

First-year seminar takes trip to D.C. to study homelessness



Students at work in Washington, D.C.

Gettysburg College students are going beyond the classroom to learn about homelessness.

A five-day trip to Washington, D.C., from Oct. 8 to 12, is the highlight of English Prof. Chris Fee's first-year seminar, "Tryin' to Find a Way Back Home: An Introduction to the Literature and Legacy of Homelessness in America." "Homelessness is a term that conjures up unsavory images in the popular imagination, flat, generic, clichés that owe as much to fear as to fact. The truth is, children account for a shocking proportion of the homeless in America today, as do women fleeing abuse, as do the working poor, many of whom find it impossible to secure affordable housing in many of our cities," Fee said. The students will [blog](#) about their experiences and post comments, photos and video confessionals.

Focusing on service and experiential learning, the first-year seminar was designed in collaboration with the college's [Center for Public Service](#). In the classroom, students study and discuss information from a number of sources including non-fiction texts, organizational websites, popular newspapers and magazines, memoirs, novels, and films. Students also fulfill service commitments in the local community throughout the semester. The trip is based at N-Street Village at Luther Place and draws on relationships between Gettysburg College and D.C. Central Kitchen, National Coalition for the Homeless, Community for Creative Non-Violence, D.C. Outfitters, and other service organizations.

The students will hear from Robert Egger, president and founder of D.C. Central Kitchen and the College's [2010 Commencement speaker](#), on Monday. They will also hear the perspective of Judge Nelson Rupp, P '11 & '14, who presides over a drug court in Montgomery County, Md. Fee has taught the course for the past eight. Graduates have gone into the Peace Corps, Americorps, and other non-profits.

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