

Service Learning Independent Study

The National Clearing House for Service-Learning defines Service-Learning as: “a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities” (See <http://www.servicelearning.org/>). This strategy is facilitated with “community partners” (i.e. organizations outside of the University) who serve as service sites for students where students are able to apply and observe course concepts in the world. Class time, course assignments, and assessments intentionally integrate the service experience as a means to learn course concepts. The purpose of the Service Learning elective is to engage participants in the process of successfully creating an appropriate plan for a community-based learning course or other teaching situation. At the core of this requirement is the belief that community-based learning works best when it is rooted in one’s philosophy of teaching and learning, and is chosen intentionally, to meet specific learning objectives.

Guidelines

If you choose this elective, you must:

1. **Complete the required pre-requisite online courses: Teaching Philosophy and Course Design.**
2. **Complete (at least 3) instructional sessions with the Service Learning coordinator in the Center for Service and Community Engagement (CSCE); and**
3. **Prepare the following materials and include them in your Teaching Portfolio:**
 - a. A proposal for infusing a new or existing course with community-based service learning pedagogy;
 - b. A course syllabus that incorporates community-based service learning (this syllabus fulfills the Course Development Syllabus requirement for the Portfolio)

About the Instructional Sessions

To learn about concepts and models of Service Learning, you will complete at least three instructional meetings with the Service Learning coordinator at the CSCE. During these meetings, you will explore the theory and application of community-based service learning and complete exercises that help you to develop a proposal for a course that uses service learning as a teaching method. Along the way, you will receive feedback from the Service Learning coordinator (and possibly from others who have chosen this elective).

If you wish to complete the Service Learning elective, email the Reinert Center (cttl@slu.edu) to let them know. The Reinert Center will notify the CSCE of the participant’s interest, and CSCE will work directly with the participant to schedule the instructional meetings.

Questions about Service Learning should be directed to Dr. Leah Sweetman, Center for Service and Community Engagement: 314-977-4214 or sweetman@slu.edu.