Course title: Service-Learning Project
Course code: (GI) SVCL 3701 ROIT
Programs offering course: Rome Open Campus Block
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Fall Block II 2020

Course Description

This service-learning course combines a structured curriculum and extensive partnership with a local community-based organization to offer tangible community service. Here, student community service includes direct engagement as well as a research-based action plan addressing a specific challenge or goal identified by a community-based organization. Students begin by exploring key community-based organizations: examining their mission, vision and goals, and the place of the organization in the local community. Each student then works with an assigned partner organization and invests at least 90 hours partnering with the organization, working with them and investigating ways to solve a challenge or issue the organization has identified. Student service-learning will include exploring the proximate and ultimate drivers of the organization's chosen challenge, and the organization's infrastructure, resources, limitations and possibilities for reducing barriers to achieving the organization's self-identified goals. In concert, coursework probes the role of community-based organizations in both local and global contexts, common challenges of community-based organizations in defining and implementing their goals, the role of service-learning in addressing these issues, and effective ways for students to help them achieve their mission, vision, and goals. Coursework also guides the student's service-learning experience by helping students develop sound international service ethics, provide tools to investigate solutions to common development issues, aid in data analysis and presentation, and provide best practices to illustrate findings and deliver approved joint recommendations orally and in writing. Throughout, students use service-learning as a means to expand their global awareness and understanding, explore shared aspirations for social justice, and develop skills to work with others to effect positive change.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Recognize the role of community-based organizations locally and globally, and identify common constraints faced by community-based organizations in realizing their mission, vision and goals
- Describe the opportunities and limitations of service-learning for solving challenges faced by community-based organizations; investigate drivers creating a particular challenge and limiting potential responses as identified by the partner organization
- Identify hurdles, including economic resources, infrastructure, governance, local laws and culture, that limit community-based organizations in meeting an identified challenge
- Develop effective tools to gather, analyze, summarize, and communicate information needed to develop an action plan to address a pressing community issue

Course Prerequisites

None.

Methods of Instruction

This course approaches service-learning through a structured curriculum of 15 instructor supervised contact hours with an additional 90 hours working in the community, most closely with a partner community-based service organization. Class hours include lectures, activities, seminars, guest lectures, student presentations, reflection, and critique. Topics include exploring the role of community-based organizations, identifying common challenges they encounter, using methods for investigating the causes of challenges, as well as identifying hurdles to overcoming them. Classes also focus on methods used to explore, analyze, and construct a sound action plan in partnership with a community-based organization for confronting challenges to its mission, vision, and goals. In parallel, students will visit and compare several community-based organizations, looking for patterns in their mission/vision, stated goals, infrastructure, and resource limitations. They will partner with one organization,
working with them to complete day to day operations while investigating possible solutions to overcome a challenge the community-based organization has identified. The student will provide a written and oral presentation of their findings and insights to one another as an action plan developed in partnership with their community-based organization.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Comparative Analysis of Three Community-based Organizations 10%
2. Reflection Essays 20%
3. Partner Organization Profile 10%
4. Proposal for Action Plan Development 15%
5. Final Proposed Action Plan Presentation 10%
6. Final Proposed Action Plan Report 15%
7. Participation 20%

TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Comparative Analysis of Three Community-based Organizations

Not all community-based organizations are alike and students will explore this by investigating three community-based organizations (other than their partner organization). Information about each organization will be supplied by CIEE instructors as well as online resources found independently by the student. Students will then write a 1500 word essay comparing the mission, vision and goals of each organization and the unique role they play in the local community.

Reflection Essays

At key moments during the course, students will write four 500 word reflection essays. These consider the role of community-based organizations, the partner organization’s self identified needs, the student’s service-learning role in helping the community, and the student’s tangible contribution to the focal organization. Each essay will draw upon classwork, service hours and the student’s own experience and critical thinking to address the topic.

- Reflection Essay 1: Role of Community-based Organizations
- Reflection Essay 2: Partner Organization’s Self-identified Need
- Reflection Essay 3: My Service-Learning Role in Helping the Community
- Reflection Essay 4: Personal Contributions to My Partner Organization

Partner Organization Profile

Students are paired with a focal community-based organization among those offered by CIEE staff. Using materials provided, as well as a visit to the organization and interview with their Field Supervisor in the organization, students will develop an organization profile. This profile will include the mission/vision statements of the organization, short and long term plans or goals of the organization, an assessment of the organization’s basic organization, its infrastructure and resources.

Proposal for Action Plan Development

With input from CIEE Service-Learning instructor and the Community-based Organization’s Field Supervisor, students will write a 1500-2000 word proposal with appropriate background, objectives and methods to investigate drivers, resource limitations and explore possible steps needed to develop an action plan designed to address a challenge or goal identified by the community-based partner organization. The outcome of the work experience and proposed investigation will be a formal action plan, developed in partnership with the community-based organization, that addresses the organization’s self-identified and assigned challenge or goal.

Final Proposed Action Plan Presentation

Each student will present a proposed action plan developed in partnership with their community-based organization. This action plan addresses a challenge or goal identified by the partner community-based organization. The presentation will include background, rationale, clearly stated goals, an explanation of how the plan was developed, pertinent research and literature review, and clear joint recommendations and anticipated outcomes that have been reviewed by CIEE Service-Learning Instructors and Field Supervisors. Students will deliver their approved joint action plan in a 15-minute oral PowerPoint presentation. CIEE Service-Learning instructors and Field Supervisors will attend and critique the presentations. Members of the community will be encouraged to attend the event to provide additional feedback and support.
Final Proposed Action Plan Report

The final proposed action plan report will give a critical analysis of the student’s findings and insights to address a community-based organization’s self-identified need, challenge or goal. Within the 2,000 word report, students provide background and context to justify the community-based organization’s self-identified project goals. They explain how the project benefits the community, provide a critical review of relevant literature, as well as embedded knowledge that supports, informs, and justifies the research project. The proposed action plan will include a clearly described methodology for effectively addressing the organization’s stated need, challenge or goal. Action plan steps should be articulated clearly, leading to a clear blueprint to address the organization’s needs, goals or specific challenge investigated.

Participation

Participation, including 3 Postings to Canvas Discussion Forum and at least 3 meetings with CIEE instructor.

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities. In addition to being active listeners and thoughtful contributors to in-class discussion, students are required to post at least three contributions to the various online discussion forums that will build on themes covered in class. In addition, students are required to meet at least three times with their CIEE Service-Learning instructor. Meetings with instructor will cover topics related to class and how they speak to the CIEE’s and the student’s service-learning goals.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent.

Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to any required field placement. Students may not miss placement/work hours at an internship or service learning site unless approved in advance by the Academic Director and placement supervisor. All students must complete all of the requisite 100 minimum work hours on site at the internship or service learning placement to be eligible for academic credit.

Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences for classes will lead to the following penalties:
N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, and local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class: Service-Learning, Community Service and You

1.1

In this session, students reflect on expectations they had before arriving and how these might have changed after. Beginning with a discussion of the readings, we explore some of the heavy and history-laden contradictions behind ideas like 'service' or 'volunteering.' We distinguish community service from service-learning, where service is embedded in academic classes meant to help the student achieve specific community service skills. We consider our identity as service learners, and learn to position ourselves for responsible community service with respect to various privileges that we enjoy. We also explore how each person carries a unique set of perspectives, (mis)conceptions, backgrounds and abilities. Finally, students are given a crash-course on intercultural competency and how it applies to service-learning.

**Required Reading**


Class: 1.2 Meet Field Supervisor and Visit Community-based Organizations

Each student will attend an orientation at one or more community-based organizations – in addition an orientation at to the organization where they have been provisionally placed. An important goal is to create awareness and breadth about the many types of community-based organizations in the community, including where one’s peers are placed. Another important goal is to familiarize each student with their partner community-based organization and its Field Supervisor, the student’s official liaison with the partner organization. Students will set up a separate meeting with the Field Supervisor during their visit. The purpose of the follow-up meeting will be a presentation of the partner organization's expectations for the student’s community service to the organization, including a challenge or goal the organization has identified it would like the student to explore.

**Required Reading**

Week 2

Class: 2.1 How Community-based Organizations Assess Community Needs

Identifying local needs and resources is an important part of understanding a community’s challenges. In this session, students will explore the basic goods and services a community is expected to provide its citizens. They will discuss how needs and resources are two sides of the same coin, as community need results from both what the community lacks and what it has. Students begin by comparing their community at home to their new local community abroad. They consider what each community appears to have in common and how they might differ. Students will consider physical aspects, infrastructure, zoning, green spaces, demographics, history, community culture, community leadership, community institutions, economics, inequity, governance, social structure and attitudes/values. Students will review best practices for how community-based organizations might assess community assets and resources. Students will use SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) as an example for how Community-based Organizations might borrow from business to explore how community needs could be identified and addressed.

Guest Speaker: Local Community Needs and Resources

Required Reading


Assignment Due - Post to Canvas Discussion Forum: First impressions for your partner community-based organization: its mission, vision and goals. Do you see common elements with other community-based organizations, including those of fellow students?

Class: 2.2 Role of Community-based Organizations in Addressing Community Need

Community-based organizations attempt to improve community health, well-being and sound development. Students investigate the importance of community-based organizations to human welfare, workforce opportunities, family support, education, safety & security, sustainability initiatives and more. They examine how community-based organizations work with government, donors and the community to address local community needs. Students also discuss common issues that keep community-based organizations from meeting their goals.

Guest Speaker: Importance and limitations of community-based organizations in the local community.

Required Reading / Viewing


Alliance for Strong Families and Communities. 2018. Families and communities are stronger when they have access to the vital building blocks of health and well-being: Community-based organizations, working in partnership with government and the philanthropic sector, provide those building blocks, retrieved August 22, 2018 from http://alliance1.org/web/community/strengthen-human-services/web/community/national-imperative-joining-forces-strengthen-human-services-america.aspx

Class: 2.3  
**How Service-Learning Can Help Community-based Organizations Reach their Goals**

Service-learning attempts to simultaneously support Community-based Organizations through directed community service while giving students an opportunity to expand their global understanding, explore shared aspirations for social justice, and develop skills to work with community-based organizations to effect positive change. While service-learning should be a win:win for the local community and student, care must be taken to assure it. In this session, students explore the role and limitations of community service and service-learning in helping Community-based Organizations achieve their stated goals and objectives. Students also consider how skills they acquire in service-learning are more broadly applicable beyond a single organization, project or service delivered.

**Required Reading**


Assignment Due - Reflection Essay 1: Role of Community-based Organizations

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**Week 3**

Class: 3.1  
**Research tools to assess and address community challenges**

Students work in groups to deliver key components of the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse’s Service-Learning Research Primer (2010). Using this resource, students consider the nature of research, including how it applies to service-learning. Students study how service-learning research is constructed, the differences between research and evaluation, qualities of good research, how research variables are defined, differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research design and discuss common problems in service-learning research. Students also examine measurement in service-learning research, including common assessment tools, characteristics of good measurement instruments, online survey tools and how to adapt existing tools to fit specific service-learning investigations. Finally, students consider ethical issues in service-learning research, with a historical overview, a presentation of basic ethical principles, professional code of ethics, protection of human subjects, institutional review boards (IRB) and informed consent. Students will then discuss some ethical dilemmas and how to approach or avoid them. In the end, students will use this primer to later analyze which investigative tools they might suggest in the final proposed action plan they construct in partnership with their community-based organization.

**Required Reading**


Assignment Due - Reflection Essay 2 - My Focal Organization’s Self-identified Challenge or Goal

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Class: 3.2  
**Proposal for Action Plan Development**

Using online resources and information from their Field Supervisor, students thoroughly research potential drivers leading to the community-based organization’s self-identified challenge or goal. They also link this goal to community health and provide clear justification for an action plan to address said issue. They review published literature for related case studies of communities and community-based organizations dealing with similar challenges or goals. They then link what is known and what has been tried with information from their Field Supervisor to determine what information is necessary to consider possible project outcomes, initial project activities and deliverables. Students then come up with a list of steps and information necessary to develop an action plan to address the local issue. Students work with the Field Supervisor to develop a time schedule and specific goals to construct an Action Plan in partnership with the community-based
Required Reading


- Assignment Due - Post to Canvas Discussion: What surprises me most about my new community.

Class: 3.3 Responsible Service-Learning Research in Your Proposal and Action Plan

The CIEE Service-Learning Instructor will lead students in a review of which responsible service-learning research methods were used in their proposal for action plan development. Students will compare what they wanted to do with what they were responsibly and ethically able to propose, and why input from their community-based organization was key. Students will also delineate attainable goals from those that are not, including likely limitations that keep certain goals unattainable.

Required Reading


- Assignment due - Proposal for Action Plan Development

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Community-based Organizations and Human Health

This includes a visit to a community-based organization whose main focus is Human Health. A spokesperson for the organization will present its mission, vision, goals and limitations. Students will then discuss the organization’s role in community-based health.

Required Reading


Class: 4.2 Community-based Organizations and Education

Students will visit a community-based organization whose main focus is Education. A spokesperson for the organization will present its mission, vision, goals and limitations. Students will then discuss the organization’s role in community-based education.

Required Reading


Class: 4.3 Community-based Organizations and Sustainability

Students will visit a community-based organization whose main focus is Sustainable Development. A spokesperson for the organization will present its mission, vision, goals and limitations. Students will then discuss the organization’s role in community-based sustainable development.

Required Reading


- Assignment Due - Reflection Essay 3: My Service-Learning Role in Helping the Community
Week 5

Class:  5.1   Community-based Organizations, Philanthropy, Government and Industry

Students see how the efforts of many community-based organizations are supported by government and industry. Further, students consider how community-based organizations are vital to government and industry in providing important services and concerns, including issues like sustainability, global health and climate change. Students will explore how governments and industry can further benefit from funding community-based organizations.

Required Reading


Class:  5.2 The Role of Culture and Cultural Competence in Service-Learning

Service-Learning can be international, where the service learner is from a different culture than the community they seek to serve. Here, students share experiences on how culture shaped their community service and service-learning experiences. They consider the role of language and culture in effective community service. They also reflect on how their cultural competence may have changed as a result of their Service-Learning experience. They go onto explore the role of culture on how service-learning is defined, approached and put into practice.

Required Reading


Assignment Due - Reflection Essay 4: Personal Contributions to My Partner Organization

Class:  5.3 Action Plan Writing and Presentation Workshop

Students will receive best practices for writing and presenting formal action plans. They will work with their CIEE Service-Learning Instructor and Field Supervisor to polish a draft of their Action Plan to assure its approval by the community-based organization. Action Plans must be fully vetted before oral and written presentation. They will represent a shared vision for how the community-based organization can move forward with strategic steps to address a challenge or goal identified by the community-based organization.

Week 6

Class:  6.1 Local Action: Global Impact

Using online resources, students will find and discuss case studies where local action of many community-based organizations adds up to a regional or global impact. Students will consider cases where human health (e.g., malaria, HIV), education (e.g., environmental education, disease prevention) and sustainability efforts (e.g., alternative energy, fewer agricultural inputs) have been promoted by community-based organizations in ways that contribute to global well-being.

Required Reading


Class:  6.2 Final Presentations

Each student will present a proposed action plan developed in partnership with their community-based organization. This action plan addresses a challenge or goal identified by the partner
The presentation will include background, rationale, clearly stated goals, an explanation of how the plan was developed, contain pertinent research and literature review, and clear joint recommendations and anticipated outcomes that have been reviewed by CIEE Service-Learning Instructors and Field Supervisors. Students will deliver their approved joint action plan in a 15-minute oral PowerPoint presentation. CIEE Service-Learning instructors and Field Supervisors will attend and critique the presentations. Members of the community will be encouraged to attend the event to provide additional feedback and support.

Class: 6.3  Next Steps

This is the last formal reflection session in the classroom space. In this reflection session, participants make plans to prepare for their departure—mentally, socially, practically and more. The CIEE Service-Learning Instructor will guide students in a discussion of how they have changed as a result of the Service-Learning Experience. Participants also use the space of this session to discuss and support each other in how to best show their appreciation to their host organization, Field Supervisor and host community.

**Required Reading**


- Assignment Due: Final Proposed Action Plan Report

**Course Materials**

**Readings**


Alliance for Strong Families and Communities. 2018. Families and communities are stronger when they have access to the vital building blocks of health and well-being: Community-based organizations, working in partnership with government and the philanthropic sector, provide those building blocks, retrieved August 22, 2018 from http://alliance1.org/web/community/strengthen-human-services/web/community/national-imperative-joining-forces-strengthen-human-services-america.aspx


