



Community Engagement and Sustainable Human Development: A Service-learning Course

Community Engagement and Sustainable Human Development is a course based on service-learning as a pedagogic methodology that prepares college graduates to be active, informed global citizens.

This is a credit bearing educational experience that provides students with the opportunity to participate in community work complemented with reflection spaces that open the possibility of making the proper connections with personal values and course contents: local development, social justice, intercultural understanding, sustainability, global citizenship and civic responsibility. The community work takes place in the context of local human development processes, mainly in urban Costa Rica.

Objectives

- To understand structural inequalities that affect poverty, privilege, power, and oppression
- To understand concepts behind community engagement
- To contextualize service-learning experiences with issues of local sustainable human development issues
- To relate service activities to social justice, global citizenship and civic responsibility
- To analyze the cultural differences between the home culture and the host culture
- To generate a space to reflect on community work and the opportunities offered by the experience.

Methodology

An ethnographic approach emphasizing all the opportunities for experiential learning will be used with the students in order to gather information for analysis and interpretation.

Students will participate in follow-up sessions to analyze and share their experiences with their peers. These sessions will provide a space for discussions about the connection between local development, social justice, intercultural understanding, global citizenship and civic responsibility compared to the experiences lived by the students.

The cases explored in class will be related to areas in which the students are working, linked to processes of sustainable human development at the local level.

Students will have to write a journal that serves as a medium to observe their intercultural process and the connections sought by the course. The product of



this experience will be presented in a creative and informative way.

A final essay and presentation is included to evaluate the students' academic performance. The final essay will reflect on the interaction of the students at the service-learning site and with the community at large. It will also include a section on recommendations for the organization where the student worked, as well as the discussion of some ideas for action aimed to improve local human development in the context of their organization.

Students are responsible for selecting their topics of research and of presenting the outline and final essay on time. It is also the student responsibility to inform of any problem in the work space. Students are expected to honor the agreements made with their placements.

Students will be assessed through two exams, which will cover the conceptual section of the course.

Grading System

The grading consists of the participation in the work and in the sessions, an exam, a journal, the solutions of cases and the outline, the presentation and the final essay. Any delay on the presentation of assignments on the due date will imply a deduction on the grade of the assignment.

Exams	20 pts
Quiz	5 pts
Journal	10 pts
Cases	10 pts
Class Participation and Attendance	10 pts
Final Paper	20 pts
Community Work	25 pts
TOTAL:	100 pts

Calendar of Class Sessions

Week 1

Wednesday: Introduction to the course (2 hours)

- Calendar revision and distribution of responsibilities: exams, cases, journal.
- Method: Individual and Collective Construction of Knowledge.
- Description of the different methodological resources for the class: journal, cases, final paper.
- Review of International Service-Learning: concept, theories, importance

Friday: Cultural differences, time management culture in Latin America (2 hours)

Activities:

- Time management culture in Latin America, monochronic and polychronic.
- Writing exercises: score yourself.
- Discussion about time management differences and its consequences.

Week 2

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)

Wednesday: Human Development (2 hours)

- Key concepts: capabilities, equity, sustainability, agency, and empowerment
- The multidimensional nature of Human Development and its application

Friday: Community Development, Cultural Differences, Communication Style (2 hours)

- Lecture: communication styles, high and low context
- Discussion about cultural differences on styles of communication and its effects on an ISL experience.

Week 3

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)

Wednesday: The Human Development Index (2 hours)

- Gender differences, poverty indexes

Friday: Cultural differences, concept of self (2 hours)

- Lecture: concept of self, individualism and collectivism
- Discussion about cultural differences on the concept of self and its consequences on the understanding of their working situations.



Week 4

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)

Wednesday: Poverty and Inequality (2 hours)

- Approaches to defining and measuring poverty
- Multidimensionality of poverty
- Why does inequality matter?

Friday: Cultural Differences in the workplace (2 hours)

- Review of the theories studied in class.
- Discussion on the effect of cultural differences on the process of their experience abroad.

Week 5

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)

Wednesday: Poverty and Inequality in Costa Rica (2 hours)

- Who are the poor? Why are they poor? How do they survive?
- Policy implications

Friday: Methodology (2 hours)

- Methodology for case studies and working session to review material for cases
- Outline for final paper

Week 6

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)

Wednesday: EXAM (2 hours)

Friday: *NO CLASS*

Week 7

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)

Wednesday: Social Exclusion, Human Security, and Vulnerable Groups (2 hours)

- The Social Exclusion Approach and its application in Latin America
- The Human Security Approach: Key concepts, principles, and application

Friday: Debriefing (2 hours)

- The importance of volunteerism as an instrument for local development

Week 8

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)



Wednesday: Vulnerable groups (2 hours)

- Indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, children and adolescents, woman, migrants
- The case of Costa Rica

Friday: (2 hours)

- Cases are due this day so students can read them for the following class. Will be sent via email to all students in the class.

Week 9

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)

Wednesday: Social Policy

- The public realm of development
- Social Policy: policies, universalism v. targeting, conditioned cash transfer programs in Latin America

Friday: Local development related to education, environment (2 hours)

Week 10

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)

Wednesday: Public Private Partnerships for Development (2 hours)

- The case of Costa Rica

Friday: Journal Presentations (2 hours)

- Quiz about case presentations

Week 11

Monday: Service-learning (3 hours)

Wednesday: EXAM

Friday: Final Project Presentation

SUMMARY

10 sessions of community service (3 hrs. each)	30 hours
24 sessions of classes (Teaching hours)	48 hours

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