

Service-Learning

You have signed up for a course in which your professor has assigned a “service-learning” project. Congratulations! You pay good money for a good education, and service-learning is a system of teaching and learning designed to challenge your academic and personal growth. By merging “book learning” with community action, your understanding of the coursework should be greatly enhanced.

Why am I getting credit for volunteering?

Your instructor is not giving you academic credit for the time you spend working with an organization; you are receiving credit for the learning connected to your experience in the community. Service-learning emphasizes hands-on tasks that address real world concerns as a venue for educational growth. Think of this experience as a text you are learning from, but instead of reading it, you are living it. You will be asked to articulate and connect the theories you learn from your course texts, from lectures, and from your experience in the community to the concepts being taught in this course. Typical volunteering does not have a direct link to your academic courses, but service-learning does! *

How will I benefit?

This experience will give you the chance to learn by doing and to document, through a concrete community project, what you’ve learned. Many internships may not give you the same levels of responsibility and creativity as a good service-learning project.

Most importantly, service-learning is an opportunity to enrich your understanding of the course material through *doing*. People learn in different ways (typically by reading, hearing, seeing, or experiencing the material) and service-learning will bring many more levels to your learning experience.

Through your service-learning project, you may explore a career or major; gain understanding of a community or culture; challenge your assumptions; broaden your perspectives of diversity issues; develop your skills as a leader and as a citizen; develop occupational skills; and learn about yourself. Some service-learning students have even gone on to get jobs at their service-learning sites, and many have gotten excellent letters of recommendation.

For more information on service-learning, contact the SSU Center for Community Engagement:
1102 Schulz, cce@sonoma.edu | 707-664-3202 | www.sonoma.edu/cce

* Adapted from The University of Minnesota *Student Guide to Service Learning Experience*