Critical Approaches to Service-Learning: APPLES Alternative Break Class

Health Behavior & Health Education 610, Spring 2015

Wednesdays 5 to 5:50pm, Genome Sciences G10

Professor
Bob Pleasants (bpleas@email.unc.edu)

Instructor
Christina Galardi (cgalardi@email.unc.edu)

Teaching Assistants
Olivia Perry – operry@live.unc.edu
Josh Bradley - joshuarb@live.unc.edu

Break Leaders
Civil Rights:
Sumi Mehmi (smehmi@live.unc.edu) and Josh Hanover (hanover@live.unc.edu)

Disaster Relief:
Manish Sreevatsava (msreevat@live.unc.edu) and Anushree Singh (aksingh@live.unc.edu)

Latino Communities:
Hannah VunCannon (hvuncann@live.unc.edu) and Vianey Lemus Martinez (lemusmar@live.unc.edu)

Rural Communities:
Lindsey Holbrook (lholbroo@live.unc.edu) and Aidan Herbolich (aherbol1@live.unc.edu)

Urban Communities:
Austin Gragson (gragson@live.unc.edu) and Ishna Koul (Ishna_Koul@kenan-flagler.unc.edu)

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.

**Individual Writing Assignments**
See the end of the syllabus for further description of writing assignments to be completed individually. The writing assignments are:

1. Critical Reading Responses (x5) (~500 words each)
2. Political Biography (~750 words)
3. Alternative Spring Break Critical Reflection Paper (~750 words)
4. Philosophy of Service and Personal Action Plan (~1250 words)

**How to post your Critical Reading Reflections as blog posts on Sakai:**
We suggest that you compose your reading reflection in a Word document on your computer. Make sure to follow the assignment instructions in terms of approximate word count.

When finished, go to the Blogs tab in Sakai. Click "Add blog entry." Title the blog entry "Critical Reading Reflection #[NUMBER]" and paste your assignment into the box. Be sure to click "Publish entry."

Your other three writing assignments (Political Biography, Alternative Break Critical Reflection Paper, and the Philosophy of Service and Personal Action Plan) should be submitted on Sakai in the Assignments tab. All assignments should be written in 12 point font and double-spaced with a 1” margin. Please name your file with the following convention: [LASTNAME].[ASSIGNMENT TITLE].docx

**Group Assignments**
The following assignments will be completed with your Alternative Spring Break team. Assignment descriptions are included at the end of the syllabus.

1. Asset Map
2. Snapshots of Spring Break
3. Final Group Project

**Grading**
All work will initially be graded as “Pass,” “Needs Work,” or “Fail” (for work not turned in). If your work is marked “Needs Work,” you must revise it and turn it in the following week to improve your grade. **You are allowed only one “needs work” as a final grade. More than one final grade of “Needs Work” will result in not passing the class. If you do not turn in an assignment, you will receive a “Fail” (zero).** You will be given the chance to turn it in the following week for a maximum grade of “Needs Work.” **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 Bob or Christina.
Course Schedule

Week 1: January 7th: 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: January 14th: 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.
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: January 21st: 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.”
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

Week 4: January 28th: 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.
Readings due this week:
1. “What I didn’t Know Then” by Kelli Covey
2. “Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener’s Tale” by Camara Phyllis Jones
Assignments due:
1. Political Biographies

Week 5: February 4th: Advocacy and Social Change Part 1
Lecture Objectives: Define and discuss theories and approaches to advocacy and social change.
Readings due this week: 1. “Actors, Resources, Interests, and Power” by Marshal Ganz
Week 6: February 11th: Asset Mapping: Building Communities from the Inside Out
Lecture Objectives: Begin introduction to philosophy and approach of community asset mapping.
Readings due this week:
   1. “Mapping Community Capacity” by John McKnight and John Kretzmann
Assignments:
   1. Recitation Assignment: Outside research on aspects of host community
   2. Mid-Semester Check in and Evaluation

Week 7: February 18th: 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.
Readings due this week:
   1. “Helping to Build a Modern Synthesis of Social Change” by William Smith
Assignments:
   1. Reading Response #3

Week 8: February 25th: Case Study #1 and/or In-Class Reflections
Assignments due:
   1. Read others’ blog posts on Sakai and comment on at least two (response should be at least 1 paragraph)

Week 9: March 4th: 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.
Readings due this week:
   1. “This is Water” by David Foster Wallace
Assignments
   1. Reading Response #4
   2. Alternative Break Critical Reflection Paper Assigned and Discussed

***SPRING BREAK***
In your ASB Groups: 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. Personal Alternative Spring Break Journals/Blogs
   2. Prepare 20 slides, 20 seconds presentation and asset maps with group

Week 10: March 18th: Storytelling & Reflection: 20 Slides, 20 Seconds
Lecture Objectives: Students will reflectively share experiences from alternative spring break with participants in other ASB Trips.
Week 11: March 25\textsuperscript{th}: Asset Maps of Our ASB Communities
Lecture Objectives: Students will share Asset Maps of their communities with the class
Assignments:
1. Alternative Break Critical Reflection Due

Week 12: April 1\textsuperscript{st}: Case Study
Readings due this week: Readings TBA

Week 13: April 8\textsuperscript{th}: Non-Profit Models
Lecture Objective: Panel discussion with local leaders
Readings due this week:
1. “Understanding Nonprofit Status and Tax Exemption” – Community Toolbox
   Chapter 43, Section 4 (link on Sakai)
Assignments
1. Due: Philosophy of Service Paper Papers FIRST DRAFT Due

Week 14: April 15\textsuperscript{th}: Social Entrepreneurship Models
Readings due this week:
1. “The Meaning of ‘Social Entrepreneurship’” by J. Gregory Dees
2. “Everyone a Changemaker: Social Entrepreneurship’s Ultimate Goal” by Bill Drayton
Assignments
1. Reading Response #5
2. Philosophy of Service Paper PEER FEEDBACK Due

Week 15: April 22\textsuperscript{nd}: 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.
Readings due this week:
1. “Servant Leadership: A Passion to Serve” by Joe Batten
2. “Tracing the Growing Impact of Service Leadership” by Larry Spears
Assignments
1. Philosophy of Service FINAL Papers Due

Exam: Tuesday, May 6\textsuperscript{th} at 4pm
Final Presentations & 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 (“Pass”). 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 (“Needs Work”). If you receive a “Needs Work,” you can revise your paper and turn it in the following week to aim for “Pass” status. If you get two “Needs Work” grades, you will get a “Fail.” If you turn nothing in for any of the assignments, you will receive a “Fail.” YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PASS THE CLASS IF YOU HAVE ANY “FAILS” 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 1” 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>Pass</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clarity:</strong></td>
<td>Accurately interprets evidence, statements, questions</td>
<td>Misinterprets evidence, statements, questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifies and clearly</td>
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<td>summarizes the key problem / question at issue. Consistently expands on the issue, expresses in another way, or provides examples / illustrations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy:</strong></td>
<td>Draws warranted, judicious, non-fallacious conclusions</td>
<td>Draws unwarranted or-fallacious conclusions</td>
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<td>Statements of fact are</td>
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<td>accurate, supported with evidence. Identifies and assesses the quality of supporting data.</td>
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<td><strong>Depth:</strong></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>Addresses the complexity of the issue; raises significant questions; avoids over-simplifying.</td>
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<td><strong>Breadth:</strong></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>Identifies and presents the student’s perspective Gives meaningful consideration to various points of view &amp; interpretations.</td>
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<td><strong>Relevance:</strong></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>All writing is pertinent to the topic; examples and illustrations are of significance to the topic.</td>
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<td><strong>Logic:</strong></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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<td>Demonstrates a line of reasoning that is logical, with conclusions that follow clearly from it.</td>
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<td><strong>Length:</strong></td>
<td>Sufficient length</td>
<td>Insufficient length</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adheres to the guidelines for length of the assignment</td>
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Political Biographies: A Story of Self (3 Pages)

In order to form a meaningful community such as the one that we are trying to create here in APPLIES (that is, one that has a strong foundation of trust and of mutual assistance) it is important that 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 with 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 five headings (Brainstorming, Analyze Identity, Analyze Bias, Synthesize, Wrap-Up) 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)
ASB Critical Reflection Assignment (3 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 in your response.

What (~1 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 (~1 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 (~1 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)
Philosophy of Service and Personal Action Plan (5 pages)

This paper is your opportunity to articulate a theory of change through service and its applications to your future service and civic engagement. 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.

This assignment will also serve as both an opportunity to reflect on your personal development through the spring break 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. After completing the assignment, you will share your ideas and understanding with a peer and receive feedback to clarify and deepen your thoughts and plans.

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

**Defining**
1. What is your current personal (not dictionary) definition of service?
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 effective, which do you believe is most important? Why? How would service work be different if this 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?

**Reflecting**
6. 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? Reflect on any insights into yourself that you gained through this experience.
7. 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?

**Moving forward**
8. 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. Consider phrasing your plans as S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound).
Peer Feedback Process for Philosophy of Service and Personal Action Plan
You will trade papers with another person in your group and return 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 their philosophy of service left you with
- what personal experiences you have had that relates and builds on the ideas they raise
- any suggestions you have for making their intended goals, actions, and behaviors more realistic and achievable

You will submit each of your reflections on Sakai as well as emailing it directly to the person.
Group Assignments

Asset Mapping Group Project
Over the break or during the recitation following the break, your group should develop an asset map for your community, identifying components that fall into the five major categories we will discuss during the "Asset Based Community Development" course lecture in February: individuals, citizen associations, institutions, land (and everything on it), and economy. You can do this on a large sheet of paper (your break leaders will be provided with this). The design of your asset map can take whatever shape you want – be creative! At the second class session following spring break, your group will have an opportunity to share this product with the class.

Snapshots of Spring Break: 20 Slides, 20 Seconds
During the first class session following your break experience, your break team will have a chance to share a reflection on your experience with the class through the form of a "pecha kucha"-style presentation. This is a unique style of presentation that tells a story using 20 slides with each slide shown for 20 seconds each (6 minutes and 40 seconds in total). Your slides should have pictures, not paragraphs – the objective is to be focused and engaging as you tell the class about your break experience.

You should set up your slide to advance automatically (you will not need to click to move to the next slide). For a video on how to set the timing, please view this link:
http://www.youtube.com/embed/YGVCKCn6jBc
This website has lots of great examples of pecha kucha presentations:
http://www.pechakucha.org/watch

Secrets for success: During the break, your team should be thinking about ways to capture your experience through photographs and how to tell the story tying them together. Not all team members will need to speak during the presentation, but several members should take part and everyone should participate in selecting pictures and shaping the story. Consider delegating roles to photographers, presentation designers, and presenters. You will likely need to rehearse the timing since it will progress automatically! It will take some practice to see how much you can say in twenty seconds before the next slide. If it helps, you may write your talking points on index cards to use during the presentation.

Please send your group's slides to Christina by noon on the first Wednesday after the break.
**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 during the final exam period. Each group will have 20 minutes to present their project via PowerPoint.

Based on the subject of your Alternative Spring Break experience, create an “ecosystem of care” to alleviate—or even solve—a major area of concern your trip addressed.

1. Be as specific as possible about the concern you are addressing.
2. Be sure to include your asset maps to bring as many resources as possible as a starting point.
3. From there, use the social ecological model (individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, society levels) to create an “ecosystem of care” that would address the area of concern of your choice.
   a. What strengths already exist? Could you add to them to make them even stronger?
   b. What partnerships currently exist to address the issue? What partnerships would you want to create to address the issue?
   c. What organizations would you create to address the issue, and how would they connect with pre-existing organizations? Would you use non-profit and/or social entrepreneurship approaches?
   d. How would all of these organizations work to provide direct service, advocacy, and activism?
   e. How would you make sure your efforts are defined by the population being served? How would you be accountable to them?
   f. Will your work be focused more on prevention or intervention? Is there potential for more prevention? If so, what would need to happen to be more preventative in focus?
   g. How will you fund your work initially? How will you sustain your funding? Don’t be limited by this, but try to think practically as you dream.
   h. How will you measure progress?

This is your chance to be as creative and progressive as possible. Imagine your group of 12 students has been asked to come into the community to work for five years and been given a budget of $100,000/year (in addition to your salaries/stipends). What would be your plan for creating the change you want to see in the community?