

Community Engagement: Service-Learning in London

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: LNDN 3248

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 3

Course Description

This is an interdisciplinary course providing a unique opportunity to become directly involved in the realities of community engagement and grassroots activism and project work. It is designed to stimulate critical thought and reflection on the challenges and opportunities of community service and support students' personal and professional development, as well as introducing students to topical debates about how best to manage and respond to the challenges of a diverse, unequal city. The course will explore the historical, sociological, and political context of community and service in the United Kingdom and theories and models of leadership, organisational behaviour, and management in the context of community work.

CAPA is committed to experiential learning, intercultural comparison, diversity, community service, and personal and professional development in our community-based service experience. The course therefore combines classroom learning (1.5 hours/week) with practical exposure in placements (20 hours/week) to foster knowledge and understanding of community service in the UK today. Weekly seminars and readings enable participants to understand contemporary social dynamics and illuminate such topics as the theory and practice of community service; social inequalities; uneven access to services; and the changing role of the state, business, and nonprofit sector in community engagement and welfare provision.

Course Objectives

CAPA's "Service-Learning in London" course will prepare students with the critical, experiential, and analytical tools to understand the history, context, and practical operation of nonprofit agencies in the UK. Students will actively participate in the everyday life of their host society through a service-learning placement. The aim of the project placement is to create a connection with local communities and their hierarchies and structures to challenge students' preconceptions and stereotypes and enable them to look critically at issues of power and privilege, as well as address questions relating to identity, such as citizenship, class, gender, race, sexuality, age, and (dis)ability. Students will have the opportunity to develop their ability to reflect critically on their experiences, relate to others in diverse settings, and communicate their knowledge of service and community in oral presentations and in writing efficiently and confidently.

Methodology

The community-based service experience, combining an academic course with experience in the field, is a semester-long academic experience with a strong educational philosophy that utilizes community service, community-based research, and other civic engagement activities along with regular reflection to meet course goals and community needs. Students will be placed with nongovernmental organisations and other community-service organisations where they will fulfill their on-site service-learning requirement. Participants are directly engaged in community-based projects which integrate service, research, and formal academic study.

Through a combination of theory and practice, participants have an opportunity to learn from, participate in, and observe community leaders and activist groups in one of the most diverse and dynamic urban environments in the world. Participants will learn about the social contradictions of the city whilst participating in the everyday life of a neighbourhood.

The course consists of weekly seminars and workshops of 1.5 hours per week and 20 hours of community-based placement experience per week. Classroom sessions include training workshops and discussions, supplemented by field studies and site visits appropriate to the community work being undertaken by students in the class. Weekly seminars will analyse the interface between the theory and practice of community project work using an academic framework which includes readings, discussion of current events and news items, visits to relevant local agencies, and open dialogue. Time is also dedicated to reflection on the progression of students' project work and workplace experiences. Seminars will create space and opportunity for students to reflect, individually and collectively, on how they personally relate to the issues being studied, including how their British experience affects their ideas about community engagement in the USA. Discussion time will be devoted to challenging students to re-examine and redefine their own values in the light of their classroom learning and service experiences, in the hope that students will return from Britain and continue to provide service, coupled with critical reflection, in their home communities.

Unlike in an internship, where the focus may be on professional development, the primary focus in this program is for students to serve local communities and reflect on their project goals in an academic setting. The service-learning placements will be assigned by CAPA and the projects will meet needs identified by the community, to be determined by the instructor

and the organisation. Students will benefit both personally and academically from this experience in terms of reciprocity and co-learning. While there will be opportunities to gain professional skills at the placement, the primary focus of the experience will always be on the impact on beneficiaries being served.

Required Reading / Materials

Cress, Christine M., Peter J, Collier, Vicki L, Reitenauer et al. (2013): **Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities** (2nd edition), Stylus, Sterling, VA.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
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 fully meet 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.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Class participation, including weekly logbook and Paper 1 presentation	20%
Research Journal: 4 entries, each 250 words 1. My Single Story (week 3) 2-3. Service-Learning Reflections (weeks 6 and 9) 4. Informational Interview (week 11)	10%
Paper 1: Individual's Contribution to Service (Non-certificate students: 1,000 words) (Certificate students: 1,500 words)	10%
Paper 2: Organisation and Project Work (Non-certificate students: 2,000 words) (Certificate students: 3,500 words)	30%
Service-Learning Site Evaluation	10%
Final Presentation	20%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Paper 1: The Impact of Service: Individual Biography (10%) due Week 5

Non-certificate students: 1,000 words Certificate students: 1,500 words

Students will present their findings to one another in Week 6

Students will choose a British individual who is involved significantly in community service and research their work, the organisations and issue(s) with which they are involved, and the impacts that their work has had in British society and potentially in an international context. Potential examples might include but are not limited to individuals working in the fields of global health, homelessness, mental health, refugees and migrant advocacy, youth, education, prisoner rehabilitation, or human rights.

Paper 2 (30%): double-spaced, 12-point font, due in class week 13

Non-certificate students: 2,000 words

Certificate students: 3,500 words

Students will work individually or in small groups to conduct research on the status and needs of their project organisation and community—this research may incorporate a specifically tailored project set by the organisation, CAPA, and the instructor, or be based on direct service work with beneficiaries undertaken by students at their chosen placement.

This paper should be analytical rather than descriptive, in the format of a research report. The final paper will be shared with the organisation, in order to benefit both them and the community with which they work. The specific focus and data collected will reflect the organisation in which you are doing direct service or project work and the nature of your service activities.

NOTE: Paper 2 will comprise three parts for non-certificate students and four parts for certificate students.

Part 1: Introduction: In this section you will identify, research, and describe the characteristics of your particular community and/or organisation, its mission and its wider context in the field, and resources available to it. You will also outline the specific project, if any, that you have been set by the organisation. Include a short summary of organisational structure, including yourself and your own work. What is the name of the organisation? Who are the clients? What are the goals of the organisation? What constraints and opportunities are there? Your primary sources will be your own observations at your organisation, supported by reference to relevant documents such as mission statements, policy documents, or publicity material, which may include website material where appropriate. All sources should be cited appropriately and listed in your final bibliography.

Part 2: Methodology & Results: Through your experiences in your placement, as well as researching and learning about your organisation and the local community in general, you will now be able to analyse your organisation's role and the significance of your own work in contributing to community benefits. To what extent and in which ways do the activities of the organisation contribute to structural changes in the local community? What else could/should be done to foster effective change? You should address the themes of the course where appropriate to support your analysis and make specific reference to course concepts, theories and ideas where appropriate. Your primary sources will be your own observations at your organisation, which must be supported with reference to at least five secondary sources including academic literature and set reading.

Part 3: Analysis & Implications: In order to provide continuity from one semester to another for other interns and for the organisation itself, each student will write a summary analysis of the activity they were involved in with their organisation—this will be a detailed write-up and conclusions from project work or “direct” service with beneficiaries, which will contribute to your organisation's future development and goals. This paper should directly address such questions as: What role does your organisation have in UK society and/or London? What impact does the organisation have on its clients and on the wider community? How are the issues it seeks to address visible in the city, its communities, and in the wider UK, as well as at a global scale? Consider the ways in which your organisation's work has a wider impact, and the ways in which its activities compare with similar organisations in the USA. What is the future of such organisations, and how and why are they changing? In writing this report, think about what kind of information your group would have wanted for working with the community this semester. This report should be written so that students in subsequent semesters will know what your group did, what worked, and what you recommend that they do. Your primary sources will be your own observations at your organisation, which must be supported with reference to at least five secondary sources including academic literature as well as relevant concepts and theories.

Remember that this paper and the project will also be shared with the organisation and future students to benefit the community organisation or project with which you have been working.

Part 4: (Certificate Students ONLY): 1,500 words (due Week 13 as part of Paper 2) This part of the research paper is designed to encourage and support students' understanding of the field of service in which their community organisation or project operates and its local, national, and international context, focusing on particular topics as appropriate to their placement activities and elective Community Engagement courses, such as, for example, human or civil rights, refugee or migrant advocacy, LGBTQ rights, prisoner rehabilitation, housing and homelessness, grassroots activism, youth support, and education.

In this part of the research paper, Certificate students should examine the key elements of knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical skills, and values that they have taken from the other courses they have taken in the Certificate program. How does what they have learned influence their understanding of the world and their place within it, and build their capacity to act with others for the public good? Students will reflect on and analyse what they have learned about the critical challenges faced by British society, the inequalities, systems, and structures that underlie these problems, and the lived experience and everyday coping strategies of those people confronted by them. In conclusion, students will also

consider potential alternatives to these systems and structures and the pathways leading toward them. They should also reflect on and analyse the skills they have developed and consider the social and political values required for effective community work. Your analysis must be supported with reference to at least five secondary sources including academic literature as well as relevant concepts and theories.

NOTE: While Certificate students will draw on what they have learned in their other Certificate courses, they must not reproduce work already submitted in assignments for those courses.

Service-Learning Evaluation (10%): While overall emphasis is placed on the processing and analysis by students of their servicelearning experience, this is also a collaborative effort involving the student, organisation, and CAPA, with beneficial community impact as its primary goal, alongside your own personal and professional development. Your contribution to the organisation will be directly assessed in terms of your consistent and active participation at the site, following of objectives, effort, as well as implementation of training and learning in attentive and thoughtful ways. There will be open and consistent communication between the staff at the site and the instructor, who will work with the placement to evaluate student progress and achievement, including site visits where appropriate. You are responsible for arranging an interim meeting with your site supervisor at mid-term to gauge progress and achievement to date, as well as identify any areas for further development, as well as an exit interview at the end of the semester which will form part of your final site evaluation. Your site supervisor will submit a detailed report on your work at the organisation and your weekly logbook will also form an important part of this evaluation. It is therefore essential that this is done and sent regularly.

Presentation Session (20%): Week 14. Students, either singly or in groups as appropriate, will prepare a presentation to communicate the results of their service placement projects. You can be as creative as you wish in the presentation format—see the instructor to discuss techniques and ideas. Site representatives may be present, as well as other members of the CAPA community. Your presentations will be marked individually: If you are working as a group, it is important that each member makes a significant contribution to the presentation. Ideally, each person should contribute equally.

Each student will be asked to present for 15 minutes on the project or direct service work in which they are participating and set it within the context of relevant challenges, social structures, and systems. Student presentations will be assessed on each of the following criteria:

- **Preparation and organisation, including effectiveness as part of a team**
- **Quality of content and analysis, including connection with core themes of the course and elaboration of their institution's/project's social and historical context**
- **Quality of delivery**
- **Ability to generate effective discussion and class questions**

Assignments Policy:

All assignments should be submitted as indicated in Canvas and uploaded to Turnitin according to the due dates listed. Keep a hard copy of all written work.

Late Assignments: You must complete all required components by the established deadlines. Late submission will incur a 5% per day penalty without the instructor's prior approval of extension and may result in a grade of F for the course. If all work is not submitted by the end of the program, you will receive an F for the course.

Course Content

Unit 1

Journal Components:

- **Journal Entry 1 (Week 3): My Single Story, 250 words**
 - Students, having watched The Danger of a Single Story in Week 1, must write a personal/critical reflection on what they consider their own “single story” to be and also consider what they feel people in the UK might perceive their single story to be.
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

Unit 2

Journal Entries 2 and 3 (Weeks 6 and 9)

- Service-Learning Reflections (250 words each)
 - Your journal should be a synthesis and integration of the readings, field experiences, and class activities. Here, you will write your reactions and thoughts regarding the course components and key course themes. The instructor will be looking for evidence of reflection and research into the social, cultural, and political context of your community placement, including use of quality newspapers as sources. Journals should also demonstrate personal development analysis; e.g., personal experience from living and working in the voluntary sector: What did you learn from this experience that you did not know before? What effect did you have there; e.g., how did you impact the people with whom you worked? How has the community experience changed what you thought you knew about organisations such as this? What has your work taught you about yourself, your community, and your country?

Unit 3

Journal Entry 4 (Week 11)

- Informational Interview (250 words)
 - Students will select two individuals with whom they are working on their service projects and interview them. This exercise gives you the opportunity to gain practical insights into the steps needed to be successful in your field, build your verbal and written communication skills, and help you to become more confident in interacting with professional colleagues. After your interviews, write a brief reflection about your meeting, including a summary of the interviewees’

general biographical background; what you learnt about your interviewees' career paths; and how the interview confirmed or challenged your professional aspirations.

Unit 4

Paper 1: The Impact of Service: Individual Biography (10%) due Week 5

- Students will choose a British individual who is involved significantly in community service and research their work, the organisations and issue(s) with which they are involved, and the impacts that their work has had in British society and potentially in an international context. Potential examples might include but are not limited to individuals working in the fields of global health, homelessness, mental health, refugees and migrant advocacy, youth, education, prisoner rehabilitation, or human rights.
- Non-certificate students: 1,000 words; Certificate students: 1,500 words
- Students will present their findings to one another in Week 6
- **Paper 2 (30%): double-spaced, 12 point font, due in class week 13**

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & 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. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).