

Service-Learning is a teaching method that links meaningful community service and academic study so that each component strengthens the other. For students, service-learning provides opportunities to engage in community issues, gain new hands-on experiences, broaden perspectives, and become more academically engaged, critical, and reflective. Service-Learning opportunities can help create a sense of civic responsibility in students that lasts beyond the college years.

Why Take a Service Learning Course?

Involvement in a service learning course allows students to have real-life experience and opportunities that extend beyond textbooks and tests. Students will meet a real community need while developing their own skills, gaining new experiences, and engaging in academic processes. Service learning experiences provide numerous benefits to students, but also come with great responsibilities.



Service Learning Positively Impacts Students’:

- ✓ Sense of civic responsibility
- ✓ Career choice and direction
- ✓ Critical thinking and writing skills
- ✓ Classroom discussions
- ✓ GPA

More Resources

- ✓ Go to the Service Learning Center’s website and look at the annual reports to see what has been done in the past
- ✓ Explore the Service Learning Courses webpage for ideas
- ✓ Contact the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to find out more

Responsibilities: While service learning provides many benefits, it also has many responsibilities. Each course is different, so check with your professor for specifics about responsibilities and requirements.

- ✓ Managing the details of your service – tracking your hours, maintain your schedule
- ✓ Contributing to the agency’s mission – fulfill your tasks, be punctual and responsible
- ✓ Being intellectually involved in your experience – share concerns or ideas and ask questions
- ✓ Course and classmates – engage fully in assignments, reflect critically, and share your ideas and experiences with others

Look at the Service Learning Student Guide on our website for more in-depth information about responsibilities and requirements.

Service Learning from a Student Perspective

When Choosing a Service Learning Course:

Think about what your goals are from the course:

Are you a senior who wants a capstone experience in your discipline? Or are you a sophomore looking to find a discipline that is right for you or explore outside your chosen field? Do you just want to make a difference in your community? What sorts of skills do you wish to contribute or develop?

Remember that each service learning course is unique:

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to service learning activities and coursework. Each service learning course will have its own design, purpose, and process. For example the professor might let you choose which community partner you work with or he/she might assign you to a partner. Some service learning projects will require travel or work on a weekly basis while others are more periodic.

There are 4 models of service learning that courses often fall within:

Discipline Based	Project or Problem Based	Capstone	Community Based Action Research
Students are engaged with an organization for an entire semester	Students act as "consultants" for specific projects	Upper-level students use experience/education to create a project or provide service	Community partners, faculty, & students create a research project to address community need

Getting the Most Out of Service Learning Courses:

- Make sure to pick a course type that fits with your needs, goals and expectations.
- Engage fully in your service project, coursework, and reflection process.
- Remember that not all service learning projects are successfully completed. Stay positive and remember to focus on what you have both learned and contributed through the experience.
- Think about your service learning experience in these three phases:

What?

"What did I experience...?"

So What?

"What does it mean...?"

Now What?

"What do I do now...?"