
Service Learning in Buenos Aires

COURSE DESIGNATOR ARGN 3640/3641

Language of Instruction English or Spanish

NUMBER OF CREDITS 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The final academic objective will be a final paper / project presented by the students in either English or Spanish to get the according credits. The latter will require the previous close bonding of the students with the local community in which they have developed their service practice.

The development of the course involves Service activities in a series of Argentinean organizations working in contexts of poverty and vulnerability, expecting the three involved parts (community – organization – students) to be equally benefitted by the exchange.

The students will help in all sorts of tasks at the institutions while they learn firsthand what types of problems they face daily (malnutrition, unmet basic needs, education and dropout and / or elderly people at risk) and the way in which Argentines are living this experience, aggravated by the crisis of 2001 and the political and social context.

The classroom work will include exchange of experiences among the students and with the teacher, cooperative learning, the development of a personal journal in which each student shares his / her experiences, etc. The content of classes will be built in the combination of required readings and the experiences and interests of students.

LEVEL OF SPANISH REQUIRED:

- Final papers can be presented in Spanish, in which case the students will receive their credits in Spanish as well. At least two years (or four semesters) of previous Spanish classes are required.
- Students may choose to allocate their credits only to the service learning program. An intermediate level of Spanish (three semesters minimum) is still necessary due to the contact with local people in the service activities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course the students are expected to be able to:

- Participate and be integrated to the daily work of organizations in Argentina in contexts of vulnerability, working as they learn from them.
- Compare the Volunteer and social support structure in Argentina and the United States
- In case of choosing to pursue credits for Spanish, to show progress in the language, with special emphasis on the following areas:
 - a. resources to discuss, argue and criticize, in writing and orally;
 - b. lexical, grammatical and Sociopragmatic contents in which students are deficient and that are necessary to carry out the project well. Students will demand their own program.
- Work in a collaborative manner being responsible for their own learning (self learning), and secondly, learn from the micro-communities where they are integrated (families, classmates and institutions that host them).

This requires:

- a. watch and listen
- b. think critically;
- c. ask questions and / or ask for help when needed;
- d. open up to what's new and different;
- e. accept the reality of everyday work, even if it does not necessarily coincide with what was expected;
- f. discover what they can bring to the group and to engage with it: take the initiative and accept challenges for the common good.

METHODOLOGY (CONTENTS)

- Being a volunteer abroad: service learning and community participation. Definitions, etymology, related vocabulary, etc.
- USA and Argentina: the host countries.
 - a. What makes them special in the field of migration (throughout the course both cases will be permanently compared, counting on all the information with students).
 - b. Immigrants in Argentina and the U.S.: where they come from who they are, how they live, social mobility.
- Argentina: how the successive economic crises have affected the map of poverty. The "slums" / shanty towns. Living below the poverty line. Education and health. Contextual aspects: history, immigration, poverty vs. new poverty, role of Government.
- Conflicts and tensions.
 - a. Social Policy
 - b. Governmental actions.
 - c. The role of NPOs.
 - d. Daily life: stereotypes, prejudice, rejection and vulnerability.
 - e. Building a Culture of Solidarity.
- 5. Key tools for community work: negotiation, planning, interpersonal communication, empathy, etc. Institutional aspects: where can community work be developed. Civil society organizations, how to create a volunteer program, rights and duties of volunteers. Building a profession in Social and Community Work.
- 6. Projects for the future: has my experience changed the way in which I visualize my professional / personal future? How will I make use of lessons learnt? How will I continue cooperation with the Global South / Argentina?
 - a. Personal and group reflection on the return of students to the U.S., and the way in which they will:
 - i. Apply what they have learned in this course.
 - ii. Keep learning.
 - iii. Continue to collaborate.

GRADING

CRITERIA FOR GRADING AND GRADING STANDARDS

Summary of how grades are weighted:

Grading Rubric		
A	93-100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90-92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87-89	
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77-79	
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
D+	67-69	
D	60-66	
F	0-59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

STUDENT CONDUCT

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct and student needs. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.