



**IS4220: Signature Project: Global Community-Based Learning**

Plymouth State University – CIS Abroad  
Global Service Learning for Credit

**Course Description:**

Global, community-based learning combines community service outside the U.S. with academic instruction, focusing on critical, reflective thinking and personal and civic responsibility. In this interdisciplinary course, the student will collaborate with a community partner abroad to complete a signature service project that addresses a significant problem, issue, or question as identified by the local host community. Prerequisites: Junior Status

**Credits:** 4 credits (140 service hours); 3 credits (100 service hours)

**Signature Service Project Characteristics & Learning Objectives:**

With the guidance of their on-site supervisors, students will implement a signature service project that addresses a significant problem, issue, or question for the local host community. A signature service project:

- Is transdisciplinary: The service project integrates knowledge from multiple disciplines and sources.
- Is completed collaboratively: The project is large and complex enough that it requires input and work from more than one person to be successful. Students will regularly engage with local host community members to execute this project.
- Is student-driven: While faculty, staff, and community partners provide guidance and coaching, student agency and independence move the project forward.
- Requires metacognitive reflection: Students reflect on what and how they learn and how their learned knowledge, skills, and dispositions might be transferable to other contexts.
- Reaches beyond the walls of the classroom: The work of the service project inherently touches the world outside the classroom in a significant way as students work alongside their host communities.
- Has an external audience for project results: Outcomes are presented via the final capstone assignment to both the faculty member and the local host community partners.
- Is completed ethically and respectfully: Work on the project engages internal/external audiences and/or partners with mutual benefit.

Throughout this course, students will:

- Engage in service activities with a selected community partner in a mutually beneficial relationship based on a spirit of collaboration
- Reflect upon larger issues that affect their host communities, and their roles in supporting their host communities as they address these issues
- Integrate community engagement and academic learning, considering what knowledge and skills might be required to truly assist, as well as learn from, others
- Communicate purposefully and respectfully
- Practice and employ problem-solving strategies
- Recognize and integrate multiple perspectives
- Regulate their own learning



An X indicates that the student will be practicing the particular learning outcome when engaging with the signature service project characteristics.

	Purposeful Communication	Problem-solving	Integrated Perspectives	Self-Regulated Learning
Implement a signature service project	x	x	x	x
Transdisciplinarity	x	x	x	
Collaboration	x	x	x	x
Student-driven				x
Metacognitive Reflection				x
Reaches Beyond Classroom	x	x	x	x
External Audience for Results	x		x	x
Ethics and Respect	x	x	x	x

### Required Readings and Materials

Students may choose the paperback or e-book version of the text for this course. The text may be purchased via Amazon (paperback or kindle version), or from the publisher (e-book) at

<https://styluspub.presswarehouse.com/browse/book/9781579229900/Learning%20Through%20Serving>

Cress, C. M., Collier, P. J., and Reitenauer, V. L. (2013). *Learning through serving: A student guidebook for service-learning and civic engagement across academic disciplines and cultural communities* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Sterling, VA.

ISBN (E-Book): 978-1579229924

ISBN-13 (Paperback): 978-1579229900

Sirilli, E. (2012, September). Want to help someone? Shut up and listen! [TEDxEQChCh]. Video retrieved from:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/ernesto\\_sirilli\\_want\\_to\\_help\\_someone\\_shut\\_up\\_and\\_listen?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/ernesto_sirilli_want_to_help_someone_shut_up_and_listen?language=en)



## Assignments

A main objective of this course is to provide students a forum for critical reflection on community-driven service, intercultural experiences, power and privilege, and critical global engagement. The course will progress through a framework that explicitly links personal experience and readings with regular writing assignments and on-line class discussions. Written assignments begin prior to cultural immersion and then cover the following broad themes while in the host community: 1) personal values & ethics; 2) service in a cross-cultural context; 3) global engagement; and 4) communicating and activating the community-based learning experience post-cultural immersion. The course concludes with a two-fold capstone assignment that prompts students to: 1) synthesize their academic learning and personal reflections; and 2) share the outcomes of their experience with an external audience.

Participants will be required to complete a pre-departure paper (four page minimum) that addresses: 1) their motivation for engaging in this project; 2) their personal goals, objectives and anticipated outcomes; 3) what service in an international context means to them; and 4) steps they intend to take to ensure that their service results in an ethical, mutually beneficial relationship between them and their local host communities.

Three guided reflection papers are required to complete the course. These papers will ask students to reflect on key elements of the service experience and relate them to assigned readings/materials. The reflection papers are due throughout the term of the community-based signature service project:

- First paper: about a week or two into the service project period
- Second paper: about the mid-point of the project period
- Third paper: about a week or two before the service project term ends

Course participants will complete a mid-term self-evaluation that critiques their contributions to their host communities and their learning.

For the capstone assignment, students will:

- 1) Write a six-seven page summative reflection that will ask them to:
  - a) Think critically about their service experience and how their participation in this project may have affected their host community
  - b) Synthesize the assigned readings and academic learning with their personal reflections on working with the local host-community;
  - c) Identify how their experience impacted their academic, cultural, personal, and professional learning; and
  - d) Consider how they might bring their global service experience back to their local community/ies.
- 2) Produce a video, presentation, or similar deliverable (to be determined in advance in consultation with the instructor) which presents the outcomes/results of their service project to an external audience (including their host organization). The service project will not be considered complete, and credit will not be awarded, until students have shared the results of their service project work externally.



**Citations:** Any citations must follow APA format. A easy reference tool can be found at: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)

**Attendance Policy:** Given that the majority of the work for the class will be completed independently at the service site, your attendance at your service site is critical. If you must be absent, you must communicate with your supervisor in advance about your absence.

**Grading Criteria/Standards**

Service hours are not the source of one’s grade. Students earn a grade based on the *learning* that happens because of the service and therefore, the manifestation of that knowledge. In other words, the reflection assignments are the evaluative measure of a global, community-based learning experience. Evaluation of your work will include the instructor’s assessment of your academic work, a self-evaluation, and evaluations by your on-site supervisor. The participant’s supervisor will be required to fill out a mid-term and final evaluation. This evaluation will be used to confirm the number of hours served as well as the participant’s degree of collaboration with the community partner, contributions, and participation at the service site.

You must fully participate in the signature service project and complete the required service hours to pass the class. While supervisor evaluations are incorporated into final grading on a Credit/No Credit basis, an unsatisfactory supervisor evaluation (i.e. one that indicates the student has not completed the required service hours, hasn’t collaborated effectively, and/or has not produced quality work) may result in failure to pass the class.

Students will be graded based on the following numerical breakdown: A = 94 or higher, A- = 90 – 93, B+ = 87 – 89, B = 83 - 86, B- = 80 – 82, C+ = 77 – 79, C = 73 – 76, C- = 70 – 72, D+ = 67 – 69, D = 63 – 66, D- = 60 – 62, F = 59 or lower. The University’s Fair Grading Policy can be found here: [Fair Grading Policy](#).

The pre-departure paper, reflection papers, and capstone assignment will be assessed based on the grading rubric.

**Late assignments:** Any assignment turned in late will be deducted 10% of the total number of points possible. If the assignment is more than one week late, 25% of the total number of points will be deducted. No points will be given for an assignment that is turned in more than 2 weeks late.

Assignment	Total Points Possible	Due Date
Pre-Departure Paper	25	One week prior to departure
Reflection Paper #1	15	A week or two into the service project

Reflection Paper #2	15	Mid Term, at the mid-point of the service project term
Mid Term Self-Evaluation	CR/NCR	Mid Term
Mid Term Supervisor Evaluation	CR/NCR	Mid Term
Reflection Paper #3	15	A week or two before the service project ends
Final Supervisor Evaluation	CR/NCR	Conclusion of service project term
Final Capstone Assignment (Summative Reflection Paper (15) and Presentation of Outcomes (15))	30	Presentation of outcomes to be shared with host organization during final week of project; paper within one week after service project ends
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Academic Honesty:** Presenting someone else’s work as your own or without attribution is a violation of Plymouth State University’s Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found here: [Academic Integrity Policy](#).