

# SERVICE-LEARNING Q&A

## What is service-learning?

Service-learning brings classroom knowledge to life by connecting course content with service projects that solve real problems and expand your view of the world across the street and around the globe.

It is a powerful way of understanding course material by learning from experience. A service-learning course

- ▶ involves you in an **organized service activity that is connected to specific learning outcomes**
- ▶ engages you in **service activities that meet real community needs**
- ▶ provides structured time to **reflect on and connect the service experience to learning**

Service-Learning is part of what's great about Ohio State: *U.S. News and World Report* calls our service-learning program an outstanding example of academic programs that are commonly linked to student success.\*

More than 60 courses in 15 colleges are available.

More than 1,500 students are enrolled and providing service in Columbus, rural Ohio, the Gulf Coast, Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Ghana.

\*America's Best Colleges 2009: Programs to Look For.



## Is it the same as volunteering?

### In volunteering/community service:

- ▶ Students engage in activities where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided. Volunteering may have little or no connection to formal coursework.
- ▶ Community service programs may be organized around a cause (e.g., MLK Day of Service) but are not necessarily connected to formal coursework.
- ▶ The benefits of volunteering are focused on the service recipients.

### In service-learning:

- ▶ The service activity tied to a service-learning course is directly linked to course content and is designed to enhance the learning of the subject.
- ▶ In a well-designed service course, the service activity is connected to specific learning objectives.
- ▶ The benefits are mutual.

## Why take a service-learning course?

- ▶ **Acquire disciplinary knowledge.** Service learning gives you the opportunity to learn more about the subject you are studying by applying what you are learning in your course in a "real world" setting.
- ▶ **Develop personal and social responsibility.** When community service is connected to learning, you gain a clearer understanding of the needs in the community and prepare for future civic involvement.
- ▶ **Develop leadership ability and critical thinking skills.** Service-learning encourages you to examine your ideas, beliefs, and values; consider multiple perspectives; and find solutions to real problems.
- ▶ **Expand your world view.** Service-learning gives you opportunities to interact with others who are different and to experience a different environment, developing your appreciation for diversity.

More ▶

## What are some other benefits?

- ▶ **Clarify your career choice and develop marketable skills.** The real-life experiences in a service-learning course can help confirm that you are making the right career choice. You can also develop career-related skills and professional contacts.
- ▶ **Develop self-efficacy.** Hands-on learning from real-life experience increases your sense of confidence in your abilities.
- ▶ **Develop research skills.** Service-learning experiences provide opportunities to collect data and to test, implement, and evaluate approaches that address real community problems.
- ▶ **Learn to collaborate.** Service-learning provides opportunities to work with and learn from people in other professional disciplines, a valuable skill for your future career.
- ▶ **Get a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment.** Service-learning is an opportunity to contribute to the community—locally or around the world.

## What happens in a service-learning course?

- ▶ **Commitment.** Typically, your instructor expects you to complete a specified number of hours of community service over the course of the quarter.
- ▶ **Preparation.** In class, you'll get an introduction to the service activity, the community partner, and details about transportation, safety, scheduling, etc. The service site will usually provide orientation to the organization and surrounding community and any training needed for the service work.
- ▶ **Action.** In-class activities such as readings, assignments, and discussion will connect to your on-site service activities.
- ▶ **Reflection.** Through journals, discussions, or other activities, you will think about and analyze your service experiences and connect them to what you are learning in the classroom.
- ▶ **Evaluation.** Evaluation will measure your progress toward the learning and service goals of the course and your ability to connect service experience with course content. Evaluation may also include assessment of community outcomes.



## How do I find a service-learning course?

- ▶ **Find course descriptions** provided by faculty that give detailed descriptions of course, expectations, readings, etc. These can usually be found in the department listing of courses.
- ▶ **Check the list** of Service-Learning Courses Offered at Ohio State at <http://service-learning.osu.edu/courselist.php>.
- ▶ A growing number of service-learning courses have an "S" as part of their course number to help you identify them. You can **use the Registrar's Master Schedule search options** to find these courses (<http://buckeyelink2.osu.edu/masterschedule/msched.aspx>).
- ▶ **Use the alphabetical listing feature** at <http://www.ureg.ohio-state.edu/course/>. Go to the course department and scroll to the course number. If the course is offered in a service-learning format, that version will appear at the end of that course's list of sections.
- ▶ **Search by "Extra Limits > Other Characteristics > Service-Learning Course"** at the Master Schedule website. That search will give you a complete list of service-learning courses for that quarter.

## What are some examples?

- ▶ **ARTS & SCI 137.06: Why Should I Care?: Rewards and Challenges of Community Service.** Students work with children in an after-school program to learn about their community and develop a community arts project.
- ▶ **Con Sci 694S & ENGINEER 694: Honduras Service-Learning Experience.** Students work with staff at an orphanage for children with HIV/AIDS and with residents of Nueva Esperanza to develop and lead projects that help develop community assets.
- ▶ **EDU P&L 271: Leadership in Community Service.** While helping kids with homework, supporting food pantry clients, and providing other kinds of service, students gain an understanding of service and leadership for the "common good."
- ▶ **ENGLISH 567S: Rhetoric and Community Service.** Students think about writing as an instrument of social change while doing writing projects for and with local nonprofit organizations.
- ▶ **MOL GEN/BIO CHEM/MICRO 591: DNA Finger Printing Workshops.** Students mentor high school students through hands-on experience in DNA analysis, designed to stimulate interest in careers in the biological sciences.