

# OFFICE OF SERVICE LEARNING



## A GUIDE FOR FACULTY



**LOYOLA**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
**NEW ORLEANS**

# OUR STAFF



KELLY BROTZMAN  
Director  
865-2282  
kbrotzma@loyno.edu

**The Office of Service Learning supports the development and implementation of service learning and community-based learning experiences in academic courses and programs of study at Loyola University New Orleans. Our goal is to bring education to life by connecting the classroom to community needs. We support Loyola’s Jesuit mission of forming students toward social responsibility, solidarity, and a concern for justice and the common good.**

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# WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING?

Service learning is the integration of service, advocacy, or community engagement experiences into academic courses. The goal of service learning is twofold: to enliven students' educational experiences and strengthen communities. Ideally, the benefits are mutual: students and faculty gain valuable understanding, and community agencies get meaningful contributions.

**I would like to incorporate service learning into my course.  
What do I need to do?**

The **first** thing you need to do is submit the course title to the Office of Service Learning. We recommend focusing on one service learning course per semester, especially if you are new to service learning. Faculty typically report that teaching service learning courses requires more time and effort than teaching conventional courses. To browse current and past service learning courses at Loyola, visit our website at [www.loyno.edu/servicelearning](http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning).

**After** you've submitted your course title, you should begin planning your course. See the *Step-by-Step Course Planning Guide* in this booklet.

# SUBMITTING COURSES

Course titles should be submitted the semester before you intend to teach them, when you submit your course titles to your department and to LORA.

## Why so early?

- So your course can be properly coded in LORA **before** students register for it. Students need to know which courses will have service learning components when they are registering, because it is prudent for them to avoid registering for multiple service learning courses. Other students have special needs which might require accommodation with regard to service learning. If you submit your course titles in time, your LORA course listings will be annotated as follows: "Course has a service learning component."
- So your efforts and your students' efforts can be properly documented and recorded. Students' service learning work is recorded on their Loyola transcripts, but only if the course is properly coded in advance. In addition, faculty teaching designated service learning courses receive letters of recognition at the end of each semester.
- It takes time and effort to develop the right community partnerships for each class. Often, new relationships must be built. Sometimes, several potential agencies must be investigated.
- Community agencies need advance notice to collaborate effectively with universities, and they need to plan ahead for the presence of volunteers at their agency.

Submitting your course title **does not obligate** you to include service learning in your course. You can always change your mind and opt **not** to include service learning.

Important deadlines:

To teach a service learning course in	Submit your course title by
fall semester of AY 2010 – 11	Friday, March 12, 2010
spring semester of AY 2010 – 11	Friday, October 22, 2010
fall semester of AY 2011 – 12	Friday, March 25, 2011

# QUESTIONS ABOUT SERVICE LEARNING

## Where can my students do service learning?

Check out our list of current partner agencies at [www.loyno.edu/servicelearning](http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning). In consultation with the service learning office, you can select which agencies match your course. You can also work with the service learning director to develop new agency partnerships or draw on your own contacts in the community.

## How will I assess my students' service learning performance?

If your students are doing service learning placements, agency supervisors will be asked to complete a standard evaluation for each student at the end of the semester. Results of these evaluations will be given to you to incorporate into students' grades. Check out this evaluation at [www.loyno.edu/servicelearning](http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning).

If your students are doing a customized class project, you should work with the Office of Service Learning and your partner agency to develop a customized evaluation process.

It's helpful to distinguish between the quality of a student's **work** and the quality of a student's **learning**. Both are important! The best way to assess the latter is through written or verbal reflection (essays, reflection papers, blogging, discussion groups, creative projects, etc.).

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## Should service learning be factored into my students' grades?

Yes. Whether service learning is optional, extra credit, or required, the quality of a student's work and learning should carry some weight in a student's overall course performance. The exact percentage or point value is up to you.

## How will my students get to their service learning sites?

There are several options. To learn more, visit [www.loyno.edu/servicelearning](http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning), and click "Transportation."

# QUESTIONS ABOUT SERVICE LEARNING

## How can the service learning office help me?

The service learning office can:

- help students with scheduling and transportation issues
- consult with you one-on-one to develop the best service learning options for your class
- cultivate and maintain partnerships with community agencies
- facilitate a placement selection process for your students
- help you draft project descriptions
- visit your class to explain service learning procedures to students
- facilitate communication between students, professors, and agencies
- administer and collect paperwork
- help you with evaluation and assessment
- help you develop reflection tools for your class
- make service learning transcript notations at the end of the semester
- troubleshoot and problem solve throughout the semester

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The service learning office may be able to defray some service learning expenses. Contact the service learning office about this.

## Why should I care about service learning and community-based learning?

A growing body of data shows that service learning can have a dramatically positive effect on:

- student learning outcomes
- faculty satisfaction with teaching experiences
- innovation in faculty and student research
- students' understanding of complex problems
- students' satisfaction with their college experience
- students' likelihood of graduating
- campus-community relations

# STEP-BY-STEP COURSE PLANNING GUIDE

1. **Submit your course title** to the Office of Service Learning by the deadline on page 4 of this booklet.
2. **Consider what kinds of agencies you want to work with.**
  - Are there specific populations, issues, or neighborhoods to which you want your students to be exposed?
  - Are there specific tasks you'd like your students to perform?
  - Consider these questions in relation to key themes and topics you will cover in class.
  - Check out our current roster of partner agencies at **[www.loyno.edu/servicelearning](http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning)**. Are any of these agencies a good match for your course?

### 3. Answer the question: "project or placement?"

In service learning **projects**, students in a class work together to complete specific tasks for an agency. Usually, professors choose the agency in advance. Projects may involve direct service with the agency's clients or indirect service which supports the agency. Project work may take place off campus or on campus. There may not be a hard-and-fast time requirement with service learning projects, but students may be asked to submit regular progress reports to professors or to agency supervisors. Professors should work with agency staff and the Office of Service Learning to produce a detailed description of the project prior to the beginning of the semester. This description should outline expectations, contain a project timeline, and state how students' work will be evaluated. This description should be circulated to students, professors, agency staff, and service learning staff. Visit **[www.loyno.edu/servicelearning](http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning)** for some examples.

In service learning **placements**, students volunteer regularly throughout the semester at different agencies. Students are actively involved in selecting (and being selected by) a placement agency. This mutual selection process is facilitated by the service learning office. Professors may allow students to choose from a short list of selected agencies. Generally, placement work takes place off campus and involves hands-on work with agency clients. Professors determine the number of hours students will commit to their service learning placements, but many agencies prefer students to commit at least 1-2 hours per week. At the end of the semester, agency supervisors report student performance using a standard evaluation. Evaluations are given to professors to be incorporated into students' class grades.

# STEP-BY-STEP COURSE PLANNING GUIDE

4. **Decide** whether the service learning will be optional or required.
5. **Decide** what sort of time commitment you'll expect from students.
  - How much time will it take students to successfully complete the project?
  - How many hours will students serve at their placements?
  - Can you justify this as part of the overall workload for the class?
6. **Decide** on a grading procedure. How many points or what percentage will the service learning be worth?
7. **Review** your syllabus and course materials. Reflect on key points where you can integrate students' service learning activities into class discussions and assignments.

# A TYPICAL SERVICE LEARNING SEMESTER

## Before the semester

1. Submit course titles to the Office of Service Learning before early registration starts.
2. Go through the step-by-step course planning guide.
3. For projects, be sure you work with your partner agency to develop a clear and specific description of the project.

## Beginning of the semester

1. Service learning staff will visit your class.
2. If you choose the **placement** model for your class, students will participate in a structured selection process which will be managed and facilitated by the service learning office. This process includes an on-campus agency fair, one-on-one advisement with service learning staff, agency tours, and on-campus agency trainings and orientations. Students will confirm their placements within the first few weeks of the semester by submitting a signed form.
3. If you choose the **project** model for your class, work with your partner agency to schedule any necessary class visits, orientations, or trainings. Project descriptions should be completed and distributed to students.
4. Inform students about evaluation procedures, grading details, and time expectations.

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## Throughout the semester

1. Service learning staff, agency staff, and professors should check in with students frequently and ask students how their service learning is going. The service learning office will periodically gather timesheets for students doing placements.
2. Integrate students' service learning activities into your class.
3. Troubleshoot as necessary.
4. Students will be invited to attend discussion groups facilitated by the service learning office.

# A TYPICAL SERVICE LEARNING SEMESTER

## **End of the semester**

1. Service learning staff will send evaluations to agency supervisors for students doing placements. These evaluations will be sent to you to incorporate into your grading process.
2. For service learning projects, be sure to verify student contributions to the project and implement an evaluation process which includes agency feedback.
3. Service learning staff will enter transcript notations for all students who successfully complete a project or placement.
4. Professors should share examples of student work with the service learning office and community partners.
5. Service learning staff will administer surveys.

## **After the semester**

1. Professors and agencies will receive survey data from the service learning office to incorporate into future efforts.
2. Letters of recognition will be sent to faculty, chairs, and deans.

# TIPS FOR POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Integrate students' service learning activities into your teaching. For example, incorporate students' service learning activities into class discussions, readings, assignments, etc.
- Treat the service learning as a course assignment.
- Insist that service learning experiences be subjected to critical scrutiny and careful reflection.
- Give students multiple opportunities to reflect on their service learning, verbally and in writing.
- Formulate specific, topical reflection questions that connect students' experiences to course themes.
- Check in frequently and ask students how their service learning is going.
- Be very specific in communicating expectations to students.
- Plan in advance, especially for customized projects.
- Make sure students know that the class will have a service learning component by submitting your course titles to the Office of Service Learning before registration begins.
- Insist on high standards and accountability.
- Verify student work.
- Treat agency needs as equal to course needs, and treat agency staff as co-educators.



OFFICE OF SERVICE LEARNING  
BOBET HALL 113  
(504) 865-2283  
[WWW.LOYNO.EDU/SERVICELEARNING](http://WWW.LOYNO.EDU/SERVICELEARNING)