

SOC: 282
COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SOCIETY
Mary Baldwin University
Baldwin Online & Adult Program: Online Class
Sheila Smith: Tel: 540/886-7210
Email: ssmith@marybaldwin.edu

Course Description

Since 1990, there has been a nationwide call for Americans to serve their communities. Most localities offer a profusion of service opportunities. Some of the more common service agencies include: food kitchens, homeless shelters, food banks, domestic abuse shelters, programs of every kind for children and young people, religious outreach programs, disability programs, mental health institutions, educational programs, and adequate housing initiatives. All of us appreciate, at some level, that community service is vital for our society, not only for the welfare of those less fortunate, but also for a thriving civil society in a democratic nation. Indeed, service to our communities is an important part of many of our lives.

This course offers the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of our service, for ourselves, for direct beneficiaries, and for the wider community. In “Community Service and Society”, students serve their community and reflect on the contribution of that service to the American way of life. Students can choose to serve from a wide range of service possibilities. A series of readings helps students learn about how community service is organized in our country and beyond, and the extent to which this service contributes to everyone’s quality of life and to the integrity of national institutions. The opportunity to keep a journal helps students to reflect on their service. Writing a paper provides the opportunity to integrate service and readings.

“Community Service and Society” takes a student to the heart of the sociological imagination. For this reason, the course is the “field” course for sociology majors. Here you are given the chance to engage in community service locally and explore globally. You will experience and understand the different perspectives of ALL those involved in the “solution” of a social problem, including both giver and recipient. Students also analyze how this solution is socially structured. Finally, it is important to appreciate how community service functions in our society. Course readings describe how community service is an integral part of civil society and both alleviates and promotes social inequality.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Apply sociological theory and critical thinking skills to community issues
2. Identify their assumptions and values regarding community issues
3. Demonstrate knowledge and sensitivity to issues of culture, diversity, and social justice as applied to community engagement
4. Differentiate service from social change as they relate to community service

Required readings:

Hamner, Doris. 2002. *Building Bridges*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon ISBN 978-0-205-31974-9
Bornstein, David. 2007. *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*. New York: Oxford University Press ISBN 978-0-19-533476-0
Sturtevant, Victoria. "Reciprocity of social capital and collective action. (Applegate Partnership stewardship group)." *Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society* 37.1 (Spring 2006): 52(13). available on Canvas

Contact with instructor:

E-mail is the preferred and most dependable means of contacting the instructor and should be used whenever possible. The instructor will contact students via Canvas announcements and their Mary Baldwin University e-mail address; for this reason, check your MBU e-mail and Canvas regularly.

Grading Scheme:

Class participation	10%	Weekly	Placement journal	10%	Due Sept. 14
Midterm Exam	15%	Due Oct. 12	Final Exam	20%	Due Nov. 28
Service journal	25%	Due Nov. 23	Final paper	20%	Due Dec. 7

NOTE: Those who wish to request an “extension” must have completed their placement journal and first exam.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Community Service:

Students are required to complete **30 hours** of documented service to an approved service agency within one semester. Students should read *Building Bridges* and research local and online opportunities within the first weeks of the semester. We will have to be creative to negotiate the more limited opportunities available during Covid-19. If you are already working or participating in a service agency and can obtain permission to use your observations for the class, that would be ideal. If not, we will have to seek a safe local or online opportunity that would enable you to provide service in an agency you could research. Students are required to work out their service placement with the instructor; this means *contacting the instructor for approval **before a student has committed to a service agency.*** Once the placement has been arranged students should submit a placement journal describing the process including, where appropriate, references to the text. **The Placement Journal is due by September 14.** Provide a copy of the *Information Sheet for Providers* which is posted online to agencies that you approach regarding your placement. A *Timesheet* is also available online for use in keeping track of your service (you are not required to use this timesheet; it is provided for your convenience). Full credit will be given to students who complete their service in a dedicated and professional manner and who submit documentation of their service. “Documentation” simply means an email to ssmith@marybaldwin.edu or signed statement of any kind by a representative of your service agency certifying that you completed your service.

Finally, we are very concerned that your service be as rewarding as possible, both personally and academically. This especially requires that you be treated well by your agency. *If you consider yourself mistreated in any way*, please contact the instructor at once about a proper response, including changing service venues. **In particular, please be very attentive to issues of security.** *Do not at any time embark on service of any kind that you perceive to be unsafe, insecure or which in any way compromises your security.* **NOTE ESPECIALLY that we do NOT approve any service which includes your working in client’s homes or personal quarters without assistance and/or oversight of an agency colleague.**

Journal:

Students keep a journal of their service experience. Journals should include: reflections on one’s personal experience with the agency; analysis of how the agency is organized, including the primary roles and the process of decision-making; description of the perspectives of both clients and service providers, especially those with whom a student actually works. Full credit will be given to students who engage their journal writing creatively and energetically, incorporating the elements above. NOTE that the journal is worth ¼ of your overall grade – more than either the service or the final paper. This is because the journal, more than any other element of the course, offers the opportunity for students to integrate readings and service experience, and to reflect on the *sociological dimensions* of their service. Use the text and instruction sheet to ensure that you keep a journal that warrants a good grade.

If students wish, they may submit their journals for an initial reading once several journal entries have been recorded, and before their service is half completed. The instructor will assess these early submissions for strengths and weaknesses, including suggestions for ideas on how to insure a good final journal grade. Journals will not be given this initial reading if submitted after service is half completed. NOTE that journals WILL NOT BE GRADED IN ANY WAY in this initial reading; only COMPLETED journals will be graded.

Finally, only the instructor will read a student’s journal; no one else will read a journal while it is in the instructor’s possession UNLESS the instructor is specifically directed by a student to make their journal available

to someone else, and then only at the instructor's discretion. Also, please remember that the instructor WILL read the entire journal, so be sure to include only those ideas that you wish to share.

Paper:

Students will apply the knowledge gained from course readings to their experience in the field in a final 3000-word (10 pages @ 300 words) paper, *excluding references*. The paper should include the following: a description of one's service (including personal reflections); an analysis of the organization of the agency; an account of the perspectives of those involved; a discussion of the role of the service agency in the wider community; reference to course reading materials.

The primary source for the material for the paper should come from the journal and the class readings. Students *are* expected to cite their sources appropriately in the text of the paper, and in a reference section appended to the end of the paper. Use the ASA style guide available at www.marybaldwin.edu/grafon/

Class Participation

We will use the Discussions on Canvas to create a learning community. Students should make a minimum of two relevant, substantive contributions to **each** of the discussion forums. Postings will take the form of at least one personal response to the readings and one thoughtful reply to another student's post which furthers the conversation.

Readings and Exams:

There are two exams; each covers the reading material for its respective part of the course. The exam questions will be drawn from the list of study guide questions available on Canvas. **ALL EXAMS ARE "CLOSED BOOK" EXAMS.** *You are on your "honor" to use no aid in completing the exam; do not discuss the exam with anyone else. All exams must be PLEDGED before they will be graded.*

Getting started

Visit and explore the Canvas site, start reading Hamner, introduce yourself to your classmates, and be thinking about your service placement. I look forward to working and learning with you throughout the semester.