

# **EXL 304- ECCE: Leadership in the Homeless Community**

## **University of Illinois at Springfield**

### **First offered Spring 2012**

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. This course will look at the topics of leadership and service in the homeless community. Recognizing that leadership can be demonstrated through several means, such as in the form of community service, advocacy, political work, and many others, it is important that individuals understand leadership is needed to enact change, especially when working with a social issue such as homelessness. Students enrolled in this course will be oriented to the concept of leadership in the homeless community through participation in online discussions and a 60 hour semester-long service project. Students will plan and implement a project to address a need in the homeless community. Critical reflection on these experiences through online discussion and journaling will enhance the experiential learning.

#### **Course Philosophy:**

Learning is an active process from the teacher's and from the learner's points of view. The instructor and student have a strong responsibility to one another. My obligation as the instructor include (a) being knowledgeable and current on the subject matter, (b) planning and providing quality learning experiences, (c) evaluating work fairly and promptly, and (d) assisting you to meet the course objectives and to fulfill personal goals. Student obligations include (a) preparing and completing assignments, (b) actively participating in the learning process, and (c) expressing needs to the instructor.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Enhance overall service-learning comprehension by participating in the reflective learning process.
2. Recognize a wide variety of leadership constructs and the application of them.
3. Develop core personal values and an ethical framework and apply them in action to civic engagement and leadership issues.
4. Identify strategies for social influence/social change in others and self.
5. Reflect on the relationship between the individual and society within contemporary American context, specifically in the homelessness community.

#### **Instructors:**

Kathy Guthrie, Ph.D.

Adjunct Assistant Professor

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\*\*E-mail is the BEST way to get in touch with me; however, we can set up a time to talk via phone. I am not located on UIS campus.\*\*

*Accommodating People with Disabilities.* Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify me during the first week of class (or as soon as possible) of any accommodation you might need for this course. Late notifications may cause your requested accommodation to be unavailable although each decision is made on a case by case basis. All

accommodations must be approved through the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in the Human Resource Building (HRB), Room 80, 217-206-6666.

**Required Text:**

Northouse, P.G. (2012). Introduction to leadership: Concepts and practice (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Additional readings will be available on blackboard

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

Students are required to work through online units, as well as complete 60 hours of community service while completing assignments. Students will (1) complete readings as assigned, (2) develop an action plan for their service work, (3) keep a journal of reflections on their readings and service work, (4) participate in online discussions, (5) write one reflective essay, (6) complete a service project they have created, and (7) write a final reflection paper at the end of the semester.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

The traditional scale of grading will be used. A total of 100 points are available for the entire class.

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

**Policy on Assignments**

- Assignments need to be turned in by uploading it to correct place under the assignment tab by 11:59 pm of the due date. Make sure that you upload the file to me (do not just copy and paste it in the comments section). Not understanding how to upload papers correctly will not be an excuse for a late paper. Assignments sent through e-mail will NOT be accepted.
- Assignments that are turned in late will automatically have a .5 point deduction for each day it is late. Note that this is .5% of your total course grade. This deduction will be before the actual assignment is graded. I understand that life happens, so communication with me is always a good idea. Extensions may be a possibility, but only if discussed BEFORE the due date. Extensions on or after the due date will not be an option.
- If you would like to receive feedback on any assignment I am more than willing to provide such. However, you will need to send it to me via e-mail at least 7 days before it is due. Feedback will not be given to requests 6 days or less before the due date.

**1. Service Action Plan- 10 points**

The action plan is due on XXX; however, if you would like feedback prior to turning in the action plan- e-mail me at least a week prior to due date! The service action plan has two parts, a description of the proposed service project and a description of personal learning objectives. The proposed service project should include: 1) description of project and agency working with; 2) reason why this particular project and agency was selected; and 3) the agency coordinator (who was contacted)

including telephone number and e-mail. The project needs to be with an established non-profit organization. The agency contact listed will be contacted by the instructor.

The personal learning objectives and what the student hopes to gain from the service experiences should also be provided; this is the second part of the service action plan. While there are learning objectives for the course, it is important to think about what you, as the student, would like to personally accomplish over this semester. **THREE** personal learning objectives should be focused on. Examples of these personal learning objectives may include: to become more aware of advocacy opportunities for homeless veterans at the local and state level or to improve communication skills of homeless individuals by developing an interactive training course for a local shelter. Each learning objective should include three things: 1) activities that will assist in your learning, 2) resources you plan to use, and 3) how you plan to assess your learning. The length of the action plan should be 3-4 pages, double spaced. *This assignment will be evaluated on ability to effectively communicate the project and learning objectives the student wishes to achieve, as well as the quality of writing.*

## **2. Service Participation in the Homeless Community- 15 points**

A total of 60 hours are required of community service for the semester in relation to the project outlined. That works out to be just under 4 hours per week either in an action or advocacy capacity (for example, either working at a homeless shelter to collect books and hosting a reading club or advocating for homeless youth at a local government level for a specific organization). Potential established non-profit agencies you may serve at include, but are not limited to: Food Banks, Homeless Shelters, Community Gardens, Community Closets (Salvation Army, Goodwill, etc), Free Health Clinics, Soup Kitchens, Homeless Task Forces (in advocacy capacity or policy focused), Urban Leagues, and After School Programs that focus on the Homeless population. If the student is unsure of what their project is going to look like, you need to start an e-mail conversation with the instructor to brainstorm possibilities. At midterm time, XXX, your service tracking sheet will need to be turned in. **The final service tracking hours sheet and a 1-2 page self-evaluation of service participation is due to the instructor at end of semester, XXX.** *The instructor will work with the student and agency coordinator to assign the grade. This grade will be determined on the total number of hours served and interaction with agency contact and staff, as well as the progress of the proposed project.*

## **3. Reading Responses/ Discussion Board- 20 points**

The readings are important to this course and fully understanding the complex nature of leadership and serving in the homeless community. Students are expected to critically digest the reading material and reflect on service experiences through online discussions. The instructor will pose specific questions about each unit and each student is expected to respond. Each student is expected to respond to each posed question at least once and respond to another student's posting at least once, each unit will have more than one posed question. The expectation is that this will be a discussion, not just posting your opinion and that is it. **Discussion board for each unit will close down at 5:00 pm on the date it is to be completed.** You will not be able to go back and answer after that time. *This will be evaluated by the number of times responded, quality of responses in regards to thought process, posing thought provoking questions and effective communication of thoughts.*

## **4. Reflection Journal- 20 points**

There will be a journal assignment aimed at exploring the sociological implications of issues arising with service experiences. The first 10 journal entries are due on XXX. The second 10 journal entries are due XXX. The student is expected to incorporate readings and service experiences in these

reflection entries. Service experiences should contain “fact” and student’s own review and critique of performance. A minimum of 20 entries are needed for this reflection journal that is equivalent to one entry every 3 hours of service. You do not have to write an entry for every 3 hours, instead you can write entries around situations. Either way, a total of 20 entries are required. Length of each entry should be 1-2 page double space typewritten. Journal entries should outline what happened in 2-3 sentences and then what you learned through the experience should be focused on. Refer to the first unit reflection information for more detailed information on reflection. *This assignment will be evaluated on fulfilling the number and length of entries required, as well as the ability to discuss situations and lessons learned with service experiences.*

### **5. Reflective Essay- 10 points**

This essay is due on XXX. This assignment will be a reflective essay on how the agency you are serving with is working towards a vision. To fulfill the requirements of this essay, you will need to answer these questions...

- Please explain the specific vision your organization is working toward.
- What specific steps is the agency you are serving taking to eventually achieve this vision? How is leadership being demonstrated? Provide specific examples of these steps. These can be through observation or direct participation.
- Please reference course readings to support your reflections.

This paper needs to be 3-4 pages, double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 pt. font. *This assignment will be evaluated on the ability to follow required format, answer questions, critically analyze the assigned readings and to effectively communicate reflection and relation to own service experience.*

### **6. Final Action Project Reflection Paper- 25 points**

The final paper will be a reflection of the student’s service project. This final project is due on XXX. This paper needs to be 7-8 pages, double spaced.

In the final paper, students are responsible for answering...

1. What was the project?
2. How did you attempt to implement the project?
3. What could have been done differently? What worked well? What did you learn from the experience?
4. How does this experience connect with the readings done throughout the semester? Does it affirm, challenge, illustrate the concepts and theories presented? **\*\*The student needs to directly connect the readings that are relevant to the project and provide examples from the experiences at the site\*\***
5. How were your personal learning objectives accomplished?
6. What is your personal definition of leadership?
7. How do you feel you demonstrated leadership in the homeless community?

*This assignment will be evaluated on the ability to critically reflect and analyze the coursework and service experiences and communicate these thoughts through the final paper.*

### **Unit Topics:**

Unit 1: **Course Introduction/ Being a Leader  
Completed by XXX**

Northouse Ch. 1: Being a Leader  
Excerpt from Jennifer Bringle's "Homelessness in America Today"

Unit 2: **Homeless Community**  
**Completed by XXX**  
Fact sheets from the National Coalition for the Homeless  
Excerpt from Joel Blau's "The Visible Poor: Homelessness in the United States"  
Service Action Plan Due

Unit 3: **Recognizing Your Traits/Philosophy/Skills**  
**Completed by XXX**  
Northouse Ch. 2: Recognizing Your Traits  
Northouse Ch. 3: Recognizing Your Philosophy and Style of Leadership  
Excerpt from Elliot Liebow's "Tell Them Who I am: The Lives of Homeless Women"

Unit 4: **Attending to Tasks/Relationships/Skills**  
**Completed by XXX**  
Northouse Ch. 4: Attending to Tasks and Relationships  
Northouse Ch. 5: Developing Leadership Skills  
1<sup>st</sup> 10 Reflection Journal Entries Due  
Updated Tracking Hour Sheet Due

Unit 5: **Ethical Leadership**  
**Completed by XXX**  
Northouse Ch. 11: Addressing Ethics in Leadership  
Case study on homeless advocacy group

Unit 6: **Creating a Vision/Setting the Tone**  
**Completed by XXX**  
Northouse Ch. 6: Creating a Vision  
Northouse Ch. 7: Setting the Tone  
Reflective Essay Due

Unit 7: **Staying in Action**  
**Completed by XXX**  
Northouse Ch. 10: Overcoming Obstacles  
Excerpt from Joel Blau's "The Visible Poor: Homelessness in the United States"

**Final Items Due, XXX**

Final Tracking Hours Sheet Due  
Self-Evaluation on Service Participation Due  
Final Action Project Reflection Paper Due  
2<sup>nd</sup> 10 Reflection Journal Entries Due