

ENVS 380 Latin American Experience Spring 2010 Syllabus

Instructors:

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W 1:30-3:30

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Course Time: Wed 10:30

Meeting Place: MG 2034

Course Purpose and Goals:

The ambitious purpose of this course is to expose students to multifaceted issues in a real world context through the integration of curricular activities, civic engagement, community involvement, and service learning experiences.

Specific goals will be for the student to:

1. Participate in the development and implementation, along with peers and community members, of a feasible service learning project that is needed within the community.
2. Experience "life" under a new and different set of rules and constraints and gain an appreciation for diverse cultures and backgrounds.
3. Learn to be open minded about unfamiliar viewpoints and issues.
4. Develop critical thinking skills that allow for independent evaluation of diverse topical arguments from a variety of viewpoints involving broad disciplines.
5. Develop an understanding of the role of citizens in a global community.

Approaches And Expectations:

This course is based on the central theme of service learning. Service learning is not just volunteering. Service learning involves the development, implementation, and evaluation of projects or programs through interaction and communication with community members. The programs should be beneficial to the community based on the community's opinion of what is needed. Projects should also be sustainable long after the service learning experience has ended.

The course will be based around the development, implementation, and assessment of projects or programs. Students will work in groups to develop projects, then work as a class to implement the projects, and work individually to assess each of the projects.

Students are expected to live up to their responsibilities and commit to the course. Students will be expected to complete assigned work on time, keep an open mind, work in groups or individually as called for, and be good citizens.

READINGS:

The course will consist of weekly readings and discussions, presentations from community members, and training sessions revolving around planned projects. Each component of the course will involve readings from the literature, textbooks, government documents, etc. Students are expected to complete all readings on time, with sufficient investment to discuss said readings intelligently.

GRADING:

Your grade is based on total points earned, meaning that it is possible for everyone to get an A. The types of assignments and their point values are summarized in the table below.

Type of assignment	Point Value
Attendance	50
Discussion Participation	50
Project Participation	50
Citizenship	50
Self Reflection	150
Project Proposal	150
Project Assessment	150
Total Possible Points	650

Your final grade in the course will be determined by dividing the total points you earn by the total possible points in the course and multiplying by 100. Your percentage will determine your final letter grade as follows:

Grading scale

90 – 100%	A
80 – 89.9%	B
70 – 79.9%	C
60 – 69.9%	D
< 60%	F

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to be present and involved in all class periods, training sessions, and presentations. The learning experience and success in meeting the outcomes of the course are dependent upon the involvement of all participants. Therefore if you are not present or do not participate you are detracting from the experience of the other participants. Therefore you are expected to be in attendance, attentive, and involved.

Discussion: Each discussion and activity will involve student prompted questions to initiate discussion. The questions will be based on prior readings and will be collected at the end of each activity.

Citizenship: The members of the course are a community. In order for the community to function optimally and for every member of the community to have the best possible experience, each citizen must be involved in the community and be concerned with the well being and success of each individual within the community.

Project:

The course will incorporate multiple projects related to non-government (La MICA) organizations, government (ANAM) organizations, and the local communities. Students will be responsible for choosing projects from within a framework of potential projects established by professors prior to arrival in Panama. Students, with support from the faculty, will be involved in discussions with the local people to prioritize projects and determine what the goals of the projects are, as well as implementation of the projects on the ground.

Potential projects may include, but are not limited to, road and trail maintenance (considering the only means for access to many of the communities is by dirt trail); construction of community

buildings, houses, or components of the La MICA research station; assistance with development of agricultural fields; base line biological surveys of the park; oral history interviews with local inhabitants; or writing a history of changing attitudes toward conservation in local communities.

In addition, all students will act as ESL tutors within the community schools. ESL tutoring will allow students to interact with the children of the community, who will hopefully develop a bond based on mutual collaboration and hard work as Panamanians strive to learn English and at the same time teach the Truman students Spanish.

Schedule

The schedule of the course has three basic components, Project Development, Project Implementation, and Project Reflection. The Project Development phase will take place during the first month of the semester on Truman campus and continue during the first two weeks we are in Panama. During Project Development discussions and activities will focus on what service learning projects are and how they can benefit everyone involved. The Project Implementation phase will take place in Panama within the various communities. During the Project Implementation phase students will be working with target groups to implement their project and work towards the successful completion of the project, as well as implementation of the sustainability aspect of the project. The Project Reflection phase will take place during the last two weeks we are in Panama and the time we are back on campus at Truman. The Project Reflection phase will be an assessment of the project as a whole, including sustainability. The Project Reflection phase will also be a self assessment of each student's personal involvement in the project to determine how they contributed to the success of the project, what they learned from the project, and an assessment of what they might have done differently if they had it to do over again.

Academic Honesty:

There are set expectations for student conduct at Truman State University (Chapter 8 of the Student Handbook) that we expect to be upheld. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is taking someone else's ideas, expressions, or productions and passing them off as your own. The first instance of academic dishonesty will result in a zero on the assignment or exam and the second instance will be turned over to the University Conduct Officer.

Disclaimer: Material contained within the syllabus is subject to change. Any changes to the syllabus will be made with plenty of advanced notification.

Week	Dates	Topics
1	Jan. 11	What is Service Learning
2	Jan. 18	English as a Second Language
3	Jan. 25	Project Development
4	Feb. 1	Project Development
5	Feb. 8	Project Development
6	Feb. 15	Travel to Panama
7	Feb. 22	Project Development/Implementation
8	Mar. 1	Project Implementation
9	Mar. 8	Project Implementation
10	Mar. 15	Project Implementation
11	Mar. 22	Project Implementation/Assessment
12	Mar. 29	Project Assessment
13	Apr. 5	Project Assessment
14	Apr. 12	Sustainability
15	Apr. 19	Reflection/Looking to the Future