

Principles of Community Service & Organizing in Oberlin

Exco 155 – Fall 2006 – 1 credit

Day: TBA-once a week Time: TBA-2 hours @ Center for Service & Learning

Coordinator Information:

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Student Liaison:

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Course Goals and Objectives:

This course brings together Oberlin College's leaders in community service, including students, faculty, staff and community members. This course is affiliated with the Community Service Resource Center (CSRC) at the Center for Service and Learning (CSL). The primary goals of the course are to train students how to lead and coordinate service opportunities and to serve as a bridge between the campus and the Oberlin community.

Through discussions, forums, practicum, and reflections, students in this course will:

- Clarify personal goals, interests, and strengths;
- Make connections with other community service leaders and form a community beyond the scope of this course;
- Gain insightful first-hand information from community representatives;
- Become familiar with Oberlin College's commitment to service, current service projects, and available resources;
- Become familiar with the Center for Service and Learning and its mission;
- Practice leadership and management skills pertinent to service leadership and beyond;
- Prepare to become team leaders in the Intramural Community Service Competition;
- Prepare to work at the Center for Service & Learning (CSL) and/or the Community Service Resource Center (CSRC)

Course Design:

This course assumes that everyone can contribute to the educational experience through an emphasis on practical experience and critical reflection. Therefore, we will engage in substantial class discussion, and invite various experts on service and Oberlin community issues to guide and enrich our learning. The role of the coordinator(s) is to organize the course and lead discussions, but they do not by any means have all the answers. Coordinators and students will explore and learn from one another.

The first module of this course will be primarily speakers, presentations, and forums from local community leaders with the aim of familiarizing students with the context of the City of Oberlin and Lorain County. As a result of these presentations, students will have a better idea of the needs of the Oberlin community and of different philosophies of service. In the spirit of cooperation, the EXCO class will often join other CSL students for these presentations.

The second module of this course will be primarily practicum-based. With the CCCL's guidance, each class member, either by him/herself or in a small group, will plan and carry out a group service project. During this second module, regular class will meet every other week, interspersed with service projects. The second module classes will be an opportunity for evaluation and reflection on the service completed and a chance for each team leader to discuss successes and challenges. There will also be topic on service, leadership, planning that will be discussed during each of these classes.

Course Expectations:

- 1) Because class participation is an integral part of this ExCo course, students are expected to attend class regularly. However, the rigors of college life sometimes demand absence from class, so two (2) absences are allowed for any reason. More than three absences for any reason will result in an NE of the course.
- 2) During the second module, each student is expected to coordinate/lead one community service opportunity for the rest of the class, either individually or in a small group.
- 3) During second module, each student is expected to participate in at least one half of the service opportunities provided by their classmates.
- 4) This course depends largely on attitude. We will be doing icebreakers and group projects that require you to tap into your positive spirit. Students are expected to participate and support their classmates. If you cannot commit and support each other with the silly stuff, it will be hard to be there for each other with the heavier stuff.

Course Schedule:

First Module

(Note: The dates of discussions during the first module are intentionally flexible, so that the class coordinator may take advantage of any speakers or events already occurring in Oberlin during this time)

Week One– Welcome & Introductions

Icebreaker/modeling

Review of syllabus

Discuss: Solidify meeting time and place. Why did you join the class? What is your experience with service in the Oberlin Community? What would you like to get out of the CSRC?

Discuss: Philosophies of service—Why do we do service?

Introduction to CSL: provided by director and perhaps other staff member(s)

Introduction to CSRC: provided by CCCL

Also give tour of building, facilities and resources of the CSL

Week Two– Social Justice & Class

Check in activity

View “People Like Us: Social Class in America” excerpts

Discussion facilitated by Adam Hohl and Donna Russell, Bonners Scholars Program

Director

Week Three– Ecosocial Context

Check In Activity

Discussion of Ecosocial Context facilitated by Beth Blissman, Director of CSL

Week Four– Service Project

Planned by CCCL with input of class

Week Five—Civic Engagement

Check In Activity

Discussion of Civic Engagement lead by Daniel Gardner, President of Oberlin City Council, and former director of Oberlin’s CSL

Week Six— Mid Term Reflection

Check In Activity

Reflect upon course so far: what have you learned, what questions do you still have, suggestions for next year, etc.
Discuss the syllabus for second module: make sure everyone understands the planning process
set times to meet individually with service planners
Complete midterm EXCO evaluations
Review nuts & Bolts of planning a service project
Relax and have snack—have a good Fall Break!

Second Module

Week Seven – Service 101: The Kickoff

Check In Activity
Welcome the beginning of the service half, review the timeline
Go over first team meetings, introductions, importance of communication, email, phone, etc.
Get to know your team, who will do what & who won't do what
Explain Weekly Bulletin (what it is, how it works, limitations)
Discuss other ways to find service opportunities
Answer questions about the service planning process
Set personal goals for planning and service

Week Nine— Service 101: Hour Logs

Check In Activity
Discuss & reflect upon previous week's service activities
Discuss Hour Log sheets: how to complete them, when & where to turn them in, why they are so important
Go over sample situations, strategies for getting team members to report their hours every two weeks:
Why do hour logs/report service?
Make sure everyone is aware of who is coordinating service and when
Answer all questions about service

Week Eleven— Service 101: Maintaining a Good Team

Check in Activity
Discuss & reflect upon previous service activities
Talk about how groups are divided up; discuss pros/cons of Bonners, CSWSPs, & A.L.L.
What makes a good team for service? In other settings?
Talk about this semester's INFO SESSION at the end of the semester.
Assess who wants to be a team leader-solidify time/date for info session
Discuss building team spirit: "A team that plays together stays together."

Week Twelve— Party and Competition 101: "A team's only a good as its leader."

Check in Activity
Discuss & reflect upon previous week(s) service activity
Reflect upon the course and the mini competition as a whole
Reflect upon how ready you feel to be a team leader- strengths and weaknesses
Talk about the Intramural Community service Competition
Complete ExCo & CSL evaluation
Party!!

Good luck on Exams and have a great break!!