Contents

This project manual contains information with regard to your upcoming project. Please take the time to read it thoroughly. It is designed to enhance your experience and better prepare you for your project. The manual contains specific information about travel preparation, health and medical issues, and details about the area to which you will be traveling. If you have any questions about this project information, please contact your Professor or Teaching Assistant. **BE SURE TO TAKE THIS PROJECT MANUAL WITH YOU TO WASHINGTON, DC,** so that you have the medical information, emergency numbers, etc. you need.

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 Intro to Service-Learning Projects

“If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time.

But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine,

then let us work together.”

~ Aboriginal Activists Group
 queensland, 1970s

The goal of each service-learning project is to foster a dialogue between the College community and the host community around issues of social justice. By working alongside people and sharing their stories, students learn about themselves and the world.

There are seven underlying philosophies and approaches to each service-learning project. Each contributes to the understanding of community and the role of the individual within it.

* **immersion.** The experience of being in a community.
* **service.** Participating fully in a community-identified project.
* **learning.** Examining community and social justice issues and how communities respond to those issues.
* **reciprocity.** Both the community and the project participants work together to plan and implement the experiences so that equitable attention is paid to the agency’s needs and educational value for the student participants.
* **asset model.** The community is not a place of “problems to be fixed.” Rather, strengths exist upon which to build.
* **reflection.** Connecting the action with theory – what is it that we have learned? How does this inform my future community involvement?
* **comfort zones.** Gettysburg College will never knowingly put participants in real danger. However, we will gladly put them in situations where they will be uncomfortable.

Service-learning projects are tools for changing students from observers into active participants and giving them a way to engage with people and ideas with whom they would otherwise have little or no contact. Because of the nature of service- learning projects, the human relationships established with the people at the project sites are paramount. Service-learning projects are committed to building bridges between the persons at project sites and the participants from the College, so that the benefits are reciprocal and continuing.

DC Site Information

**About the Site**

In the late 70s, a Lutheran Seminary student named Paul Poerschke facilitated the initial contacts with Luther Place Church in Washington, DC, and its pastor, Rev. John Steinbruck. Soon after that, Gettysburg College students were volunteering at Luther Place Church and staffing the overnight shelter on a regular, sometimes weekly, basis.

Home base for participants is the Luther Place Hostel at the Steinbruck Center. Throughout the stay, participants work at DC Central Kitchen, a food kitchen which uses refrigerated vans to pick up surplus food from restaurants, caterers, hotels, and cafeterias. The donated food is brought to the Kitchen and used to prepare 3,000 meals daily. Participants will gain additional information from visits to organizations such as the National Coalition for the Homeless, and through discussions with resource people. Students will also participate in a DC Outfitters program -- visiting people in DC who face homelessness and offering clothing/conversation.

**Helpful Web Sites**

The following web sites will be helpful in learning about the area to which you are traveling.

 DC Central Kitchen [*www.dccentralkitchen.org*](http://www.dccentralkitchen.org)

 Capital Area Food Bank [*www.capitalareafoodbank.org*](http://www.capitalareafoodbank.org)

 National Coalition for the Homeless [*www.nationalhomeless.org*](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)

Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV) [*www.theccnv.org*](http://www.theccnv.org)

N Street Village [*www.nstreetvillage.org/*](http://www.nstreetvillage.org/)

Steinbruck Center [*www.lutherplace.org/steinbruckcenter/index.html*](http://www.lutherplace.org/steinbruckcenter/index.html)

National Housing Trust Fund [*www.nhtf.org*](http://www.nhtf.org)

The Hunger Site [*www.thehungersite.com*](http://www.thehungersite.com)

 So Others May Eat (SOME) [*www.some.org*](http://www.some.org)

 Share Our Strength (SOS) [*www.strength.org*](http://www.strength.org)

Oxfam America [*www.oxfamamerica.org*](http://www.oxfamamerica.org)

Cultural Sensitivity

The term “cultural sensitivity” is an elusive one. It embodies a number of different behaviors, attitudes, and emotions that are necessary for cross-cultural understanding and a satisfying experience. Numerous studies have attempted to explain the concept of cultural sensitivity and analyze the process of it. Time is one factor. It is difficult to become fully sensitive of a culture by studying it or visiting it for a short time. Four key components to achieving cultural sensitivity during a short visit are: awareness, respect, participation, and emotion. It is important to understand these components before your cross-cultural experience begins.

During your project, you will meet many people, such as community leaders and community members. You will often be looked to as a representative of Gettysburg College, whether or not you are aware of it. Very little goes unnoticed when a group arrives.

When you enter a community or agency, take time to get a feel for what is and is not appropriate. If you have any doubts about something, ask your Professor. Avoid the temptation to make exceptions for yourself; these exceptions may or may not be made by the people with whom you will be working and/or living. We ask that you come prepared to be flexible. Plans may change from day to day, and it is sometimes hard to stay on a fixed schedule while on a service-learning project.

The project includes speakers with a wide range of opinions, which guarantees that you will not agree with everyone you meet. In a discussion, you are welcome to ask hard questions, but do so with respect. When asking personal questions of others, be prepared to share something about yourself. Phrase questions thoughtfully. For example, instead of saying “How much do you earn?” or “How much is your rent?”, ask “How much do individuals in your community earn?” or “What is the typical rent for a family?”

**AWARENESS**

The first component of cultural sensitivity involves awareness of other cultures. Understand that it is difficult for us to imagine that there are different worlds and different ways of doing things even within our own US borders. We must open up and become keenly aware that we are creatures of culture. Our culture shapes our values, defines our priorities, and molds our personalities, both as a nation and as individuals. So as you enter this new culture, understand and realize that the values, priorities, and personalities of others may be different from yours. You are a visitor to this culture — do not expect it to conform to your ideas. The great challenge and excitement comes in experiencing a different way of understanding the world.

**RESPECT**

In order for any progress to be made in cross-cultural understanding, the visitor must respect the culture of his/her hosts. This does not imply agreement with or a willingness to adopt the other culture. Rather, understand that there are many different perspectives and values in the world. It is harmful and unnecessary to judge the other culture. Accept it, learn from it, and keep an open mind. For example, it would be inappropriate to not try food or to visibly show dislike for food. Cultural sensitivity requires that you show respect and participate in sampling cultural foods.

In accordance, your hosts may see things from a different perspective than you. Be aware and respectful that their conclusions may be sharply different from your intent. For example, clinging tightly to your group and whispering may appear disrespectful to your hosts. You may perceive that what you are doing is harmless and should not concern them, but they may arrive at another conclusion.

**PARTICIPATION**

You will never become culturally sensitive unless your participation is a demonstration of respect. Participation in the culture will quickly deepen your understanding and provide you with the best possible experiences during your trip. Soon, you will find that you begin to relate to your new friends. This is demonstrated by the realization that you no longer need your wristwatch or that you actually like grits.

**EMOTION**

Possibly the most important aspect of cultural sensitivity involves emotions. A participant could easily be aware that other cultures exist, have respect for those cultures, actively participate in the culture, and still not be truly sensitive. Cultural sensitivity involves a heart-felt sense of caring and giving of yourself. This will happen as you grow closer to the communities to which you will visit. It may take several days to be comfortable enough to let down your guard and begin caring and feeling for the people around you. Any sacrifices you make will be freely done because you genuinely care about your hosts and want them to understand the depth of your feelings for them.

Travel Preparations

**Expenses**

The cost of meals, accommodations, related site visits, and all transportation are covered. However, you may want to take extra money for snacks, special entertainment or performances, etc. The amount of extra money you take is your decision. Past participants recommend taking $50, being careful not to carry large amounts of money. It is recommended that you carry a modest amount of currency and use an ATM machine.

**Luggage**

Participants of this project may take only one piece of luggage, as well as a small bag for day use in which to keep money, necessities, etc. Label all luggage inside and out with full name and address. Keep in mind that *participants are responsible for their own luggage,* so do not pack what you cannot carry on your own!

**Safety**

On the whole, problems with security and safety at project sites are rare. It is advisable that you know about the area to which you are traveling. We encourage you to visit the web sites listed in this manual. Participants are responsible for their own safety – keep yourself informed. Please follow these basic safety recommendations.

* Report all incidents (real or perceived) to your Professor or TA. Your current and future safety may be at stake. It is important for participants to share experiences, information, concerns, observations, and ideas with the other project members.
* Do not travel or explore areas alone. Stay in lighted, public areas at night and during the day.
* Do not display cash in public view. When using an ATM or making purchases, be discrete.
* Do not accept offers or favors from strangers. Avoid potentially compromising situations.
* Stay alert at all times. Remember, when becoming too confident or comfortable, one may drop their guard and be vulnerable to people who do not have their best interests in mind.
* Follow your instincts. Learn to trust yourself and how you feel. Sometimes, the only information you will have of impending problems is your “gut” feeling.
* Dress appropriately and save the designer look for home. Wear clothing that affords comfort, flexibility, and agility.
* Do not bring valuable jewelry, watches, or expensive clothing. Do not bring what you cannot afford to lose.
* Do not leave cash, cameras, or other valuable items unattended. It is always a good idea to keep valuables with you at all times.

**Emergencies**

Your Project Leader will be available for help in medical emergencies. Emergencies will be handled with due urgency and care. We take every reasonable precaution to ensure your health and safety on site. PLEASE NOTE: the Professor, TA, and our DC partner agencies err on the side of caution. Should it be determined that a participant is in danger and a visit to the Emergency Room is necessary, said participant will not have an option on whether or not to go.

In case of an extreme emergency back home, you may be contacted by your family members through the Department of English. Expect at least one day to make necessary arrangements for any emergency return to Gettysburg, plus travel time. An emergency return may incur additional costs to you which are beyond our control.

**Department of English,** Gettysburg College

email: jrosenst@gettysburg.edu

*717-*337-6750 Department of English, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm.

717-321-5701 *cell* Jody Rosensteel, evenings and weekends.

717-337-6911 Department of Public Safety, Gettysburg College.

**Participant Expectations and College Policies**

All project participants on service-learning projects are expected to act with the same level of responsibility, respect, and maturity as when residing at their own homes or on Gettysburg College campus. As this is a Gettysburg College affiliated program, all participants are expected to abide by the College’s Code of Conduct, as outlined in the Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities found at <http://www.gettysburg.edu/college_life/srr/student_handbook/>. Any actions which violate the Code of Conduct and take place during the project time frame will be addressed through the College’s judicial system upon return to campus. Such behavior will also be addressed by the site partner(s) and Project Leader, should they determine that the behavior in question violates their own policies. Should a participant’s behavior jeopardize the group or site in any way during the project, the Professor, in consultation with College officials, reserve the right to send a participant home during the project at the participant’s expense. Such reasons include, but are not limited to, violations of College policy, the use of alcohol or illegal drugs, disrespect toward site community and/or fellow project participants, or medical/psychological emergencies. To avoid misunderstandings, the group will define the parameters of conduct and activities, in accordance with their own preferences and the Code of Conduct, prior to departure through the development of group Ground Rules and Agreements. These parameters are for the common safety of the group.

BE AWARE. Every year, hundreds of young travelers are arrested domestically and internationally for illegal possession, use, or trafficking of drugs. Participants are subject to all domestic laws. Gettysburg College is completely powerless should you be arrested. Participants are asked to refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages and the use of drugs.

Check List

*The following items are a general list of things to pack for your project. Participants can take one piece of luggage. A day bag may also be packed, as long as it is small enough to be placed on your lap or under a seat.*

**What to Bring**

* Pants / jeans for work sites (no shorts).
* Short sleeve t-shirts / shirts / blouses for work sites (no tank tops or midriffs).
* Undergarments.
* Hat to wear at work site (or a hair net will be provided by the agency).
* Sneakers or shoes with closed toes and rubber tread (no heels, sandals, or flip flops) for work sites and walking.
* Coat/sweatshirt.
* Umbrella/poncho (in case of rain).
* Nightwear (will be mixed company in the hostel).
* Toiletries.
* Washcloth / towel / shower shoes.
* Sleeping bag or sheets/blanket.
* Pillow.
* Prescriptions and/or over-the-counter medications.
* Personal first aid supplies.
* Flashlight and travel alarm (optional, but recommended).
* Project Packet (manual/journal), pens/pencils, readings/handouts.

**What Not to Bring**

* DO NOT BRING OR WEAR any clothing or other items resembling military paraphernalia, including olive drab, camouflage, or any item having army-issue characteristics. Clothing advertising alcohol, tobacco, or other inappropriate products/wording should be left at home.
* DO NOT BRING any illegal drugs or alcohol, nor carry/pack firearms, explosives, knives, or anything that could be interpreted as potential weapons.
* DO NOT BRING expensive equipment or jewelry that you cannot afford to lose.

Medical & Insurance Issues

* **prescription medications.** Contact your physician to be sure you have enough medications for your entire project. Persons with medical problems that are not easily recognized (diabetes, allergic reactions to antibiotics or bee stings, heart conditions, epilepsy) should consider obtaining a medic alert identification tag. This tag is internationally recognized. Consult your physician on obtaining one.
* **over-the-counter medications.** Participants are responsible for taking their own over-the-counter medications, such as pain relievers, cough drops/medicine, diarrhea medicines, etc. Your Professor or TA is not authorized to dispense any types of medication. Therefore, participants must come prepared with their own medications.
* **other important necessities.** You may wish to bring sunglasses, sunscreen, prescription glasses and/or contacts.
* **insurance.** Gettysburg College encourages all service-learning participants to carry some kind of medical insurance.

Information Sheet for Families

Emergencies

In case of an extreme emergency back home, you may be contacted by your family members through the Department of English or the Provost’s Office. Expect at least one day to make necessary arrangements for any emergency return to Gettysburg, plus travel time. An emergency return may incur additional costs to you which are beyond our control.

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