Dear Colleagues,

This template was designed to assist Duquesne faculty members preparing proposals for the UCSL designation, which is the University's descriptor for courses that fulfill the service-learning requirement. The elements that pertain to service-learning are integrated into the Center for Teaching Excellence’s general syllabus template¹ which includes information that is appropriate for any class.

The template provides an overview of the elements that may be included on a service-learning course syllabus and provides example language that could be used to describe the elements. The language throughout can be used verbatim, or may be amended to better reflect the overall tone of your syllabus.

According to Heffernan (2001)² exemplary service-learning syllabi:

- Explicitly state that service-learning is used as one of the course teaching and learning strategies
- Define service-learning and distinguish it from other community experiences such as volunteerism
- State the learning objectives that are addressed through the service experience
- Describe the nature of the service placement and/or project
- Define the need(s) the service placement meets
- Specify the roles and responsibilities of students in the placement and/or service project (e.g., transportation, time requirements, community contacts, etc.)
- Specify how students will be expected to demonstrate what they have learned in the placement/project (journal, papers, presentations)
- Define reflection, or critical inquiry, and what constitutes high quality reflection
- Present reflective course assignments that link the service experience and the course content
- Specify how reflective assignments will be graded and/or evaluated

This template was drafted over the summer of 2008 with the help of the University-wide Service-Learning Advisory Committee. Any suggestions you have for its improvement would be welcome. Contact information for the Office of Service-Learning is located in the footer of each page.

Sincerely,

Lina Dostilio, Director, Office of Service-Learning

¹ Adapted from the Center for Teaching Excellence Syllabus Checklist, available at http://www.cte.duq.edu/resources/TchInstruction/eResources/syllabuschecklistrev.html. “The Center for Teaching Excellence provides resources for designing courses and syllabi. The following guidelines are generally not University policy, but are intended as a helpful resource. Be sure to check with your department or school. There may be a policy of what must be included, and a departmental culture of what’s considered good practice.”

Course title, department, catalogue number, section number, Duquesne University (see Schedule of Classes)

Date (term and year)

Course meeting days and times, room and building

Time commitment associated with community-based service-learning work

Course Instructor Information (instructor’s name, office location & office hours, telephone number, e-mail address, and possibly, web page)

Community Partner Information (name of agency, name of contact person(s); street address, for purposes of getting directions; phone number; email; website; hours of operation)

Description of the course (engage students by showing your enthusiasm and the course’s relevance to real life; avoid technical language where possible)

Provide General definition of service-learning. Perhaps along the lines of:

- At Duquesne University, service-learning is embedded in existing courses throughout our degree programs and is seen as a valuable learning activity, bringing to life the tradition of Catholic social thought and Spiritan charism. Service-Learning combines academic instruction, meaningful service, and critical reflective thinking to enhance student learning and social responsibility. It differs from volunteerism, community service, internships, and field education through its use of structured, critical inquiry and the importance placed on reciprocal partnerships between this class and its community partners.

State course goals (broad goals and a word about how the course fits the larger curriculum)

Describe learning objectives

- Specific outcomes you expect students to achieve – what students know and should be able to do? This also includes learning objectives met in whole or in part by student participation in service-learning activities, which may include some traditional course learning objectives, in addition to those listed in the University Core Curriculum: “Students will demonstrate comprehension of discipline-specific content informed by their experiences of serving the community, students will recognize and reflect critically on the connections between discipline-specific theory and practice.”

Provide description of the Service-Learning Activities:

- This section should detail the community work the students will be doing, including the list of partners and description of work that will be done; time commitment; and an explanation of the link between the community experience and the learning objectives of the course.

Service-Learning Description Example:

List of partners and description of work that will be done: This class has partnered with two community-based organizations, XYZ Shelter and the ABC Kitchen. Students will choose from between these organizations and will work with them over the course of the semester to prepare and serve meals to people experiencing homelessness.

Time commitment: Students will, ideally, spend 2 hours per week at their chosen agency over a period of 10 weeks (September 15 – November 30).

Linkage between community experience and learning objectives for the course: The community work being done will help us to better understand the theories and concepts related to the politics of urban social service provision and the types of social service organizations working to meet food insecurity.

Your description may be much lengthier and necessitate separately listing each agency placement due to variance in the work that will be done per site.
INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES & MATERIALS

- Methods of instruction (e.g., service-learning, interactive lecture, discussion, group work, projects, practicum)
- Calendar of class dates, topics, readings, assignment due dates (including reflective assignments related to service-learning), exam dates
- Special features and dates (e.g., community work dates, excursions, guest speakers, online chats with experts)
- Description of Reflection (suggested description could include, “Reflection is a method of inquiry used in service-learning to encourage further understanding of the course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. Structured and guided reflective activities and assignments are implemented pre-service, throughout the service, and post-service to facilitate ongoing consideration of the experience.”)
- Textbooks, readings and brief description of these
- Where texts are available (e.g., campus bookstore, library reserve, online)
- Other required purchases (e.g., lab supplies, computer CDs, calculator)

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

- Brief description of each requirement
- Expectations for in-class participation and group work
- Expectations for reflective/critical inquiry assignments; rubrics to determine quality of reflective work. Classes that carry the UCSL designation are encouraged to include in the description of reflection a copy of the rubric that will be used to evaluate reflective assignments. One example is Bradley’s Criteria for Assessing Level’s of Reflection (see appendix A).
- Due dates for assignments and projects
- Quiz and exam description and dates
- Place, date, and time of final exam
- Grade breakdown for the final grade (# of points possible per assignment/test and total # of points for a final grade of “A,” “B,” etc.); indicate whether or not you will use plusses and minuses in grades?

COURSE POLICIES

Most importantly, use positive language to set expectations and provide support:
- Duquesne policy regarding academic integrity, available online from CTE home page: www.cte.duq.edu
- Your own policy regarding attendance & tardiness
- Your own policy regarding acceptable behavior onsite at community agencies, regarding missed community work dates, and regarding tardiness to community work experiences
- Procedure for students who anticipate missing a community work date or who will be late (for example, “Students who expect to arrive late or miss a community work date should call the site contact as soon as possible and also email the instructor to notify me.”)
- Your own policy regarding late assignments & make-up exams
- Information for Students with Disabilities:
  (Official wording approved by Provost Pearson, Sept. 2007)

“Students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations, as determined by the institution, after proper documentation of the disability has been received. At Duquesne University, the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services, located in room 309 Duquesne Union (412-396-6657), is responsible for determining reasonable accommodations.”

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accommodations and for assisting students in communicating these to faculty. Students should notify the faculty member at the beginning of the term, if any reasonable accommodations are needed. Students need to be registered with the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services. Before accommodations will be granted, the faculty member should receive a memo confirming the recommendations for reasonable accommodations from the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services.’
(revised September 2007)

TRANSPORTATION

- Using the transportation information provided in the OSL Risk Management Guide (available at www.servicelearning.duq.edu/impdocs.htm) describe the modes of transportation available to your students and methods for accessing transportation.

STATEMENT OF RISK MANAGEMENT

- Inform students about the risks involved in service-learning: (suggested language could include, Service-learning most often involves students working in off-campus community settings as part of their University course work. These community-based settings and the work our students do while in them present risks that are not present as part of traditional classroom learning. The site(s) at which you will work have been evaluated to assure that they do not endanger students, agency clients, or faculty.)
- Provide your students with the available resources and trainings listed in the OSL Risk Management Guide (available at http://www.servicelearning.duq.edu/impdocs.htm), which includes important phone numbers such as police, Port Authority, and the Office of Service-Learning.

A syllabus worksheet and sample Duquesne syllabi are available upon request from the Center for Teaching Excellence: cte@duq.edu, 412-396-5177, 312 Admin. Building.

Example service-learning syllabi are available upon request from the Office of Service-Learning: servicelearning@duq.edu, 412-396-5893, 20 Chatham Square.
Bradley’s Criteria for Assessing Levels of Reflection

Level One

- Gives examples of observed behaviors or characteristics of the client or setting, but provides no insight into reasons behind the observation; observations tend to become dimensional and conventional or unassimilated repetitions of what has been heard in class or from peers.
- Tends to focus on just one aspect of the situation.
- Uses unsupported personal beliefs as frequently as “hard” evidence.
- May acknowledge differences of perspective but does not discriminate effectively among them.

Level Two

- Observations are fairly thorough and nuanced although they tend not to be placed in a broader context.
- Provides a cogent critique from one perspective, but fails to see the broader system in which the aspect is embedded and other factors that may make change difficult.
- Uses both unsupported personal belief and evidence but is beginning to be able to differentiate between them.
- Perceives legitimate differences of viewpoint.
- Demonstrates a beginning ability to interpret evidence.

Level Three

- Views things from multiple perspectives; able to observe multiple aspects of the situation and place them in context.
- Perceives conflicting goals within and among the individuals involved in a situation and recognizes that the differences can be evaluated.
- Recognizes that actions must be situationally dependent and understands many of the factors that affect their choice.
- Makes appropriate judgments based on reasoning and evidence.
- Has a reasonable assessment of the importance of the decisions facing clients and of his or her responsibility as a part of the clients’ lives.

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