service and their relationship to the community.

Content:

Assignments will include:

- Weekly readings from texts, newspapers, etc., accompanied by worksheets or quizzes
- Writing in a weekly journal
- Participation in planning and carrying out a group service project and leading the class in a critical reflection
- Group and individual oral presentations based on themes and projects of the course
- Leadership of the student's individual integrated service project
- A final paper/oral presentation (reflection) of what the student learned via community service and increased awareness of societal issues

Grading:

- Attendance 10%
- Assignments/oral presentations/quizzes/class participation 30%
- Group project 10%
- Individual integrated service project 40%
- Final 10%

The lecture class will be held only once each week per section, so attendance is essential and will be a portion of the final grade. There will also be a weekly lab for planning and executing the capstone service project, and volunteering in the community.

The exam will be based on the theory and philosophy behind civic engagement and how the student applies that knowledge and volunteer experience to his/her personal view of what it means to be a good citizen.

The capstone project will be evaluated in part by the student, part by the instructor and also by the individual or entity in the community that is receiving the service.

General Education Outcomes:

1) Read effectively, constructively, and critically.

Students will be assigned to read a current local newspaper each week and a class discussion of societal issues will begin each lecture. They will also be reading essays from *The Impossible Will Take a Little While* by Paul Lobe and tying the experiences of Desmond Tutu, Martin Luther King Jr., and others, to their own situation. They will also read and discuss the short poetic chapters of *House on Mango Street*, and find the subtle references to the societal problems facing a Latina child growing up in poverty in the inner city.

2) Write clearly, informatively, and persuasively.

Students will write a weekly journal describing their learning experience via volunteer work. They will also be asked to write reactions to assigned readings. The final exam will include a written reflection of service work done throughout the semester.

3) Speak effectively in a variety of contexts.

Students will be provided multiple occasions to speak in public--to the class as well as to individuals and groups in the community. They will provide oral presentations individually, as well as in groups to report on group projects. The oral presentations will be evaluated and students will be provided with feedback so they might improve for their next oral presentations.

8) Apply ethical reasoning to a variety of contexts.

Students must determine what issues facing the community are problems, what should be done to fix them, and whether or not they should be fixed. Students will be reading about local, national and world issues and learning through experience by participating in community service. They will be asked about these three communities of which they are a part--Is there is something they can do to help the situation? Should the situation be helped?

Key Performance Indicators:

Achievement of course objectives will be assessed through the assignments, reflections (written and verbal), discussions, and exams. Upon completion of this class students will:

- Understand the value of service learning as an alternative teaching and learning strategy
- Be more aware of societal issues facing the local community, the nation, and the world

- Have a better understanding of how these issues affect them individually and how they can make a difference through civic engagement
- Know the avenues, skills, and tools necessary for an individual to make positive changes in society
- Possess greater communication, leadership, and organizational skills
- Have established personal beliefs regarding volunteerism, service learning, and the individual's relationship to the community

Representative Text and/or Supplies:

- *The Impossible Will Take a Little While* by Paul Rogat Loeb
- *Soul of a Citizen* by Paul Rogat Loeb
- *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
- *How Can I Help?* by Ram Dass and Paul Gorman
- *The Open Space of Democracy* by Terry Tempest Williams

Optimum Class Size: 24

Maximum Class Size: 35

Signatures:

I hereby submit this course syllabus:

Sheryl James Bodrero, PhD, Associate Professor

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the General Studies Department:

Kim Cragun, MS, Associate Professor, Chair

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the Office of VP for Academic Affairs Division:

Gary Smith, Ph.D, , Dean

I have discussed the need for library resources related to this class with the person submitting the syllabus:

Lynn Anderson, MLIS, Technical Services Librarian (Main Campus)

Michelle Olsen, MLS, Campus Librarian (Richfield Campus)