

CET Syllabus of Record



Program: Public Health and Service-Learning in Ho Chi Minh City

Course Title: International Service in the Developing World

Course Code: VS312

Total Hours: 16

Recommended Credits: 2

Suggested Cross Listings: Asian Studies; Anthropology, International Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Note: CET is grateful to Dr. Lynsey Farrell of American University for sharing her Externship syllabus, on which this syllabus is partly based.

Description

In this course, students participate in service-learning placements at local and international organizations working in Vietnam. Through this placement, students are involved with their host organization on three levels. The first level is academic—students become acquainted with the organization’s issue(s) of concern within the framework of broader international development questions. For example, at a local environmental group, students might examine the major sources of pollution in a region, and the political and economic ramifications of environmental action. The second level is participatory—by means of participant-observation students gain insider knowledge and a better understanding of how their organization operates: How does the management structure work? How does the staff interact? What are the most challenging issues and tasks for the organization and why?

Finally, students assist the organization with both day-to-day tasks and a larger final project. Day-to-day tasks are determined by the organization. Final projects are devised by the student, in consultation with both the host and the CET Program Director. Students are asked to contribute to long-term projects, using notes from predecessors and leaving instructions for a successor to ensure sustainability over terms.

Objectives

During this course, students:

- Gain advanced knowledge of the social issues in which their placement organization specializes (in both local and global contexts)
- Understanding the inner workings of their placement organization and the cultural climate in which it operates
- Gain practical knowledge of the host organization’s needs and challenges
- Assist the organization with day-to-day tasks and larger projects
- Hone their perspectives of Vietnam (and broader Asian and global contexts), by tying together personal, academic and professional viewpoints in an informed manner

Course Requirements

Students participate in their service-learning placements for a minimum of 10 hours/week. Time spent at the placement site is recorded and submitted to the Program Director weekly. Transportation time to and from the placement does not count towards required hours.

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Students attend weekly class sessions. This is a chance for them to discuss as a group their experiences at their placements as well as assigned readings. Students are expected to prepare for these sessions and participate actively.

Students must complete all assigned readings. Readings average 20-40 pages per class session. Students are required to keep a journal of their experiences, and to update their journal weekly. Content should recount experiences on site, issues and successes in service-learning, and reflections on the themes discussed in class. Journals are graded by the Program Director.

Students write a personal summary (5 pages) about their experiences at the organization. This personal summary should include a description of the role played, how the reality of the experience matched (or not) student's expectations, how the experience has changed (or not) the student's academic and career plans, and advice for the next service-learning participant. This summary will be shared with future students.

Students are required to devise and complete a final project for the host organization, in collaboration and based on the needs of the host organization. The project's parameters are wide in order to allow students to implement a project that is most helpful to the host organization. Two weeks into the term, students submit an assessment of the organization's needs as they understand them (2 pages). The student works with the Program Director and the host organization to devise a project based on these needs. A project proposal (1-2 pages) is submitted by the week 4. This proposal should outline the project and detail the necessary steps for successful implementation. The final project must be completed by the final week of the term. Students describe their projects—its purpose, history, challenges, successes, etc.—to their peers in an oral presentation during the last week of the term.

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

Participation (on site)	10%
Participation (weekly reflection sections)	20%
Journal	15%
Personal summary	15%
Final project	20%
Final presentation	20%

Primary Texts

Randy Stoecker and Elizabeth A. Tryon, with Amy Hilgendorf (2009). *The unheard voices: community organizations and service learning*. (Temple University).

Janet Eyler, Dwight E. Giles, Jr (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* (Jossey-Bass).

Bruce W. Speck and Sherry L. Hoppe (2004). *Service-learning: history, theory, and issues*. (Praeger).

Supplementary Texts

Various articles focusing on the issues of interest to the students' host organizations.

Websites and brochures from the host organizations.

Films related to host organizations or social problems in Vietnam and Asia.

Outline of Course Content

Note: Students cover approximately 1 topic or critical question per week. The order of topics varies and is dependent on the specific service-learning placements of the students.

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Topic 1: What is service-learning? Background, theory and issues

How do we define service-learning? How is it different from volunteering, community service, or internship? To what extent is service-learning a viable teaching and learning strategy? What are some of the major issues and short-comings of service-learning?

Topic 2: Models of service-learning: Pros, cons and relevance

What are some of the most prevalent models of service-learning? What are the pros and cons of each model? Which model best fits your service-learning placement and experience? What are the learning outcomes of the course?

Topic 3: Service-learning in an international context

What are some distinctive challenges and opportunities when engaging in service-learning internationally? To what extent does international service enhance the learning aspect of service-learning?

Topic 4: Developing intercultural competence

What is intercultural competence? What are some developmental models of intercultural sensitivity? How does international service-learning provide unique opportunities for the development of intercultural competence?

Topic 5: Community organizations and host needs

Who is serviced by service-learning? What are the host needs and how do we perform community needs assessments? How do our actions and presence affect the host community?

Topic 6: Social entrepreneurship and leadership

What is social entrepreneurship? How can a service-learning experience inspire students to become social entrepreneurs? What are some examples of regular people engaging in social entrepreneurship?

Topic 7: Social change and social justice

What is social justice? How does the existence of the community organization reflect bigger social issues? To what extent can students become agents of social change?

Topic 8: Ethics of international service-learning

What ethical issues emerge in international service-learning? To what extent is service-learning sustainable?