Critical Approaches to Service-Learning: APPLES Alternative Break Class

Health Behavior & Health Education 610, spring 2014

Wednesdays 5 to 5:50 p.m., Genome Sciences G10

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There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, "Morning, boys, how's the water?" And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, "What the hell is water?"

If at this moment, you're worried that I plan to present myself here as the wise old fish explaining what water is to you younger fish, please don't be. I am not the wise old fish. The immediate point of the fish story is that the most obvious, ubiquitous, important realities are often the ones that are the hardest to see and talk about. Stated as an English sentence, of course, this is just a banal platitude -- but the fact is that, in the day-to-day trenches of adult existence, banal platitudes can have life-or-death importance.

~David Foster Wallace, This is Water
Course Overview
Why are we involved in service-learning? What do we get out of it? What do we give to the communities we serve? What do we take? What are some of the unintended effects of service-learning, and how can we work to maximize the benefits for everyone involved?

Students in this course will read about, analyze, and reflect upon theories and experiences relevant to social action, coalition building and social change. This course will confront the possibilities and limitations of service and service-learning. The content and approaches of this course represent a wide variety of disciplines, with an emphasis on the field of public health. This course will connect theory to practice and thought to action.

This is a course associated with the APPLES Service-Learning program’s Alternative Break Program. APPLES is a student-led, staff-supported program that builds sustainable, service-learning partnerships among students, faculty and communities in North Carolina and beyond. By engaging all partners in an enriched, community-based curriculum, APPLES experiential programs foster socially aware and civically involved students. All students are required to participate in the APPLES Alternative Break component. Students in this course meet weekly for a one-hour lecture and for a one-hour recitation. Students are organized into five recitation sessions, each with a unique focus: 1) Civil Rights, 2) Disaster Relief, 3) Latino Communities, 4) Rural Communities and 5) Urban Communities. This course fulfills the Experiential Education requirement. This is a two-hour pass/fail course.

Learning Goals
Through this course students will:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of service and service-learning
2. Reflect upon their motivations for service-learning, the strengths and weaknesses of the approach as a whole, and their service-learning experience(s).
3. Examine social, economic, and political factors shaping communities
4. Apply perspectives of service-learning and critical analysis to their alternative spring break experiences.

Expectations, Assignments and Grading
Attendance
Students are expected to attend and participate in all lecture and recitation sessions. More than one unexcused absence from either lecture or recitation session will result in failing the class. Attendance will be taken by sign-in sheet at every lecture and recitation period. In addition to the completion and passing evaluation of all writing and service-learning assignments, full participation in the week of spring break is required to successfully pass this course.
**Classroom Conduct**
We are going to be talking about many different challenging ideas and questions in which there are few right answers and many different interpretations. You are encouraged to challenge ideas while respecting other people. Laptops are not permitted in class except under exceptional circumstances which must be approved in advance. Please do not arrive late to class.

**Reading Assignments**
All readings will be posted to the course site on Sakai. Students are expected to come to both the lecture and recitation sessions having read all required assignments and prepared to discuss those readings.

**Writing Assignments**
See the back of the syllabus for further description of writing assignments. **All assignments should be written in 12 point font and double-spaced with a one-inch margin.** The writing assignments are:
1. Critical reading responses (~500 words each)
2. Political biography (~750 words)
3. Philosophy of service paper (~1000 words)
4. Alternative spring break critical reflection paper (~750 words)
5. Personal reflection and action plan (~500 words)

**Final Group Project**
The culminating product for this course is a final group project that will help you synthesize your alternative spring break critical reflection papers and collaborate in thinking about how to better serve the community you served. You will present this project in the final two days of class. Each group will have 15 minutes to present their project.

- Basic description of what you did
- Who were your partners?
- Who were you serving?
- What kind of approach to service/helping/social change did the organization(s) you worked with take? What kind of approach did you take in your service to them? Would you change either your or their approach at all if you could?
- Did you take a community asset approach? Did the organization you worked with do so? What were the assets/needs of your community?
- Was your work focused more on prevention or intervention? Was there potential for more prevention? If so, what would need to happen to be more preventative in focus?
- What tactics/tools/strategies did your organization(s) take in creating social change? Were there other approaches that could have been helpful?
- Were your projects “defined by persons served and accountable to them in significant ways”? If not, could they have been? How?
- Is there anything we can do to do more on a more individual level?
- Were social issues individualized or did you were on structural issues? Where on the Social Ecological Model did your work fit? Are there opportunities for this work to be done “higher” up the model to the Organizational and Policy level?
- Other ways to improve your organization/project to better serve clients/communities?
Grading
All work will be graded as “exemplary,” “commendable,” “not yet commendable,” or “zero.” If your work is “not yet commendable,” you must revise it and turn it in the following week to improve your grade. You are allowed only one “not yet commendable” as a final grade. More than one final grade of “not yet commendable” will result in not passing the class. If you do not turn in an assignment, you will receive a zero. You will be given the chance to turn it in the following week for a maximum grade of “not yet commendable.” If you turn in more than one late assignment, you will fail the class. If you ever have any questions or want to meet, feel free to email me.
Course Schedule

Week 1: Jan. 8: Introduction to the course
Lecture Objectives: Clarify the approach and philosophy of the course. Explain the requirements and logistics of the course. Introduce two stories of service and examine implications of these stories.
Readings due this week: None

Week 2: Jan. 15: Politics, Privilege and Identity
Lecture Objectives: Introduce theories of privilege and difference. Discuss implications of privilege and power for community. Reflect on our identity as a factor to how we experience the world and enact service. Introduce political biography assignment.
Recitation Objectives: Introduce specific experience history, begin introduction of community partners and goals for coming week.
Readings due this week:
1. “Privilege, Oppression, and Difference” by Allan Johnson (Chapter 2 of Privilege, Power and Difference)

Assignments due:
1. Reading response 1

Week 3: Jan. 22: Critical Perspectives on Service & Service-Learning
Lecture Objectives: Discuss the implications of doing service as an inherently political act. Define and discuss charity versus justice service. Discuss “Why service-learning is bad”
Recitation Objectives: Leaders share their political biographies. Continued discussion of experience issue.
Readings due this week:
1. “Starfish Hurling and Community Service” by Keith Morton
2. “Why Service Learning is Bad” by John Ewby

Assignments due:
1. Reading response 2
2. Political biographies

Week 4: Jan. 29: Working with difference: Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility
Lecture Objectives: Introduce ideas of cultural competence vs. cultural humility. Discuss implications of both concepts on how service and service-learning are performed in communities. Discuss how asset mapping relates to these concepts.
Recitation Objectives: Participants present their individual political narratives and talk about shared expectations and goals for the experience.
Readings due this week:
1. “Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardner's Tale” by Camara Phyllis Jones
2. Latino Communities-specific and Rural Communities readings assigned [read by all]
Week 5: Feb. 5: Advocacy and Social Change Part 1
Lecture Objectives: Define and discuss theories and approaches to advocacy and social change.
Recitation Objectives: Discuss recitation assignment: Outside research on aspect of host community.
Readings due this week:
1. Urban Communities and Civil Rights readings assigned [read by all]
2. “Actors, Resources, Interests and Power”

Lecture Objectives: Begin introduction to philosophy and approach of community asset mapping.
Recitation Objectives: Discuss advocacy and social change in relation to your focus areas and upcoming ASB trips.
Readings due this week:
1. “Mapping Community Capacity” by John McKnight and John Kretzmann
2. Disaster relief reading(s) assigned [read by all]
Assignments:
1. Recitation assignment: Outside research on aspects of host community
2. Mid-semester check in and evaluation

Week 7: Feb. 19: Advocacy and Social Change Part 2
Lecture Objectives: Discuss the differences between service with and without a social change approach. Discuss how advocacy is a means of social change.
Recitation Objectives: Discuss advocacy and social change in relation to your focus areas and upcoming ASB trips.
Readings due this week:
1. “Helping to Build a Modern Synthesis of Social Change” by William Smith
2. “Community Toolbox” from University of Kansas Work Group for Community Health and Development
Assignments:
1. Reading response 3

Week 8: Feb. 26: ASB Leaders TAKEOVER

Week 9: March 5: Default Settings and Service-Learning
Lecture Objectives: Discuss self/other heuristics and implications for social change and being in community with trip participants and host community.
Recitation Objective: Final preparations and logistics for trip.
Readings due this week:
1. “This is Water” by David Foster Wallace
Assignments
1. Due: Reading response 4
2. Alternative break critical reflection paper assigned and discussed
***SPRING BREAK***

**Recitation Objectives:** Have daily reflection session where group processes experiences, works on critical reflection ideas, works on statement of belief ideas, discusses feedback they received when proposing social change project to constituents of community.

**Assignments**
1. Alternative spring break blogs/journals

**Week 10: March 19: Storytelling & Reflection**

**Lecture Objectives:** Students will reflectively share experiences from alternative spring break with participants in other ASB Trips.

**Recitation Objective:** Reflection on the ASB experience

**Week 11: March 26: Farmworker Advocacy in NC: (Ryan Nilsen Guest Lecture)**

**Lecture Objectives:** Feelings of helpless and apathy can be overcome through studying previous social change / advocacy movements that succeeded.

**Recitation Objectives:** Reflect on ASB in comparison to other groups’ experiences. Begin Final Projects.

**Readings due this week**
1. Readings TBA

**Assignments:**
1. Reading response 5
2. Alternative break critical reflection due

**Week 12: April 2: Nonprofit vs. Social Entrepreneurship Models**

**Lecture Objective:** Panel discussion with local leaders

**Recitation Objectives:** Work on final projects

**Readings due this week:**
1. Readings: “The Nonprofit Industrial Complex”

**Week 13: April 9: Value Clarification and Future Directions: Service-Learning to Service Leadership**

**Lecture Objectives:** Reflectively discuss moving from learning and serving to leading. Students will think of their own style of leadership and leadership potential.

**Recitation Objectives:** Finish work on final projects.

**Readings due this week**
1. Readings TBA

**Assignments**
1. Due: Philosophy of service paper papers due

**Week 14: April 16: Group Presentations Part 1**

**Assignments**
1. Philosophy of service paper peer feedback due
Week 15: April 23: Group Presentations Part 2
   1. Philosophy of service FINAL papers due

Exam: Tuesday, May 6 at 4 p.m.
Final Reflections & Celebration
A discussion of what we have learned in the class and how it has informed your views of social change and social progress.
Critical Reading Responses

Critical readings responses are brief (500-700 word) papers written in response to the reading(s) for that day. They should include a concise (~150-200 word) summary of the reading’s (or readings’) main points. Write the summary as if you are telling a friend what you read. After the summary, you should provide a slightly longer (~400-550 word) analytic comment or question related to the reading(s). You could relate the reading to your own experience, compare it to another reading we’ve done, or take a specific point raised in the reading(s) and critically respond to it. Don’t just say whether you liked/disliked it or whether you agree/disagree. You may also want to consider asking questions as these reflection papers are a great opportunity to dialogue with your instructors.

If you write at the appropriate length and include both summary and analysis/reflection, you’ll receive full credit (“check”). If your paper is beyond commendable, you will receive “check plus.” If something is missing, the paper is short, or if the paper seems to be mostly summary without sufficient analysis and reflection, you’ll receive half credit (“check minus”). If you receive a “check minus,” you can revise your paper and turn it in the following week to aim for “check” status. If you get two “check minus” grades, you will get a zero. If you turn nothing in for any of the assignments, you will receive a zero. YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PASS THE CLASS IF YOU HAVE ANY ZEROS AS YOUR GRADE.

Note: Analytic reflection papers should be approximately two pages, double-spaced (or one page single-spaced) with a 12-point font and one-inch margins. Please include the word count for the paper under your name. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
## Critical Reading Reflections Writing Rubric

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<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Commendable</th>
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<td><strong>Clarity:</strong></td>
<td>Identifies and clearly summarizes the key problem / question at issue.</td>
<td>Accurately interprets evidence, statements, questions</td>
<td>Misinterprets evidence, statements, questions</td>
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<td>Consistently expands on the issue, expresses in another way, or provides examples / illustrations</td>
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<td><strong>Accuracy:</strong></td>
<td>Statements of fact are accurate, supported with evidence.</td>
<td>Draws warranted, judicious, non-fallacious conclusions</td>
<td>Draws unwarranted or-fallacious conclusions</td>
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<td>Identifies and assesses the quality of supporting data.</td>
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<td><strong>Depth:</strong></td>
<td>Addresses the complexity of the issue; raises significant questions; avoids over-simplifying</td>
<td>Identifies the salient arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con</td>
<td>Justifies few conclusions, seldom explains reasons</td>
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<td><strong>Breadth:</strong></td>
<td>Identifies and presents the student’s perspective</td>
<td>Thoughtfully analyzes and evaluates major alternative points of view</td>
<td>Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view</td>
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<td>Gives meaningful consideration to various points of view &amp; interpretations</td>
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<td><strong>Relevance:</strong></td>
<td>All writing is pertinent to the topic; examples and illustrations are of significance to the topic.</td>
<td>Justifies key conclusions, explains assumptions and reasons</td>
<td>Fails to identify strong relevant counter-arguments. Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view</td>
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<td><strong>Logic:</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a line of reasoning that is logical, with conclusions that follow clearly from it.</td>
<td>Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead</td>
<td>Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions</td>
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Political Biographies: A Story of Self (three pages)

In order to form a meaningful community such as the one that we are trying to create here in APPLES (that is, one that has a strong foundation of trust and of mutual assistance) it is important the we open up to each other and know each other personally. Achieving self-awareness of one’s world view – its strengths and limitations, is the first step to being able to make connections with other points of view and to gain wisdom about the world and your place in it.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you in this exploration. This is an activity to get you to think critically about the things that define you and how you understand your own identity, which you can share with your team. This isn’t about your personality but rather your relationships and communities and their implications for how you understand the world through them. You do not need to answer every question about your community. You do need to move beyond generic generalizations to critical thought and personal insight.

Please include the headings in your response to make sure you get to all the parts of the assignment.

Do not forget your writing standards!
Provide evidence for your claims and any concepts you introduce (accuracy)
Include examples where necessary (clarity)
Consider the complexity of any conclusions that you draw (depth)
Rely on logical conclusions (logic)
Represent the most important learning from the experience (significance)
Keep your learning focused around a central idea (relevance)

Brainstorming (half page or less)
Take two minutes and write all of the words that describe your relationships and communities that you belong to. They can include race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, religion, ability/disability, political affiliation, national/regional geography location, education, age, family background, gender, sexuality, group membership (service clubs, cultural clubs, residence halls, sports teams), family relations, and preferences (music, TV, books, food).

Choose one of these things you want to examine through the series of questions that follows (our identity framework). The strongest political biography will come from choosing something that is both personally important to you and that you can analyze critically. You can choose to examine an intersectional identity (where two aspects of your identity meet) if you wish such as being a Christian homosexual, a white male, or a young college student.

Analyze Identity: What assumptions create this identity?
Answer as many of these questions as feel meaningful.
- How was this community created?
- Who defines this identity or community (peers, media, parents, other sources)?
- How is it defined? What are the attributes associate with this identity?
- Does this identity have sub-communities within it? What are they?
- Do you choose to be a part of this community or identity? If so why?
- What attitudes, behaviors, responsibilities, and commitments are part of being in this community?
- What are the values of this community?
- What voices are not heard as strongly in these communities?
Analyze Bias: How does this identity color your understanding of the world?
What are the implications of your membership in this community for how you understand the world? This should take you about a page.
- What advantages or disadvantages does membership to this community have?
- What are possible biases you have in this understanding?
- How can you minimize bias when working to understand others?
- If you chose an intersectional identity how do the two identities interact?

Synthesize: How has your personal experience been shaped by this identity:
How does your own experience make you unique within this community? This should take you a page to explore.
- How have your personal experiences impacted your understanding of these communities?
- What other identities do you have that most impact your position within this community?
- How does your personal experiences affect the way you act within these communities?
- What would you change about these communities?

Wrap-Up: In a half of a page or less
- What are the things that you hope to gain from your Alternative Spring Break Experience and the course?
- What will you need to do to accomplish these things? (e.g. Complete the readings, complete reflections, work on building feelings of team as a group)
Philosophy of Service (four pages)

The philosophy of service essay is your opportunity for you to articulate a theory of change through service. All semester we have discussed different types of service and how each has strengths and weaknesses in accomplishing change at different ecological levels (individuals, organizations, community, physical environment, policy). We are more effective agents for positive change in their communities when we can articulate what steps and how service should be performed for change to be accomplished. The purpose of this paper is for you to reflect on and further develop your own philosophy of service that is how larger change in society is created and what your personal role in that change is.

Please address the following and put these section headings at the top of each section

Defining
1. What is your current personal definition of service? (if you give me a dictionary definition I will be sad)
2. How does your definition affect your actions?
3. Considering the four types of service/action we talked about in class (direct, organizational, advocacy, activism) what are the strengths and weaknesses of each type? How effective is each type at changing both individuals and society?

Describing
4. Of the characteristics that we have talked about in class to make service effect which do you believe is most important? Why? How would service work be different if the characteristic was emphasized more?
5. What is the concept / practice that you have struggled with understanding the most in this class? How has your understanding of this changed over the course of the semester?

Critiquing
6. Describe any current service or capstone project. Critique and complement their work by using the characteristics of effective service we have been discussing. Make sure you select a specific example and find both positive and negative aspects in their approach.

Or
7. Critique and complement your advocacy project by using the characteristics of an effective service project as discussed in class.

Dreaming
8. Please generate a list of goals, actions, behaviors and intentions that you hope to start, continue, or strengthen as a result of this class and your spring break experience. Goals are more powerful when tied to specifics, timelines, and when broken down into manageable steps.

Peer Feedback Process
You will be put in groups of three. You will write each other person in your group a one page response to their paper and email it to them by the due date. You can write feedback in the style that I have been giving feedback:
• what interested you
• what have they been struggling with that you have also been struggling with
• what do you not agree with
• what questions have their philosophy of service left you with
• what personal experiences have you had that relates and builds on the ideas they raise

You will submit each of your reflections on Sakai as well as emailing it directly to the person.
ASB Critical Reflection Assignment (three pages)

The critical reflection assignment is an opportunity for you to generate, deepen, and document the learning from your experience during your Alternative Spring Break. Critical reflection is important so that we don’t as TS Eliot warns “have the experience but miss the meaning (The Four Quartets, 1943.) For this assignment we will be following the What, So What, Now What model. This model is designed to guide but not limit your thinking. Feel free to add in important ideas not covered in these prompts.

Please include what/ so what / now what titles to each of the sections

What (~one page)

Describe the event: What / Where / Who / When / Why (make the reader feel like they are there and emotionally engaged in the story)
How did this situation make you feel? What did it tell you about yourself?
What assumptions had you made?
What did you expect from the situation?

So What (~one page)

Why was the situation the way it was?
Could this happen to us?
Who else could it happen to?
How did this situation illustrate the social problem you are examining? (You will need to do some research and offer facts & descriptive statistics about your social problem)
How did this confirm to what you have previously learned of the social problem or situation?
How did this situation change your understanding of the social problem you were examining?

Now what (~one page)

How do we contribute to the problem?
What would need to be done to create a positive outcome for this particular situation?
What would need to be done to change the social problem?
How did this situation change your understanding of the social problem you were examining?
How did this experience change your understanding of service?
How did this experience change your understanding of social change?
What have you learned from the experience itself that goes beyond your readings for class or recitation?

Conclusion: Tie together the situation, the social problem, and your solution

Do not forget your writing standards!
Provide evidence for your claims and any concepts you introduce (accuracy)
Include examples where necessary (clarity)
Consider the complexity of any conclusions that you draw (depth)
Rely on logical conclusions (logic)
Represent the most important learning from the experience (significance)
Keep your learning focused around a central idea (relevance)
Personal Action Plan (two pages)

This assignment will serve as both an opportunity to reflect on your personal development through the experience but also to set intentions, behaviors and goals for future action and engagement with the issue you focused on and others service activities you hope to be involved in.

Did this experience cause you to reflect on any aspect of your identity? What specific experiences made you see yourself in a new way? Has your commitment to service in your life changed through this experience? Service-learning experience or any experience when you live and interact closely with people and are doing the hard work of social change or working with populations that have different experience then our own can provide valuable insight into who you are. Reflect on any insights into yourself that you gained through this experience.

How did this experience change your understanding of yourself? What have you learned about yourself? Did this experience teach you anything about who you want to become as a person or professional? Expand from question one from specific experiences to your understanding of yourself. Your understanding of yourself could include recognized character traits such as perseverance, ability to work with others who are different than your or moral traits such as empathy, passion for social change etc. What have been the lessons for you from this experience?

In light of this learning I will…. Please generate a list of goals, actions, behaviors, and intentions that you hope to start, continue, or strengthen as a result of this experience or more generally in your life. Behavior and intentions are more powerful when tied to specific goals, timelines, and when broken down into manageable steps. Resolving to do more service would be an example of a bad intention. Naming a campus organization that you want to get involved with, a committee in that organization that you would like to join, and a timeline you set for yourself to join the organization would be a better intention.