

Teaching & Curriculum Development

Course Design

Syllabus Design

Set up your course syllabus to aid students in understanding how the service project will be more than just an add-on to the course.

When writing about the service learning component in your course syllabus, consider including the following elements:

- Reference service as an expressed goal of the course.
- Explain if the service learning component is optional or required.
- If the service learning component is optional, explain how/by when students need to indicate they are choosing this option.
- Clarify which assignments will be replaced by the optional service learning component.
- Clearly set up the community issue or need and define the scope of the service project.
- Clearly describe how the service experience will be assessed and what elements of students' learning and experience will be assessed.
- Describe the nature, context, and scope of the service and/or community project.
- Specify the roles and responsibilities of students in the project (e.g., transportation, time requirements, community contacts).
- Specify the means by which students will be expected to demonstrate what they have learned through the project (papers, presentations, portfolios, etc.).
- Clarify the connection between the service and the course content.

Examples:

- Description of the principal course assignments
- Learning outcomes maps that situate the service in terms of the learning objectives associated with it
- A description of what you/your discipline/your department means by the terms "reflection" and "reflective learning." If the term "reflection" isn't commonly used in your discipline, use an alternate term to describe the same analytical process (e.g., critical analysis).
- A description of the expectations for the public dissemination of student and faculty work
- A description of the community partner organizations (e.g., the organizations' missions, the populations that they serve)
- Important dates, including the date by which students must choose the service learning option (if applicable) and/or their service site, the date of the service learning orientation, when required paperwork and reflection assignments are due, and the final date to complete service hours
- The name, contact information, and office hours of your Service Learning Teaching Assistant

Adapted from Fenstermacher (1990), as presented in: Heffernan, K. (2001). *Fundamentals of Service Learning Course Construction*. Campus Compact.