

COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING 300
The Theory and Practice of Community Service-Learning, or
Theorizing Community and Its Practices
Section B1, Winter 2007
Wednesdays 1-3:50pm
Room: TB 65

Instructor: Dr. Mark Jackson
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3-4pm
Office: Tory 6-28
Ph. 492-3547
E-Mail: jacksonm@ualberta.ca

Taught at the junctures of sociology, ethics, and experiential learning, Community Service-Learning (CSL) 300 will theoretically and practically interrogate "community", "society" and the social ethics of "service" and "learning." At this moment of late modernity, how are specific social fissures and needs created that demand collective response and personal responsibility? What are some of the social forces (ex. urbanisation, neo-liberal globalization, consumer capitalism, multiculturalism, etc...) that produce perceived needs, which are in turn addressed by civil society? What does it mean to respond to social needs, practically, politically and personally? Can we address increasing social inequity, and at the same time critique the grounds on which those needs and their responses are conceptualized? Is learning itself a part of social responsibility, and how can learning be enhanced by practical and specific community engagement?

Students will address these and other broad questions through both in-class seminar style theoretical learning, and through practical, voluntary work experiences with community organizations and service groups. The course will be thematically structured through seminar readings, lectures, discussions, and presentations. Practical work experience expected of the students' participatory learning will complement the theoretical readings and seminar discussions. This practical work experience will be facilitated through the rubric of Community Service-Learning. Students will be required to work as volunteers for approximately 30 hours in a chosen community service organization. Pre-arranged volunteer placements and projects have been selected whose mandates loosely correspond to the course's focal themes. Students will be required to develop their thinking and research on community, service, citizenship, and learning through the interrelationships and juxtapositions of theoretical reading and participatory practice.

Course Themes:

Several themes will be addressed in the course. These themes will act as lenses for focusing our analysis on the interplay between "community", "service", and "learning." Readings in the course pack address:

- CSL and its negotiation with the context and idea of the university
- The meaning of community
- Social Need
- Urbanism and the possibility of community
- Marginalization and community – urban aboriginals in Canada
- Faith and the construction of community
- Refugees, human rights and the state of exception
- Wilderness and community dependence
- Rural communities
- Food and community formation

Hopefully, students will leave the course having developed their critical insights through discussions, debates, reflection and learning surrounding the meanings of community and the practice of service. Importantly, they will also have critically reflected on, and engaged with, on a practical level, the everyday complexities, responsibilities and imperatives of urban dwelling, citizenship and community building.

Required Texts:

Custom course packs for CSL 300 are available at the U of A Bookstore.

We might also watch at least two films: *The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the End of the American Dream* (2004) and *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2002). Films will be screened during scheduled class time unless otherwise noted.

Evaluation:

CSL Participation (approximately 30 hours)	25%
Seminar Preparation and Participation	25%
Reflective Journals (submitted twice during semester)	20%
2 Short (4-6 pages) Response and Papers	30%

Grades will be given out of 25, 25, 20, and 30, added, and then the total out of one hundred correlated to an alpha scale for the final registrar grade (see below).

Percentage	Letter Grade	Point Value	Description
95-100%	A+	4.0	Excellent
90-94%	A	4.0	Excellent
85-89%	A-	3.7	Excellent
80-84%	B+	3.3	Good
76-79%	B	3.0	Good
71-75%	B-	2.7	Good
66-70%	C+	2.3	Satisfactory
62-65%	C	2.0	Satisfactory
58-61%	C-	1.7	Satisfactory
54-57%	D+	1.3	Poor
50-53%	D	1.0	Minimal Pass
0-49%	F	0.0	Fail

For further details, see section 23.4(4) of the 2005/2006 University Calendar (online at www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.4.html#23.4). Unless otherwise discussed with the instructor, failure to complete a component of the course requirements can result in a failing grade. Violations of the Code of Student Behaviour can also result in failing grades.

Late Submissions:

Late papers, journals and assignments, without valid and documented reasons for lateness, will not be accepted. Without valid reasons, late submissions will incur 10% deductions for every day late, including weekends. Valid reasons for lateness include documented illness (I.e. with medical certificate), bereavement or the like. Electronic copies of submissions (e-mail attachment/diskette, etc...) will not be accepted.

Term Evaluation:

1. Community Service (CSL) Participation (25%)

CSL participation is a required facet of the course. Students are required to work approximately 30 hours (not less than 25) with a chosen service organization. These hours can be fulfilled over the entire winter term, or they can be concentrated over a short duration; this will depend largely on the project you choose to work with, its requirements and flexibility, and your own responsibilities and flexibility. You are expected to keep a log of your hours and activities with your organization. In either case, the log detailing your hours worked must be submitted at the end of term with your journal. Have your community supervisor sign the log after your 30 hours to verify their completion.

Why is CSL participation a part of the course?

CSL bridges service and learning. It integrates volunteerism/activism with university learning, and is of mutual benefit to both community and campus. It structures opportunities for students to link community engagement with their academic program.

What is CSL good for?

1. It challenges students and faculty to think about complex social issues and to make vital links between communities and classrooms.
2. It develops social citizenship (faculty and student), critical thinking, and problem solving skills.
3. It enhances the goals of the course by making learning immediately relevant to community life.
4. It mentors capable, motivated and flexible volunteers, develops student resumes, and provides the opportunity to develop work skills.
5. It helps to provide opportunities for personal growth, personal development and social healing.

Reading about community, social responsibility and learning are sometimes very different experiences than active participation in community work, community building. The multiple, often antagonistic, forces which characterize our urban lives can cause significant disconnects. Sometimes these practices can seem at odds with academic reading and thought. Sometimes they are natural corollaries. At bottom, however, good thinking about community cannot begin without active and practical engagement.

This engagement can take many forms: ethnographic, participatory, representative, interpretative, aesthetic, etc. Since the notion of community is a focus of this course, participating in community service provides a wonderful opportunity to experience the practical imperatives of community building in the urban context, as well as providing the opportunity to engage the intersections of participatory observation and academic research. It is hoped that the conjunction of community service and traditional classroom participation will enhance the learning experience of the students.

I want you to use your experiences in your service organization to reflect and write critically about the practices and theories of communities and cities. You will be expected to bring your CSL experiences,

insights and learning to the class and its discussions, as well as incorporate them into your short papers and journals.

I also want you to use your energies, talents, skills and insights to help organizations fulfill their mandates to their various and intersecting urban communities (individual, neighbourhood, municipal, provincial, global, etc.). The community organizations and projects with which you will work are all non-profit initiatives which attempt to address specific community needs. Ideally, by working on their projects, you will help these organizations achieve their goals. At the same time, you will have the opportunity to enhance your own learning through active involvement, observation, writing, and communicating that work with your fellow seminar participants.

2. Seminar Preparation and Participation (25%)

The course will be run as a seminar. The instructor will not be lecturing from a pulpit. Students are obligated to do the readings and to come to the class prepared to critically discuss the material, their insights, and their experiences. All students will be expected to participate in the discussions.

In order to help facilitate this participation, each student will be expected to present two (2) articles to the class throughout the semester. These articles will be chosen by the students on a first come first serve basis. Please confirm your choices by the 17th of January, or earlier.

Preparation of the readings means that you will summarize the main points and arguments you gleaned from the articles. You may make formal presentations if you wish, but you are not required to do so. Those who do choose to make formal (but short 10-15 minutes to the class) presentations to the class will not be assessed higher marks necessarily than those who are more informal in their approach. The main object of the exercise is for you to summarize the key points of the articles, explain the arguments or claims raised, and, importantly, identify at least two (2) questions that are of interest to you from each article that we can then address as a group. At the end of the class in which you present you will submit to the instructor a short (200 words max.) summary or abstract of the readings/articles that you present for the group. These summaries or abstracts will count towards your assessment for the reading preparations. All participants will be assessed on the degree to which you come prepared to discuss the material, listen to others' viewpoints, engage in critical debate, and further the productive discourse of the seminar.

Ethics Note:

You might be working with vulnerable people. You will be privy to sensitive parts of people's lives. Please use aliases in class when referring to clients within organizations and refrain from communicating personal information (where they might live, contact information, etc.) with class participants, friends, etc. You don't need to use aliases to refer to your community supervisor, but do so when referring to people who are seeking the resources of the organizations with which you might work.

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

3. Journal (20%) Due Feb 28th, 2007 and April 11th, 2007 [Please submit your log of hours worked with your final journal submission.]

Students will be required to keep a journal detailing their involvement with the course and their community placements. The journal will be submitted for evaluation half way through term and on the last day of term. The journal is intended to be a candid and reflective account of your work, thinking, and experiences over the entirety of the course. Record your thoughts, notes, observations and activities with the seminars and your CSL placements. The journal is not intended as a formal notebook of field

observations, although it can incorporate facets of this research method should the need or interest arise. It is intended as a reflective and reflexive account of your thoughts and impressions on the intersections between theoretical and academic reading and practical, community activity.

You are encouraged to be inventive with your journal. As such, you may incorporate visual materials as part of your journal. These visuals may include photographs, drawings, video work, graphic design elements, etc. I would like the students to challenge themselves with various research and observational methods, including visualizing their experiences and participation. This visualization can take the form of photographing or video-graphing their experiences and the contexts of their learning. Whether this takes place within their specific organizational participation, or in the wider contexts of the urban communities (geographic, identity, cultural, racial, etc...) within which they live, will be up to the student.

Research Ethics Note:

Should students choose to photograph anybody, be they the staff or clients of the organization, they will be required to obtain written permission from the subject or subjects. This formal written permission must be submitted with any journal and/or final paper containing the images or representations of these human subjects. Students are advised that they should be extremely sensitive to photographing or representing “vulnerable” people (i.e. street youth, disadvantaged people, homeless people, people before the courts, refugees, etc...). Permission in the form of informed consent should always be obtained. Should students wish to represent visually anyone under the age of 18, they must obtain permission both from the subject, and from that subject’s legal guardian, or the CSL project supervisor. Verbal permission should be sought before taking photographs inside people’s homes, and that steps should be taken to protect the privacy of addresses and other identifying features (license plates, etc.)

People subject to representation must be able to provide **informed consent**. If people are not able to provide informed consent, then they must **NOT** be represented. **Subjects must be informed that they are able to withdraw consent at any time, before or after being represented, and that they are not obliged to provide reasons for the withdrawal of consent.**

Employing visual research methodologies, including photographing research subjects and contexts, can be an exciting, revealing and challenging process. Much may be learned and shared by exploring innovative ways and means of observing. However, these methods can also raise sociological sensitivities (cultural, racial, religious, economic, etc...) which might not otherwise be of apparent concern. Care should be taken to protect the sensitivities of both the subject and researcher.

The journal may be as personal as you wish given the fact that it will be read by the instructor. Be assured that the journals and their contents will be kept strictly confidential by the instructor.

Journals will be evaluated on the amount of effort put into their writing, the degree of innovative critical reflection engaged, and the degree to which the author critical integrates their practical experiences with their more theoretical researches, reading, notes and class discussion.

Students are expected to write detailed, sustained journals, that evidence an habitual practice, that are engaging, reflexive, and exploratory. They may be handwritten, typewritten, web-log format, bound, unbound (yet suitably collated)...whatever suits your personal style and comfort. Journals that evidence having been written at the last minute will be failed. Journals need not be mighty tomes. There is no standard to their length. The overall product will evidence an engaged, reflective and critical practice. This is best attained by consistent attention to the work.

Students are required to keep their journals in safe and secure places. The contents of the journal might contain material sensitive to clients involved in the CSL projects. It is required that students respect this privacy and sensitivity by keeping their journals and reflections secure.

4. 2 Response and Reflection Papers (30%) (Marks will be assessed out of 15 points for each submission)

- 1st paper is due February 14th, 2007 [in class]
- 2nd paper is due April 19th, 2007 [submitted to Sociology Main office (5-21 Tory) by 4pm]

12 point font/ double-spaced/1 inch margins/4-6 pages, excluding title page and bibliography

Question for 1st Response Paper

Several of the theorists we shall be reading argue that the practice and experience of “community” is anathema to modern life, and, as such, fundamentally caught in an ambiguity and paradox. Ferdinand Tönnies, Georg Simmel and Zygmunt Bauman all suggest that while modernity provides the opportunity and dynamism to bring people together in unique and stimulating ways (modern cities, diversity, mobility, technology, etc.), it, at the same time, fragments, through friction, insecurity and sheer, overwhelming dynamism, the possibility for community to be either ‘self-evident’ or ‘natural.’ Respond to Bauman’s claim that, as a result of community needing to be fought for, it can, as a result, only be “numb — or dead”(p.10-11). Explicate what Bauman means by this claim. (Don’t spend too long on this. I want the idea and response to come from you, with the theorist as support or counter-argument. Your thinking and response should be the focus of the writing.) With reference to your own life and experience, write about an incident in your own life that illustrates or reflects the paradox these theorists all engage. How do you respond to the claim that “community” is forever beyond our reach? What does community mean to you?

Question for 2nd Reflection Paper (may be subject to revision)

Given your experience over the semester, how has your participation in the community organization, in the classroom, and with the readings shaped your understanding of social responsibility? Critically reflect on the experience, and perhaps, imperative, of community building using specific examples from your placement and from your reading.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY and RESPECT:

Volunteering and service is often an invitation to someone’s very private vulnerabilities; that is why it is worthwhile. You might be working with very vulnerable people (addicted street kids, homeless people, people in trouble with the law, sex workers, refugees from refugee camps and war torn countries, people in poverty, etc...) and thus privy to sensitive parts of people’s personal and social lives. Please maintain high degrees of confidentiality. Respect peoples’ intimacies with that confidentiality.

COMMUNITY SUPERVISOR:

Think of the community supervisor as a co-educator and mentor in the course. You can learn much from them, perhaps more than from the classroom or instructor. Accord them due respect and courtesy. Their voices will also be a part of the evaluation procedure if your final projects aim to fulfill their needs.

PROPOSED TERM SCHEDULE (Subject to Revision)

January 10th: Introductory Class

January 17th CSL and the University

Submit reading and presentation choices to me by the 17th.

John Saltmarsh, "Ethics, Reflection, Purpose, and Compassion: CSL" (e-mail)

Dan Butin "Service Learning as Postmodern Pedagogy" (CP)

Cornell West, "The Moral Obligations of Living in a Democratic Society"(CP)

Stanley Fish Articles on Ivory Tower and University Responsibility (Online)

January 19th ** Deadline for completion and submission of CSL forms (incl. Security/Child Welfare/Police checks) to CSL House (11039 Saskatchewan Drive/492.2420)

January 24th The Meaning of "Community"

Ferdinand Tönnies, "The Concept of *Gemeinschaft*" (CP)

Anthony Cohen, "The Symbolic Construction of Community"(CP)

Zygmunt Bauman, "Welcome to Elusive Community"(CP)

Miranda Joseph, "The Supplemmentarity of Community"(CP)

January 31st Social Need

Jonathan Bradshaw, "The Concept of Social Need" (CP)

Michael Ignatieff, "The Needs of Strangers" (CP)

Barry Smart, "Freedom Without Responsibility" (CP)

February 7th Urbanism and Community

Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (CP)

Mike Davis, "The Urban Climacteric"(CP)

Wendell Berry, "Sex, Economy, Freedom and Community"(CP)

February 14th Urban Aboriginals and Community (Guest participants: Suzanne Butler, Derek Thunder, and Lewis Cardinal)

Arthur K. Davis, "Urban Indians in Western Canada" (CP)

John Roslinski, "Urban and Rural Aboriginals" (CP)

Dwayne Trevor Donald, “Edmonton Pentimento”(email)
Razack, S. “Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice”(handout)

February 28th Faith, Service and Compassion (With Guests Rev. Coleen Lynch, Dr. Brendan Leier, and Dr. Bob McKeon)

Enrique Dussel, from “Ethics and Community” (CP)
Jane Addams, “The Subtle Problems of Charity”(CP)
Miguel A. De La Torre, “The De-liberation of Ethics”(CP)
John Sobrino, “Compassion”(e-mail)

March 7th Refugees, the State of Exception and Human Rights (With Guests Kiran Choudhury, Renee Vaugeois and Carrie Mallory)

Giorgio Agamben, “Beyond Human Rights” (CP)
Geraldine Pratt, “Abandoned Women and the Spaces of Exception” (e-mail)
Kathryn Choules, “Globally Privileged Citizenship” (e-mail)

March 14th Wilderness and Community

Allen Hertzke and Chris McRorie, “The Concept of Moral Ecology” (CP)
Alphonso Lingis, “Ecological Emotions” (CP)
Max Oelschlaeger, “Natural Aliens Reconsidered”(CP)

March 21st Rural Community (with Guest Alvin Sorensen)

Rabindranath Tagore, “City and Village” (CP)
Wendell Berry, “Private Property and the Commonwealth” (CP)
Roger Gibbins, “The Rural Face of the New West” (CP)
Wendell Berry, “The Prejudice Against Country People”(handout)

March 28th Food and Community

Rebecca Todd Peters, “Supporting Community Farming” (CP)
Bill McKibben, “The Cuba Diet” (handout)
Karen A. Franck, “Food for the City, Food in the City” (handout)

April 4th
April 11th

Final reflection paper due April 19th, 2007 in instructor’s mailbox in Sociology Main office (5-21 Tory) before 4:00pm