



HEALTH & COMMUNITY: SERVICE-LEARNING ROTATION 2020-2021

MEDS 3050S

Course Directors:

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Mon, 4-5 p.m., online (webex)

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Course description

This course is a one-semester rotation in community service for students pursuing health-related careers. The syllabus follows a 'service-learning' approach, in which volunteer work at a community agency is paired with an independent project that is entwined with faculty-directed programmatic activities. These activities include weekly online reflections, work-in-progress updates, and workshops on database searching, writing literature reviews, and oral/poster presentation skills. Students should contact the course directors prior to the start of the semester in order to identify a community partner. This can be an agency of your own choosing, or one that we help you to find based upon your interests. To begin the placement process, please filling the following form: [Community Service Placement Form Link](#).

Your work at the agency will be two-fold: (1) Routine weekly volunteer service responsibilities that benefit the community partner and (2) an independent community service project that you develop and perform. This independent project is developed by the student, in collaboration with their agency supervisor. At the end of the semester, the student will perform a critical evaluation of the project outcome and present the findings. This experience will develop organizational and critical thinking skills, prepare students to interact with racially and culturally diverse societies, increase awareness of health problems that are influenced by social, economic or cultural factors, improve team working skills, and cultivate a life-long commitment to civic and ethical responsibility.

IMPORTANT: In view of the ongoing pandemic, all students enrolled in community service coursework will apply a hybrid approach to their service responsibilities (i.e. a combination of on-site and remote activities). This will allow the students to benefit from direct engagement with agency staff and clients, but also provide a mechanism for continued service in the event of another shutdown. Remote activities will involve a combination of (1) remote activities that directly benefit the agency (the nature of which will be worked out in conjunction with your supervisor) and (2) remote activities that involve covid19 contact tracing (all students, see below).

New for 2020-2021: Contact tracing and community service

As you may be aware, local governments across the US are having difficulty meeting the demand for contact tracers to reduce the spread of covid19.

[Special Report: Local governments 'overwhelmed' in race to trace U.S. COVID contacts.](#)

To address this, UC has put together an interdisciplinary contact-tracing curriculum that will train students in the theory and practice of contact tracing in public health, including opportunities for students to practice their newly acquired skills in contact tracing for affected individuals in the community. In fall semester, all MSBP community service students will participate in this contact-tracing curriculum as part of the first 3 assignments for MEDS5050 or MEDS3050.

Students who register for this course are highly motivated to improve public health, both locally and globally. Serving as a contact tracer as part of this course will provide first-hand knowledge of the importance of this public health tool and its application to a pandemic crisis situation. Details on how to get started will be provided under Canvas announcements.

Course objectives

- List the social, economic or cultural factors that impact public health
- Describe the need of a community agency from a national and local perspective
- Develop a proposal to address an unmet need
- Write a literature review that critically evaluates the issues confronting a volunteer agency.
- Effectively communicate project outcomes in oral and/or poster presentation format.
- Describe how a project has enhanced personal knowledge of civic and ethical responsibility, as well as sensitivity to cultural diversity and social justice in the community.
- Describe how a project has fostered a critical self-reflection of personal identity and sense of vocation.
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- Describe how a project has fostered a critical self-reflection of personal identity and sense of vocation.
- Covid19 training objectives:
 - Describe how the pandemic has impacted non-profit agencies.
 - Conduct contact training according to established protocols.
 - Describe the scientific principles that underpin the effectiveness of contact tracing methodology.
 - List requirements for protecting health information during contact tracing.
 - Develop time management and interpersonal skills for tracing contact leads.

Prerequisites: Permission of course directors.

Time commitment: The expectation is 4 hours per week for each credit hour enrolled. This includes travel time, time spent at home or the library working on your project, or time spent on contact tracing. Students should follow the operating calendar of the agency that they serve. If a community partner is performing normal operations on a day that conflicts with a student's personal schedule (or UC's schedule), the student is expected to serve on that day (or to negotiate with the agency to make up the time in a mutually agreeable way).

Electronic communications policy: For fall semester, all programmatic activities listed on the syllabus below will be conducted online. Some of these are interactive Webex sessions.

Academic integrity: The University Rules, including the Student Code of Conduct, and other documented policies of the department, college, and university related to academic integrity will be enforced.

Special accommodations: If a student requires a special accommodation they should contact the course director well in advance so that an appropriate placement in the community can be made.

Pass/fail option, audit policy, and withdrawal policy: There are no pass/fail or audit options for this class. Withdrawal procedures follow U.C. guidelines.

Grading

Table-1: Graded assignments

Weekly assignments	10%
Written progress report/oral presentation	20%
Community partner evaluation of student performance	60%
Completion of covid19 contact tracing	10%

A	94-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59
A-	90-93	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66		
		B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63		

General information about what to expect during the course

- **Online assignments.** Each week will have an online assignment that challenges you to think about your agency in depth. They are due by the following Sunday at midnight and there is a 50% penalty for late submission. The first 3 assignments constitute the training in covid19 contact tracing, which must be completed by the end of the third week.
- **Brainstorming sessions (in-class).** We have found that students appreciate brainstorming session where they can talk about problems at their agencies and troubleshoot solutions. For this reason, we have reserved Mondays from 4:00-4:55 for group meetings via Webex. The sessions highlighted in yellow are group activities and required. However, the instructor will be available every Monday at 4:00 pm via webex for ad hoc brainstorming sessions.
- **Agency activities (in-person and remote).** Work on-site is to be arranged by the student in consultation with their supervisor, keeping in mind that a backup plan for remote activities must be in place before the end of the first week in the semester. Your work at the agency will involve two components:
 - **Weekly community service.** This includes any routine activity that you do on a regular basis to assist the agency. For example, tutoring students, making phone calls, delivering food, mailing brochures, trash cleanup.
 - **Individual project.** This is something that you develop in consultation with your supervisor. You will submit a written progress report on this at the end of fall semester and present it orally. It is highly recommended that you decide on a project prior to the start of the semester so that you can hit the ground running. These projects vary tremendously depending on the type of agency. For example, the project could be promotional (generating brochures, social media, educational videos), educational (writing detailed literature reviews to assist the agency staff, generating a syllabus for training/education, or brochures), informational (writing questionnaires to determine awareness or knowledge of a subject), or quantitative (analyzing data to understand why something occurs), or even financial (fund raising with defined goals). The common feature is that all projects share the goal of generating something that didn't exist before.

Fall semester syllabus (MEDS 3050)

WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNMENT
1	M 08-24	Welcome to community service Assign 1: covid19 contact tracing part I
2	M 08-31	Assign 2 covid 19 contact tracing part II
3	M 09-07	Assign 3 covid 19 contact tracing part III
4	M 09-14	Assign 4 GROUP BRAINSTORM
5	M 09-21	Assign 5 GROUP BRAINSTORM
6	M 09-28	Assign 6 GROUP BRAINSTORM
7	M 10-05	Assign 7
8	M 10-12	Assign 8
9	M 10-19	Assign 9
10	M 10-26	Assign 10
11	M 11-02	Assign 11 (final oral presentation (due 11-16))
12	M 11-09	Assign 12 (final written report – due 11-30)
13	M 11-16	Final project presentations
14	M 11-23	Final project presentations
15	M 11-30	Final written report due

Guidelines for the preparation of written and oral/poster presentations.

Your written reports will be in 3 sections. Parts I and II are part of a single word document. Part III is a separate upload of a one-page flyer.

Part I: Community service responsibilities

This is your opportunity to show case any routine weekly duties that you had at the agency that were not necessarily part of your individual project. It can be a bulleted list, as long as there is sufficient explanation of what the activities entailed.

Part II. Individual project

A suggested template for the written project is below. This applies to any progress reports also.

1. **Abstract** (250 words or less)

- Abstracts are a condensed summary of a project that allows a reader to get the idea of a project's goal and outcome, without reading the entire document. You will write two abstracts: at the beginning of the semester you will write a proposal abstract that outlines what you plan to do (i.e. you will use the future tense and talk about "anticipated outcome" instead of "results". At the end of the semester the abstract will be modified based on outcome and you will include at the beginning of your written report (like a journal article).

2. **Background/significance** (3-5 pages, with at least 25 references from the primary literature): Using your literature search as a foundation, write a literature review that provides the reader with a background into the issues that confront your agency. For example, if the agency focuses on addiction, you need to explain:

- What defines addiction? What types of substance abuse does your agency deal with?
- What is the problem of addiction from a 'big picture' perspective (ie nationally, or worldwide)?
- What is the scope of the problem locally?
- Why does this problem exist (i.e. what are the economic or societal factors that contribute to this situation?)
- What solutions are needed? – this last section on what solutions are needed should lead the reader directly into the next section (your project aims). i.e. your project aims should help to address a small part of what you have stated to be an important need.

3. **Project aims** (1/2 page): List 1-3 aims that can be reasonably accomplished during the semester. Use strong verbs that can be linked to clear outcomes. For example: "create, design, assemble, select, determine, apply, demonstrate, calculate, explain, write etc". Avoid vague language such as "know, appreciate, hope, understand, appreciate, etc".

Example: X% of the Cincinnati population are illiterate. The purpose of this study is to improve the reading skills of clients at the Cincinnati Literacy Network by accomplishing the following aims:

Aim 1: Develop a learning strategy to increase the ability of illiterate adults to read X

Aim 2: Develop a learning strategy to increase the ability of illiterate adults to read Y.

4. **Approach** (1-2 pages): What methods did you use to accomplish each aim? For example, if it involved meeting with people, indicate clearly the nature and scope of those interactions and what your role was. Did the project involve statistical analysis? If so, what kind?

5. **Results** (2-3 pages)

Describe the final outcome. Indicate what objective criteria your used to conclude that the project was a success or not? If the project was not a success, explain why you think it did not work. If the project had to be changed along the way that is ok, just explain why and how it was changed. Example: All 10 clients were tested by the National Center for Adult Literacy to determine their level at the start of the semester. At the conclusion of the training, each client was tested again and 9 of the 10 clients succeeded in improving by one level

6. **Obstacles encountered**: Describe any obstacles you met along the way and how you addressed them.

7. **Limitations and future directions**: What were the limitations of the project and what should be done to follow up on this study? If you could do this project over again, what would you do differently?

8. **References**. Aim for at least 25 references

Note regarding individual projects that involve literature reviews for the agency: Some of you may be tasked by your agency to write a literature review as part of your individual project. The goal of this is to take advantage of the extensive UC library resources that are not available to the agency in order to provide a comprehensive literature review that will be of use to agency staff. This is distinct from the final written report.

Part III. Marketing brochure for future recruitment to your agency (end of spring semester only).

We often hear from students and their supervisors that the agency would benefit from having a continual flow of volunteers to promote continuity of a project or a service after a student departs. To assist with this, you will be asked to upload a separate "poster flyer" (no more than one page) that can be used to recruit other students who might be interested in your agency. This is your opportunity to show case the importance of your agency and its mission so that other students may follow in your footsteps. This flyer should include the following:

- The title of your agency.
- A brief overview of the agency mission.
- A "job description" that describes what volunteers do at the agency. This would include any routine weekly duties, as well as any current or future individual projects that your supervisor would like to see accomplished. For example, it could be a continuation of something that you set up.
- A photo that captures some aspect of the agency. Note: the identity of minors must be kept anonymous (ie, use photos from the back of the classroom).
- A marketing statement that would attract the interest of the type of student you would like to see recruited to your agency. For e.g. "If you like working with children..."

Guidelines for the final oral presentation

Use the same sections described above for the final written report. The challenge is to be very clear and concise in order to convey the goals and outcome of the project to an audience of peers and faculty.