

Community Service

Urban and Regional Planning is a field with strong links to communities. Practicing planners are often required to participate in community activities, deal with the public on a regular basis, and serve in some capacity that involves direct contact with citizens and community leaders.

The Community Service course, a 3-credit elective in the Minor of Urban and Regional Planning, provides students an opportunity to work directly with a community service agency in Gainesville, Florida. Public sector agencies, such as a city or county office, and non-profit organizations qualify as community service agencies. **The course is open to UF undergraduate students who are pursuing and have declared the URP minor with their home department.** This is a department-controlled class, so students will not be able to sign-up for it on ONE.UF; the faculty in charge will sign students up after an agency is selected and approved.

Students interested in taking this elective class should contact the faculty in charge during the enrollment period to complete necessary documentation and registration and to discuss potential volunteer agency assignments. Some of the planning related organizations where students have volunteered in previous semesters include:

- Alachua Habitat for Humanity
- City of Gainesville, Cultural Affairs, Parks Department
- City of Gainesville, Planning Department, Historic Preservation
- Alachua Conservation Trust
- Community Weatherization Coalition

Students requesting to perform their Community Service assignment in agencies that the Department of Urban and Regional Planning does not currently have an affiliation with must allow additional time for processing the necessary documentation.

Objectives

The main objective of the course is to expose students to planning issues in their community. By working directly with government agencies and non-profit organizations, students will learn first-hand how to deal with community issues related to urban planning and community development.

Method and Expectations

In lieu of meeting in a classroom, each student will be placed in a public sector agency or a non-profit organization and will work as a volunteer during the academic semester. Students are required to intern for a minimum of 60 hours, but are free to dedicate more hours during the semester and encouraged to continue working as a volunteer for the organization after completing the course requirements. Time spent attending community meetings or other activities involving beneficiaries of community service activity as well as time spent with routine meetings between student and supervisors can be counted towards service and can be logged on the time sheet.

During the Community Service course students are expected:

- to fill out the service-learning agreement attached to this syllabus and commit to honoring it;
- to comply with schedule agreed upon with faculty in charge and agency supervisor and provide advance notice of an absence;
- to attend required meetings listed on this syllabus and any additional meetings required by the faculty in charge and/or the agency's supervisor;
- to complete projects assigned by the faculty in charge and agency supervisor in a timely manner;
- to respect the policies and expectations of the agency;
- to behave professionally and respectfully while completing assigned tasks and projects;
- to be attentive towards citizens and members of the community while on duty;
- to serve in a manner that preserves the reputation and integrity of the University of Florida and the Department of Urban and Regional Planning;
- to communicate with faculty in charge in case problems arise and to provide adequate advance notice if service must be terminated.

Required Reading

Appropriate handouts may be distributed to students to provide support material. In addition, each student is responsible for seeking sources and resources to support their community service experience.

Evaluation

Attendance will be taken at any scheduled meetings (see Course Format and Assignments below). A Time Sheet is provided for students to keep track of hours worked during the semester. The faculty in charge will provide an Evaluation Form to agency supervisors. Evaluation Forms should be submitted to faculty in charge by mail, fax, or e-mail by the last day of classes for the semester. The final report submitted by students is a reflective essay and should be turned in to the faculty in charge at the end of the course.

An S/U grade will be assigned based on compliance with the requirements of the Community Service course, participation in any scheduled meetings with faculty in charge, the quality of the work performed by student as reported by the community service agency supervisor, and a final report relating the experience within the context of urban and regional planning as well as learning outcomes.

The grading scale will be as follows:

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|------|
| Completion of required hours | 40 | Final Grade: | |
| Attendance at meetings | 10 | S Satisfactory | > 80 |
| Supervisors' feedback | 25 | U Unsatisfactory | < 80 |
| <u>Essay / Final Report</u> | <u>25</u> | | |
| Total | 100 | | |

Course Format and Assignments

Students enrolled in this class *may* be REQUIRED to attend scheduled meetings on campus with the faculty in charge during the semester. All meetings will be held in the office of faculty in charge, unless otherwise noted.

First Assignment

Fill out the enclosed Service Learning Agreement and turn it in to the faculty in charge. Agreement should be printed, signed, and mailed to URP's mailbox (URP Department, P.O. Box 115706, Gainesville, FL 32611-5706) or faxed to 352.392.3308. Agreement may also be e-mailed (scanned, with signatures) to the faculty in charge.

Second Assignment

Meet with agency supervisor to establish a schedule for the semester. Decide how hours will be tracked and inform faculty in charge of chosen method.

On-Going Assignment

Complete the enclosed Time Sheet (or use alternative time sheet provided by agency) on a weekly basis. Time Sheets will be submitted, as requested by the faculty in charge, at any scheduled meeting during the semester. A final Time Sheet with total number of hours worked during the semester and supervisor's signature needs to be enclosed to Final Report.

Final Assignment

Final essays / reports are due on the last day of classes for the semester and should be submitted by email to the faculty in charge. The final report is a reflective essay. Graphic work may be added if done as part of Community Service assignment. Electronic files of all assignments are to be submitted as well.

Essays / Final Reports should be typewritten, 3 to 5 pages long, but no more than 2,000 words. They may be single-spaced and printed double-sided. Essays need to contain the following:

- Header (including student's name, agency where activities were performed, course / section number, and semester / year)
- Description of specific tasks performed
- Experience gained and skills learned
- Explanation of how this experience affected opinion of service learning
- Explanation of how this experience contributed to understanding of Urban Planning

Any other additional comments you may have about the program or any suggestions for future improvement are welcome. You may add comments to your essay (beyond the 2,000 word count), or, if you would prefer your comments and suggestions remain anonymous, I encourage you to add them to your end-of-semester evaluations.

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade, as described in the Undergraduate Catalog, will be issued at the discretion of the faculty in charge of this course. The instructor may judge what extenuating circumstances warrant adequate excuse for not completing required course work. For more information on grades, please refer to

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Academic Honesty

Students must follow University of Florida's policy regarding plagiarism, cheating and the use of copyrighted materials. Students are responsible for reading and abiding by the University's Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php>) and the University Honor Code. Under the Student Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>).

Failure to follow the rules in the Student Honor Code will result in a failing grade on the assignment in question and consequently may result in a failing grade in the course. In addition, disciplinary action will be brought under the Judicial Process for Academic Honesty Violations. Students who are unclear about what constitutes academic dishonesty, academic misconduct, plagiarism, or other violations should consult UF resources (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/publications/>) or make an appointment with the instructor to clarify any questions. In addition, all should consult the above websites and the undergraduate catalog for further information.

Special Accommodations

The instructor will respect the needs for accommodations of students with disabilities consistent with the University's policy. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting special accommodations.

UF Counseling Services:

The following offices can be of assistance to solve personal problems, career selection problems or problems relating to deficiencies in academic skills.

1. Counseling and Wellness Center, (352) 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
2. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

Service-Learning Agreement

This class is open to undergraduate students who have declared URP as their minor.
Please fill in the following information and return to Faculty in Charge listed on syllabus.

Name: _____

UFID: _____ Current Term: _____

Credit Hours: _____ Expected Graduation Term: _____

Student's Major Department: _____

Have you declared the URP Minor with your home department? Yes No

Title and Brief Description of Course Assignment:: _____

Community Service Agency Assigned: _____

Supervisor's Information:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Telephone Numbers: _____

e-mail: _____

Student's Signature Date

Supervisor's Signature Date

Instructor's Signature Date

