

# Student Project Handbook

## OVERVIEW

The Community Projects are, for many, the most exciting and transformative part of the course. The Projects are co-designed with community leaders and organizations to meet both immediate and long-term community needs, as well as to be a meaningful introduction for students to how the community works and how it is evolving. If you invest yourself as an individual and as a team in your project, you will very likely have the experience that you are making a positive difference in the future of this community.

However, if you don't have the space and flexibility in your schedule to get substantially involved in a project off campus, including 2.5 hours outside of the Thursday AM slot, this course may not work for you.

You will receive a summary of each of the projects in the second week of class. The projects are quite varied and, with your help, will be integrally linked to the coursework throughout the semester. I expect you to do at *on average* 6 hours of project work per week, *throughout the semester, including:*

- travel time (if you go twice that's at least an hour)
- meeting time with the project guide(s)
- community work (eg tutoring, planting, surveying, deconstructing a home, etc.)
- organization development (or: capacity building) efforts (eg brochure, video, website work, database entry, researching other programs, neighborhood surveys, etc.)
- background research
- final report, short class presentations, community presentation (if relevant), final class presentation.

In order to be receptive to the new situations you find yourself in and respectful of the people you meet, you will need to use your best listening skills, and pay careful attention. But this does not mean that you should be passive or wait around for continuous handholding. You will be working with great people who have huge personal and professional commitments, often in understaffed and underfunded situations. They may not answer your emails right way So being proactive, asking questions, getting engaged, trying different ways to make contact, and taking initiative is an important part of the process.

Though Thursday morning is set aside for projects and meeting with Project Guides, much of the project work will happen at different times, sometimes as a group, and other times as individuals. ***It is important to be clear when choosing projects whether you are available at the times besides Thursday mornings that you may be needed, if they are indicated in the project summary.***

Each project will have unique requirements, but nearly all will include: Class and Community Presentations; a Portfolio of materials that address the host agency's specific requests around organizational capacity building (such as a brochure, website work, video, survey report, etc.); and a Final Report summarizing the project content and process. This report is designed to benefit the community organization and be useful to potential volunteers, interns, other project teams, and faculty partners. Projects may include a modest amount of reading, especially at the beginning. Project check-ins, project skill trainings, addressing challenges, learning community-based lessons, giving and getting feedback, and participating in problem solving, and weekly reflections will be a regular part of the class experience.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Most projects most of the time will involve you somewhere in the community, outside the campus bubble. Getting to projects in as reliable, timely, and low-impact a way as possible is an integral and fun part of the curriculum. **You must notify your team and your guide(s) by email and/or cell phone, as needed, of any delay or absence.** Clear communication and accountability will be essential to the success of the projects. Sometimes car use will be necessary for some or all team members. We will establish early on who has use of a car and will make cars available for each team, if and when needed.

## **TEAM MEETINGS**

In order to stay on track and productive it is important to have an meeting with your Project Guide once a week, probably on Thursday mornings. This contact time can help assure that your team stays on task, learning together what changes to make to move the project forward, and taking the time to build your community and cultural competency skills .

It is also important to **meet with your other teammates apart from the Guide at least once a week** to make sure that communication, collaboration and accountability to each other is going well. It is also a great place to practice the communication, facilitation and leadership skills we emphasize in the course

## **STAYING ON TRACK AND ACCOUNTABLE**

We have prepared a few online organizational documents to help you and your team stay organized and connected. These are “Google docs” and a Google calendar, and will require you to create a Google account if you don't already have one. Each Project will have its own calendar page and project page on Google, and you will have your own personal page to keep track of your work.

- Project Page – There is one Project page that lists all the tasks for your Project, descriptions of the actions steps required, which of you is assigned to each task, as well as any essential information for each task, such as contact information for people or directions to location. It will also show the deadlines for each action. The Project Page is set up so that Project Guides can add information and you can view but not alter.
- Project Calendar – The Calendar page shows all tasks and actions, with deadlines, for the duration of the course. It may also show details of events, addresses, contact information, etc. for any calendar item. The Calendar is controlled by the Project Guide, but accessible to you to view.
- Student Personal Pages – Each student will have their own Personal page to keep track of your work on the project. This page will include a description of each task as well as deadlines. You will be expected to log in *each day that you work* to report what was done that day. There is also space for your questions and for the Project Guide's and course instructor's comments. These pages will be reviewed each week at the Weekly Team meeting. Both students and Project Guide can add to the Student Personal Page.

## **FIRST PROJECT PRESENTATION**

In addition to short project check-ins at various points in the semester, project teams will prepare one 15 minute “**Project Presentation**” during the 2nd half of the semester a few weeks prior to the “**Final Project Presentation**” in the last week of classes. These presentations will help to inform the class on the current progress of your involvement in the community and will address the questions indicated in the “Project Presentations and Report ” section below. They will also

give you valuable feedback on the effectiveness of what you're doing as well as ideas for improvement. *In preparing and sharing the project presentation, focus on creating as clear, educational, creative, and user-friendly a presentation as possible, i.e., developing your Community Education Skills.*

**Evaluation** is based on

- **Content** - Clarity and depth. E.g. Clear and specific examples linked to broader course context
- **Presentation**- Community Education skills - Effective connection with and engagement of audience. Common-sense language, creativity, instructive stories, audience engagement, consciously "connecting the dots"
- **Collaboration**- Evidence of effective group collaboration with each other, guides, etc.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION** The public presentation can take place anytime during the semester. This may be an important part of your project or not relevant at all. This presentation to your agency's staff, Board of Directors, service recipients, or some other relevant community group or government agency, may address their needs in very specific ways. Or it may be a variation of the format you use for your final presentation. If the timing is right, the class presentation could be a kind of rehearsal for the public presentation.

## **FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**Class presentation** will take place in class, **hopefully with your Project Guide(s) present (so invite them ASAP), Tuesday December 11 and Thursday December 13**, (during the last week of classes) **between 9:25 AM and 11:55 PM. Total time: 25 minutes must include 5 to 10 minutes to engage the group** in either questions, experiential learning activities and/or feedback or tasks that may benefit the project.

Final Project Presentations will build on the elements of the **Final Project Report** (see below) and on the **short project presentation** you did earlier in April.

- a) This is COMMUNITY EDUCATION practice, so it needs to be creative, attractive, engaging (ideally interactive), educational, and concise.
- b) Incorporate the feedback you got at that time from classmates and instructor.
- c) Presenting the material of your first presentation in a more concise and coherent way
- d) Highlighting the later steps of the project
- d) Lessons learned (as a team, about the agency and community, local race and class relations, social justice and sustainability breakthrough success factors, personal and project, etc.)
- e) Recommendations - where you'd like to see it headed

**Evaluation of your team presentation** is based on same criteria as the Short Presentation- **Content, Presentation and Collaboration**, (see above), plus **Improvement** from rough to final draft.

## **FINAL PROJECT REPORT (8-10 pages) & PORTFOLIO ("DELIVERABLES")**

Draft final report due **by Friday, Dec 7 midnight**. Project Guide and Instructor will give you **feedback by Tuesday Dec 11, 5PM**, and you will submit the revised **final versions by Friday Dec 14 by midnight**.

**The Project Report is a team collaboration intended to be of value to your organization as feedback** for future project development and volunteer engagement, and adaptable as **outreach, orientation** and/or **education** for other volunteers, interns, and campus departments and

professors (e.g. through agency and IC websites). It does not have to read like a formal academic document though it should **demonstrate depth of learning and reflection**. The **language, style, and format should read like a user-friendly handbook for orientation and community education**. *It should, for example, make it easy for the next group of IC or CU volunteers or professors (such as students in Amy Frith's Spring 2013 Community Nutrition course) to pick up the essentials of the project and have a sense of what they may be building upon.*

The report will reflect your collective insights on the project and the agency, and will include, project **Goals, Methods, Steps, Challenges, Successes and Outcomes, Lessons learned** (about the community; the organization; the people we work with; cultural differences; race and class issues; and how you related to all this), and **Recommendations** for project improvement. (Use your communication skills to be authentic and honest, yet relational and respectful.)

It should also address the following questions, *to the extent possible*:

- What is this organization or initiative's 's core **Mission** and how does it fit into the **larger community issues in our area**? How does our project **support the organization's mission**?
- How does the project contribute in a **systemic** way to **healthy community development**? How does it contribute both to **ecological** issues and **social and economic justice** issues?
- What were **our team's** strengths, weaknesses and lessons in meeting our **Shared Leadership** goals?

*If possible, make notes about the key areas covered in the project report over the course of the project work or at least during the last weeks of the semester.*

**Evaluation** is based on same criteria as Short Presentation- Content, **Presentation and Collaboration**, (see above ), plus **Improvement** from rough to final draft.

*Note:* Your final **Individual Reflection** of the semester, will include a section on the **project's relevance** to your life and learning. The Project Report is a collaborative document, but can certainly be enriched with short individual reflections.

PORTFOLIO MATERIALS (or "**deliverables**") are reports on surveys or other research, curriculum modules, brochures, posters, videos, website pages, etc. anything that supports your group's " capacity" to serve the community. They vary widely with each project. *Some may have been submitted and revised at different points in the semester.* If they haven't already been submitted, the **Final drafts** are due the same day as Final report Draft final report , **Friday, Dec 7 midnight**. Project Guide and Instructor will give you **feedback by Tuesday Dec 11, 5PM**, and you will submit the revised **final versions by Friday Dec 14 by midnight** .