Inequality and Social Justice Service Learning: Hunger and Homelessness
Spring 2014
University of Montana

Course Number: 35280 - SOCI 442 - 01
Day: Tuesdays
Time: 2:10 pm – 5:00 pm
Class Location: The Poverello Center (535 Ryman Street, Missoula, MT)

COURSE INSTRUCTORS

Daisy Rooks  Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology
Email: Daisy.Rooks@mso.umt.edu
Office: SS 319
Phone: 243-2852

Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30am - 10:30am
Thursdays 12:40pm - 1:40 pm
Fridays 2:30pm - 3:30pm
or by appointment when possible

Cassie Sheets  Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, Poverello Center Inc.
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Office: 535 Ryman Street, Missoula, MT 59802
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Paige Ely  Undergraduate Preceptor, Department of Sociology
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Office Hours: by appointment

Victoria Cronin  MSW Practicum Student, Poverello Center Inc.
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Tessa Johnson  Director of Veteran Services, Valor House
Email: tessaj@montana.com
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COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this service learning course, students will:

- Provide a needed service to the Poverello Center and the individuals that it serves by volunteering for 39 hours during the semester at one of the Poverello Center sites;
- Reflect upon the service experience and assigned readings through written assignments and class discussions;
- Gain an intimate understanding of inequality, poverty and related social justice issues;
- Learn how to use qualitative research methods to investigate the lived experience of hunger and homelessness;
- Learn to apply a sociological perspective to the lived experiences and endeavors of Poverello clients and staff;
- Increase understanding of community service and civic engagement.

COURSE MATERIALS

There are three required books for this class, all of which are available in the campus bookstore. The Gowan and Kusmer books will be available on traditional reserve at the Mansfield Library; the Masters book will not.


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Attendance, Preparation and Participation

Students must attend all class sessions. Students who miss a class with the permission of the university instructor must make up all missed material. The workshop in week two cannot be made up, and therefore cannot be missed. Students who miss too many classes, with or without permission from the university instructor, will be at risk of failing and will be advised to withdraw from class.

Active participation in class exercises and discussions is essential for the success of the course. Adequate preparation for class is also essential. All students are expected to come to class having read the assigned materials and ready to discuss them. All students are expected to participate in a respectful and appropriate manner during class sessions.

Service Commitment

To pass this course, students must satisfactorily complete 39 hours of service at one or more of the Poverello Center sites. Students enrolled in this course are expected to be responsible,
consistent, appropriate volunteers. They must abide by all the rules and regulations listed in the Poverello Center’s volunteer agreement.

Students will be assigned a service placement at one of the Poverello Center sites by the end of week 1. Students are responsible for arranging their volunteer schedule with Victoria Cronin and getting themselves to and from their volunteer commitment. If students have questions or concerns about their service commitment at any point in the semester, they are encouraged to do the following:

- Contact Cassie via email or phone and/or
- Speak with Cassie when she visits class and/or
- Contact Daisy via email, phone or in her office hours

No student may be required to participate in a service-learning placement that creates a religious, political, or moral conflict for them. If such a conflict arises, please bring it to the attention of the university instructor as soon as possible.

This course has a service learning designation from UM. Service learning is a method of teaching and learning in which students, faculty, and community partners work together to enhance student learning by applying academic knowledge in a community-based setting. Student work addresses the needs of the community as identified through collaboration with community or tribal partners, while meeting instructional objectives through faculty-structured service work and critical reflection meant to prepare students to be civically responsible members of the community. At its best, service learning enhances and deepens students’ understanding of an academic discipline by facilitating the integration of theory and practice, while providing them with experience that develops life skills and engages them in critical reflection about individual, institutional, and social ethics.

**One-on-One Check-in with Victoria**
Between week 5 and week 12, students will complete one check-in with Victoria Cronin, a practicum student at the Poverello Center and member of the teaching team. These meetings will last approximately an hour and will be scheduled at the student’s and Victoria’s convenience. In these meetings, Victoria will lead students through a semi-structured reflection about their service experiences.

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

**Weekly Fieldnotes**
Students will turn in 7 sets of fieldnotes during the semester in the following weeks: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13. Students can chose to not post fieldnotes during the week of their scheduled one-on-one check in with Victoria. Students will post their fieldnotes to the course moodle site by noon on Fridays.

Although fieldnotes should be written in the first person, they have little in common with informal writing or journaling. Fieldnotes should be edited carefully and must contain the following components:

- Detailed descriptions of all service activities;
• Descriptions of the physical space where the service takes place with attention to sights, smells and other tactile details;
• Faithful recreations of all conversations with Poverello Center clients, volunteers and staff;
• Discussion of all of the students’ feelings and thoughts about the service and/or interactions with clients, volunteers and staff.

Fieldnotes will be reviewed by members of the teaching team and students will receive qualitative feedback each week from the university instructor or the preceptor. Students will receive midterm and final fieldnote scores from the university instructor. These scores will reflect the level of detail, the amount of reflection and the careful preparation of each student’s notes.

**In-Class Essays**
Students will complete 3 in-class writing assignments during the semester. The assignments will take place in the following weeks: 4, 8 and 12. Each assignment will correspond to one of the three assigned books for the course. Students will have 45 minutes to respond, in writing, to a prompt developed by the university instructor. This exercise is open book and open note: students will be allowed to reference their books, notes and any other materials that they prepared themselves, during the exercise.

**Assignment 1: Draft of Research Paper**
Students will turn in a draft of their research paper in week 6. This assignment should be well-written, edited carefully and contain the following components:
• A clear and well-articulated research question related to hunger and/or homelessness;
• A brief discussion of three scholarly sources that attempt to answer the same research question (students can use a research guide provided by the Mansfield Library for this part of this assignment);
• Some preliminary answers to the research question, based on the student’s service experience at the Pov;
• Several excerpts from the student’s fieldnotes that help answer the research question.

**Assignment 2: Final Research Paper**
Using feedback provided by the university instructor, students will revise the drafts of their research papers for this assignment. This assignment should be significantly different, and ideally significantly stronger, than the rough drafts that students turned in for assignment 2. Students’ scores on this assignment will reflect the quality of the assignment as well as the depth and breadth of their revisions.

**Assignment 3: Choice**
For this assignment students can chose between two options:

**Option 1: Presentation of research findings at UMCUR**
Students can chose to present their final research paper at the annual UM Conference for Undergraduate Research (UMCUR) in week 11. Students who chose this option will work
closely with the university instructor to prepare their abstract submissions and conference presentations. The university instructor will score students using the following criteria:

- Presentation was lively and interesting;
- Presentation used visual aids;
- Presentation demonstrated careful preparation and planning;
- Presentation reflected engagement with scholarly literature;
- Presentation contained convincing evidence for each claim made by the student.

Option 2: 1 interview transcript

Students can chose to conduct an interview with a client at the Poverello Center and produce a word-for-word transcript of their interview. The interview should be approximately 45 minutes in length, and students will use an interview guide developed by the university instructor. The interview transcript must be edited carefully so that it is free of spelling errors, grammatical mistakes and other typos.

Due Dates

All written assignments are due on Fridays at noon. You must upload your assignments to the course moodle site. If an assignment contains an unreasonable number of spelling, word choice or grammar mistakes, I will return it to you, unread, for further editing. If an assignment is more than one week late, and the author has not asked for and received an extension from me, I reserve the right not to accept it.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). For more information, please consult http://www.umt.edu/disability. Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. “Reasonable” means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENTS

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