

## EXS-L 201 - Fall 2011: Learning and Serving the Environment

This course is designed to promote experiential learning for UIS students while advancing the institution's mission of providing a sound basis for informed and concerned citizens. The course focuses on environmental issues while encouraging students to take personal action to protect the environment. Students will become familiar with the concepts of service learning and environmental protection through participation in seminars and the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a semester-long environmental service project that meets a community need.

### Course Philosophy:

The content of this course is designed to allow students flexibility in meeting course goals and requirements. Each student will be assigned to work with a team of fellow students to accomplish self-planned goals and will also have the opportunity to work individually or in small groups. The variety of environmental service projects and project partners, as well as the challenges of working in a team and managing busy schedules, can create an exciting but sometimes demanding learning environment, whether in the classroom or out in the field/project site. An attitude of openness to new ideas, respect for others' opinions, and willingness to work toward common goals is expected at all times and in all course/project locations. The freedom to help determine the environmental projects and goals comes with an extra responsibility to be accountable to teammates, project host/s for meeting commitments, and the course instructor. Any questions or concerns about your ability to meet course requirements should be relayed to the instructor so that a mutually agreeable solution may be found.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course students will have knowledge of the:

1. Purpose, techniques, and impact of service-learning
2. History, philosophy, and nature of environmental community service
3. Nature and magnitude of local, regional, and global environmental issues
4. Everyday actions individuals can choose to use resources wisely and protect the environment
5. Basic strategies/tactics used by individuals and groups/organizations to maintain or improve quality of life in their communities
6. Steps necessary to plan, develop, and implement a team environmental project action plan in a community setting
7. Processes and collaboration necessary for community service related to environmental issues

### Required Text:

Coles, Robert. (1992). *The Call of Service: A Witness to Idealism*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Wiland, Harry and Bell, Dale. (2006). *Edens Lost and Found: How Ordinary Citizens Are Restoring Our Great American Cities*. Chelsea Green.

\*\*Additional articles may be provided by instructor; check Blackboard weekly.

**Course Requirements and Grading:** Students are required to attend course seminar sessions and complete 60 hours of community service while completing class assignments. Students will: 1) attend class, participate in discussions, and complete all assignments, (2) keep a journal of reflections on course readings, films, and field work, (3) write a midterm paper, (4) keep a log of individual and team service project hours worked, and (5) create and give a final project presentation at the end of the semester. A traditional grading scale will be used:

|    |       |    |       |    |       |   |       |
|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|---|-------|
| A  | >92   | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D | 60-69 |
| A- | 90-92 | B  | 83-86 | C  | 73-76 | F | <60   |
|    |       | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 |   |       |

**Accommodations for disabilities:** To obtain disability-related accommodations for this course, students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the course instructor and the campus Office of Disability Services (ODS) in HRB 80, 217-206-6666. Please contact the instructor after class, by phone or by e-mail to discuss your needs.

### **1. Class Attendance and Participation (15%)**

Weekly classes are a chance to critically digest the reading material, learn new strategies, view related films, conduct team planning, update the group, and reflect on field experiences. Students are expected to read all assignments and be prepared to discuss. As listed, reading assignments are to be completed *prior* to attending class that week. One absence from a scheduled class is allowed without penalty. An additional absence will require a written make-up assignment provided by the instructor. At three absences, the student will automatically drop a letter grade.

### **2. Service Site Attendance and Participation (30%)**

A total of 60 hours of community service on selected environmental service project/s are required for the semester; roughly 4 hours per week at the service site/s and/or working in a student team. Regular contact and communication with the course instructor, site coordinator/community partner, and members of your project team is vital to success in this class. The majority of community service hours will be earned through working on the team project, but students have the option of working on additional environmental service projects as pre-arranged and approved by the instructor. The extra project hours may be served individually, in pairs, or in small groups and, although not required, are a way to ensure reaching the 60-hour service requirement. NOTE: Project host documentation verifying all service hours is required. Only emails from project hosts acknowledging hours worked will be accepted. The instructor will work with the project host or community partner to assign grades, which will be based on the total number of hours served and each student's level of participation and leadership.

### **3. Weekly Reflection Journals (15%)**

Weekly journal entries shall chronicle the student's personal and academic growth and should explore the sociological implications of issues arising during team interaction or at the service site. The student is expected to incorporate weekly readings, classroom discussions, films, guest speaker topics and site/group experiences in this reflective writing. A total of 14 journal entries are required and should incorporate the following elements: an overall description of the activity, interpretation or explanation of the experience, and detail on your personal opinions/feelings and learning. Length of each entry should be 1–2 pages double-spaced and typewritten in Times New Roman 12-point font. This assignment will be evaluated on fulfilling the number, length, and elements of entries required and on timeliness of their submission.

### **4. Group Action Plan (10%)**

Action plans must be developed using a collaborative process and include at minimum the following elements: measurable project goals and objectives, expected outcome/impact, action strategies, timeline, resource list or budget, assignment of duties/roles, and means of evaluation.

### **5. Midterm Essay (15%)**

The essay topic must be pre-approved by the instructor prior to beginning research/writing. The essay should incorporate thoughtful reflection and critical analysis of related resource materials and classroom discussions. The total length should be 3–5 double-spaced, typed pages using Times New Roman 12-point font. References shall be in proper APA format.

### **6. Final Project (15%)**

The final project will be a presentation detailing each team's service project implementation and assessing and evaluating project outcomes. Presentations must be 15–20 minutes long and actively involve each group member in both development and presentation. The assignment will be graded on the ability to fulfill action project guidelines and communicate project experiences.

## **Course Syllabus**

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Aug 24, 2011 | Welcome, introductions, course overview |
| Week 1       | Team-building exercise                  |

Understanding service learning: What is service? What is reflection?  
Exploring environmental values  
Discuss student schedules, teamwork, ground rules  
Announce journal reflection topics/questions for weeks 1 & 2

Aug 31, 2011  
Week 2

Reading: Coles – Introduction; Edens Lost & Found – Intro & Chicago  
Discussion: Readings, brainstorming environmental issues  
Film: *Edens Lost & Found: Chicago, City of Big Shoulders*  
Distribute list of environmental service project/partner choices  
Discuss service project options/teams  
**Service project priority list due end of class**

Sept 7, 2011  
Week 3

Reading: Coles, Ch 1 & 2; Edens Lost & Found – Los Angeles  
**Weeks 1 & 2 reflection journals due start of class**  
Discussion: Readings, determining community needs and assets, exploring environmental issues  
Films: Chad Pregracke/LLW, *Story of Stuff*, *What Is Sustainability?*  
Project team assignments announced  
How to create action plans, week-by-week calendar, and goals  
Homework: Meet with team, begin draft of project action plan

Sept 14, 2011  
Week 4

Reading: Coles, Ch 3; Edens Lost & Found – Philadelphia & Seattle  
Discussion: Readings, exploring environmental issues  
Film: *Fresh*  
Service/environmental public messages/methods/media  
Potential midterm topics  
APA style citations/sources  
Team building, implementing action plans  
**Draft project action plan due end of class**

Sept 21, 2011  
Week 5

**Weeks 3 & 4 reflection journals due start of class**  
Guest speaker: TBA  
Film: *A Sense of Wonder: Rachel Carson*  
Finalize action plan drafts  
**Final action plan due end of class**  
Service project implementation begins  
Midterm essay topics assigned/approved

Sept 28, 2011  
Week 6

Discussion: Guest speaker topic, exploring environmental issues  
Film: *Flow*  
Team check-ins

Oct 5, 2011  
Week 7

NO CLASS

Oct 12, 2011  
Week 8

**Midterm essays due start of class**  
**Weeks 5 & 6 reflection journals due start of class**  
Discussion: Identifying common goals, developing partnerships, exploring environmental issues  
Team check-ins: Updates and analyses, project host feedback

Oct 29, 2011  
Week 9

**Weeks 7 & 8 reflection journals due start of class**  
Film: *Recycled Life*  
Guest Speaker: TBA

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|-------------------------|--|
|                         | Team check-ins: Updates and analyses   |
| Oct 26, 2011<br>Week 10 | NO CLASS   |
| Nov 2, 2011<br>Week 11  | <b>Weeks 9 &amp; 10 reflection journals due start of class</b><br>Film: <i>Trashed</i><br>Team check-ins: Updates and analyses   |
| Nov 9, 2011<br>Week 12  | NO CLASS   |
| Nov 16, 2011<br>Week 13 | <b>Weeks 11 &amp; 12 of reflection journals due start of class</b><br>Guest Speaker: TBA<br>Team check-ins: Updates and analyses, barriers to completion?  |
| Nov 23, 2011<br>Week 14 | NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break  |
| Nov 30, 2011<br>Week 15 | <b>Weeks 13 &amp; 14 reflection journals due start of class</b><br><b>Individual Service Hour Log/Team Logs due start of class</b><br>Final team check-ins: Service project progress, wrap-up<br>Final presentation planning |
| Dec 7, 2011<br>Week 16  | NO CLASS   |
| Dec 14, 2011<br>Week 17 | <b>Final project presentations</b> – Invite community project hosts<br>Wrap-up discussion<br>Journals returned<br>Team/self/course/instructor evaluations  |