

Semester in Bath, Spring 2004  
Comm 157:  
Community Action and Service  
Bath Internships

Instructor:

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W 10:00 -1:00 and by appointment

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*Course Description:* Comm 157 combines community service with scholarly reflection. In a service-learning course, we know that community service is most effective when it is combined with opportunities for reflection. Therefore, this course is more than merely an opportunity to “volunteer.” It is structured so that you will read, write and discuss your experiences with others. The course reader is designed to assist you in discussions of your experiences and in the writing of your papers. The goal of the course is to deepen your understanding as participants in an evolving multicultural world.

*Course Goals:* This course satisfies the upper division GE requirement in Area S: Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S. In our case, of course, the actual work experience will occur in a different country – Britain – which has an number of interesting parallels and striking differences for

Americans. We will be reading the same texts as campus-based 157 courses, but our discussions will have a more comparative flavor. After completing the course, students will be able to: describe how religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability and age identity are shaped by cultural and societal influences in the contexts of equality and inequality; describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S. and the U.K.; describe social actions by religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and age groups leading to greater equality and social justice in both countries; and recognize and appreciate constructive interactions between people from different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups in the U.S. and the U.K.

*Required Texts:*

Course Reader: available at the Spartan Bookstore under EDUC 157

*Course Requirements:* Because of our location in Bath, our course will differ in several ways from a campus-based 157, with more reliance on full-class meetings, supplemented by small, student-organized support groups. The support groups will be composed of students working for similar types of organizations (social-service agencies like Oxfam in one group, cultural agencies like the National Trust in another). Support groups will be expected to meet at least briefly once a week, to discuss their experiences, journals, and work for the class. The full class will meet at least three times during the semester, at 9:00 am in the Sion Hill

Lecture Theatre, on Thursdays when History 151C is not being held. (Please note that the 157 schedule on the syllabus is tentative, and may change once the History course meetings are set.)

*Assignments and Grading:* Comm 157 is a credit/no-credit course. In order to receive credit, students must complete all the major assignments of the course: completing the requisite hours of internship and submitting a journal about that experience; writing two papers; doing the reading

for and participating in full-class and support-group sessions.

*Submission of Written Work:* Essays must be typed, double-spaced, and follow standard MLA format. Papers may be handed in only during class and only by a student in attendance. Do not leave them in the office or anywhere else. Please keep a copy of all work submitted (on disk at least), and retain all graded work returned until the end of the semester. Please do not submit late work, or unassigned work, except by prior arrangement. Students should anticipate a significant delay in the return of any late work.

*Topics for Papers:* Each of the two papers should be approximately six pages in length, and must include the following elements:

- Examples from your internship experience
- At least one reference to an article from the course reader
- At least one reference to an article from your own research

Papers will be evaluated for completeness, relevance, and writing mechanics. **The evaluation forms to be used by the instructor in marking the paper are attached.** If you are asked to revise your paper, comments by the instructor will clarify why. Revision must be successfully completed to receive credit for the course. Please submit papers on or before the due date; late papers will be read and returned last.

#### **Paper #1** (due March 11<sup>th</sup>):

Overview: Consider your own identity and how it may influence your ability to be effective in your community service site. In the course of your six-page essay, address the following issues:

1. what social problem does your site attempt to address?
2. what are you doing at this site? Based on class readings, critically evaluate your own motivation.
3. Critically evaluate your activities so far and how your own background or sense of identity (gender, ethnicity, age, social class) influences your ability to be effective.
4. What insights have you gained so far on the relationship between your identity and

those of the people you interact with during your internship?

5. What are other potential ways of addressing the problem your agency is attempting to remedy? How might the approach of your agency, or the difficulties it is facing, be different if it were operating in the US?

#### **Paper #2—Learning Objectives Reflection Paper** (due by May 6<sup>th</sup>).

Taking into account the course readings, your individual research, and two interviews you conduct (one with a worker at your agency and one with a client) consider the following general questions over the course of writing your six page essay:

1. Critically evaluate your internship experience in terms of how *you* might have changed over the course of the semester, insights you gained, and your impact on the problems your community service agency was designed to focus on. How effective have you been in helping your site address problems it is supposed to help solve? Why or why not?
2. Critically evaluate your community service agency in terms of how it might more effectively address the populations it serves. How might it address larger problems of inequality or social injustice? How might such an agency be different if operating in the US? (Note: consider the role historical, social, political, and economic processes might play in the ability of your agency to be effective, and how those processes would be different in the States.)
3. Summarize in the body of your paper what you have learned from your two interviews.