

NOMINATION FORM
CHE SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT COMPETITION

Institution: Tri-County Technical College

Title of Project SOC 205 (Social Problems) Service Learning Component

Director of Project Catherine E. (Cathy) Saidat

Contact Information of Project Director

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Establishment Date of Project August 19, 2013

Unit That Administers Project Instructor

Total Number of Students Involved 17

Signature of Institutional President



PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING THE NOMINATED PROJECT
(Insert your answer after each question.)

1. For purposes of this competition, the Commission on Higher Education defines service learning as college student learning at any level and in any situation that is *linked* in a direct, hands-on fashion to the resolution of a problem or concern in a target community outside the institution *and is related* to a college course with some type of reflection activity. Briefly, how does your project meet the parameters of this definition?

This course is a survey of current social problems in America, stressing the importance of social change and conflicts as they influence perceptions, definitions, etiology, and possible solutions. As described in the course syllabus, among the outcomes associated with the course are the ability to:

1. Explain how the three major sociological theories view various social problems; and,
2. Examine how those with differing political perspectives define social problems and propose solutions for various social problems.

The material was approached from above and below. That is, students analyzed social problems from both a policy level, as well as grassroots. It was at the grassroots level that the service learning component was incorporated. The exercise was designed for students to witness and experience theoretical paradigms come to life.

Students selected a social problem or an organization that addresses a social problem of interest to them. The instructor made contact with appropriate organizations to explain the project and to ask if the organization will participate, and then passed on the contact information to students.

Students interviewed the contact individual, with particular emphasis on the organization's mission statement and how the work the student might do relates to the mission statement. Then students volunteered three or more hours to the organization, working with other volunteers or with clients. After the work was complete, students were to place the work they did in the context of the organization's mission statement, and then place both into one of sociology's three main theoretical frameworks.

2. Specifically, which segments of the college/university community does your project involve?

The project involved students enrolled in the Social Problems (SOC 205) course.

3. How many students (specify degree levels to the extent possible) does the project affect?

There were 17 students who completed the course. The prerequisite is completion of Introduction to Sociology (SOC 101); therefore, students are in the second-semester of their first-year or are in their second year.

4. Describe the target community or communities your project serves.

Students were at liberty to select an organization whose work interests them or one with whom they had a personal or professional relationship. Alternatively, they could select an issue of interest to them and, with the instructor's help, later identified an organization that addressed the issue. Their selections were limited to those within the tri-county area that the college serves (Anderson, Oconee and Pickens) and must not be an organization sponsored by one particular church. A list of organizations where students volunteered appears at the end of this application.

5. Describe your project's effectiveness in helping to solve the problems or concerns in the target community.

Since students selected projects of interest to them, there was no one particular problem to be addressed. It is difficult to predict what the project's effectiveness might have been communitywide, but 17 individuals providing over 50 hours of service most certainly had some impact.

6. Describe the degree to which your project enhances student learning while providing specific examples of the service learning activities the students engage in. Also explain how the service learning activities reinforce or apply what the students learn in the classroom.

Students find sociological theories difficult to understand without context. This project was designed to address this difficulty. Different theories describe problems in different ways and offer different solutions. By working with organizations that address particular social problems, students gain the opportunity to experience a particular theoretical paradigm in action. The instructor believes that once students grasp one theory, others will come more easily.

The end-of-course evaluation reflected high levels of student agreement with these statements about service learning:

- course content is better learned when connections to real-life situations are made
- helping students to understand required lectures and readings
- seeing how the subject matter can be used in everyday life
- students becoming aware of some of their own biases or prejudices
- learning how they can become more involved in their own communities
- better understanding their roles as citizens
- seeing the services they performed as beneficial to the community

Students in this course are often "armchair quarterbacks," underestimating the scale of many social problems, or oversimplifying the solutions. This project can help students experience the magnitude of a problem or the effectiveness of a particular solution. One student commented, "...she opened my eyes to the social problems around me that I didn't even realize."

7. Is there academic credit associated with the project (not necessary for submission)? If so, please explain the particulars.

The service learning component served as the final exam for this 3-credit hour course.

8. If funding is required, how is the project funded and what is the approximate annual budget for the project?

Expenses for this project were limited to postage on thank-you notes students sent to their contacts at the service organizations after they volunteered. The department head agreed to absorb the postage cost into the department budget.

9. Feel free to add any other comments you may have about your project.

The instructor is a strong advocate for partnerships. Obviously, the organizations and their clients benefitted from the service. Secondly, involving students in the community serves to spotlight the college through the work of its students as ambassadors. Finally, beyond helping students gain a more realistic perspective of social problems, their full participation in the project results in increasing their own professional networks that might serve them in the future. Ultimately, the experience resulted in one student signing on as a permanent volunteer and another student receiving an offer of employment.

Organizations served by Fall 2013 SOC 205 Social Problems class:

Adopt-a-Highway—cleaned up section of local highway

Anderson Interfaith Ministries—2 students:

1. distributed food to clients
2. helped client set up monthly household budget

Anderson Soup Kitchen—set up tables, served, swept and cleaned up one meal

Bethany House—read to children in day care while their teen mothers were in class

Boys and Girls Club, NW Campus—served snacks and directed games in afterschool program

Goodwill Industries—tagged clothing with prices

Habitat for Humanity—2 students:

1. spent one day on a house build at Clemson
2. prepared brochures and flyers for distribution at upcoming event

House of Israel—assisted with childcare while parents attended counseling

Meals on Wheels—distributed meals to seniors

New Foundations Home for Children—helped youth counsel prepare for court (2 students)

Redeemer Health and Rehab—directed activities for impaired seniors

United Way of Oconee County—prepared brochures and flyers for distribution at upcoming event

Upstate Homeless Coalition—helped client set up monthly household budget

You may also include supplemental information about the project (such as brochures, pictures, etc.).

Attached are two documents from the Service Project. "Service Project rev" contains the complete instructions for the project. "1 Pre-project proposal" helps students identify organizations for Step 1 of the project instructions.

Please return this form via e-mail by **March 14, 2014**, to:

Trena Houp, Associate Director
Division of Academic and Student Affairs
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
1122 Lady Street, Suite 300
Columbia, SC 29201
803.737.4853
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SOC 205: Pre-Project Proposal

State the social problem you wish to address.

Answer these questions to define the social problem (from the handout *Is this a social problem?*), providing evidence or references for your responses.

1. Is there public outcry?
2. Is there a gap between social ideals and reality?
3. Does it have national attention?
4. Is a solution possible, or is it just part of life?
5. Are the people affected influential or powerful?
6. Does it affect a large segment of society?
7. Has there been a rapid increase in the number of people affected?
8. Does it have media attention, and what does the mass media have to say?
9. What is the prevailing ideology?

Do not be terribly concerned if the project you have chosen to do does not meet all the criteria for being an “official” social problem. Oftentimes, organizations work to address local issues in an effort to prevent them from becoming social problems. This may be the case with your chosen project or organization.

Do some preliminary research to identify local organizations or chapters of national organizations that work to address this problem. Check with your instructor to see if s/he might know of local organizations that may not be accessible through conventional means.

Identify the organization(s) you wish to contact, including local contact information (name and phone number or e-mail address), if you know it.

Unless you have a relationship with the organization, please do not make contact at this time.

Service Project

This project will constitute your final exam for this course: Social Problems (SOC 205)

Objective: Identify an organization that works to address a social problem and determine the organization's theoretical placement through field research (participant observation).

This may be done individually or with a group.

Select a social problem of interest to you. Using the list of organization in Chapter 18 of your textbook, identify an organization that works to address your chosen social problem.

Alternatively, you may select a local organization that is not listed in the textbook; however, you **MUST** receive the instructor's approval before proceeding.

- You must spend at least 3 hours working with the organization (not including time spent with the initial Interview or other contact)
- Please be sensible about your level of participation with your selected organization. Do **NOT** do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable or endangered, or that might result in your arrest.

1. Pre-project proposal (20%)

Submit a brief document to your instructor describing the social problem you wish to address and the organization you have selected.

The document must also include answers to the nine questions posed in *Is This a Social Problem?*.

Your instructor will make the initial contact, describe the assignment and get a contact name for you. It is possible that you will have to select a different organization, and this approval process may take some time.

Do NOT proceed until you have received the instructor's approval.

Initial Contact

Once you have your instructor's approval to proceed, contact the organization and arrange to meet with a representative for a brief interview and to describe your assignment. Explain that you are doing a project for your Social Problems class, and that you would like to volunteer some time to the organization.

Your participation should include an opportunity to meet some of the workers, and perhaps some of those who benefit from the services the organization provides. Some things you might be asked to do are:

- a) Stuff envelopes
- b) Distribute posters or brochures
- c) Help paint or clean

Do not be disappointed if you are restricted from doing certain tasks. Some agencies—such as those that provide health care services or work with children—do not permit volunteers to work with them without background checks or physical exams.

Use the attached interview Sheet for the interview. During your meeting, be sure to get:

- a) The organization's Mission Statement
- b) A written verification of your commitment—this can be a letter from the event facilitator or a message on his/her business card, but **MUST** include the organization's logo or letterhead
- c) Permission to photograph the event in which you will participate—if you think you might want to include photographs in your final presentation, you will need to bring Consent forms with you to the event

Do NOT proceed with the event until you have completed the Project Proposal (next step).

2. Project Proposal (30%)

After you have made arrangements with the organization, but before your volunteer event, submit to the instructor a proposal that includes:

- a) The social problem you will address
- b) Your selected organization and the date of your initial interview
- c) A description of what you will do with or for the organization, including the date and time of the event
- d) The organization's Mission Statement (copy is ok)
- e) The Interview sheet (copy is ok)
- f) Written verification of your commitment (copy is ok)

Do NOT proceed with the event until you have received approval from the instructor.

Activity

After you receive approval from your instructor, follow through with your commitment. Remember to bring plenty of Photo Consent forms if you will be taking any pictures.

Code of Honor

Besides organization workers, you may also encounter recipients of the organization's services. I expect that you will treat those you encounter with respect and sensitivity. Please honor their

dignity and respect their privacy. While you are there to observe them and learn from them, be very careful not to treat them as though they are “on display”.

Please also bear in mind that you represent Tri-County Technical College to the “outside world”. I trust you will conduct yourselves accordingly.

Follow-up

After the conclusion of the event, I hope you will send the organization a note of thanks for letting you participate with them and learn from them. Not only would it be an excellent public relations gesture, but will make you memorable to them when you’re seeking employment (networking or as a reference). See me for stationery (for handwritten notes) and postage will be paid by TC if you return the addressed, sealed envelopes to me before the semester ends.

3. Written Submission (50%)

Prepare a submission that includes these components and answers these questions.

1. Identify the problem
 - a. Use *Defining a Social Problem* as a guide for describing the social problem
 - b. State the problem from each of the three theoretical perspectives
2. The name of the organization, the individual you interviewed and his/her position within the organization
3. The organization’s Mission Statement
4. Describe the work the organization does to address the problem
5. How do the organization’s activities fulfill its stated mission?
6. People
 - a. Number of workers, both volunteers and paid
 - b. Number of units served, including the unit and the timeframe (i.e., 140 households per year, 35 individuals per week, etc.)
7. What, specifically, did you do and how did it contribute to the organization’s mission?
8. Using your textbook as a guide, determine the organization’s theoretical placement
 - a. Which of the types of solutions suggested in your textbook most closely resemble the type of work your organization does?
 - b. Based on your response to part a., how does the organization define the problem?
 - c. Based on your responses to parts a. and b., which perspective does your organization appear to support?
9. Briefly examine the positive and negative consequences of the solution your organization implements.
10. If you had the opportunity, what recommendations would you make for the organization’s future?

11. How does the organization's theoretical perspective compare with your own?
12. Do you think you might work with this organization in the future? Why or why not?
13. Attach to the back of your submission:
 - a. Initial Interview sheet
 - b. Verification of commitment
 - c. Original signed Photo Consent forms for all individuals photographed (if you took any pictures or videos)

NOTE: Any submission or presentation that includes images of any individual who has not signed a Photo Consent forms will result in a 0 for the presentation. This is a violation of personal privacy and is a very serious matter that contradicts the American Sociological Association's guidelines for informed consent.

Interview

Your name _____

Organization: _____

Local address: _____

Date and time of interview: _____

Name of person interviewed: _____

Position: _____

Contact information: _____

What is the organization's mission? _____

(Ask for a copy of the Mission Statement)

What, specifically, does the organization do? (i.e., provide meals, contraception education, etc.)

Is this a chapter of a national organization, or local? _____

How many people are regularly involved in delivering the service(s)? Show volunteers and paid staff separately. _____

How many units (people, families, schools, etc.) are served? Specify units and frequency (per week, per month, etc.) _____

What can you do for the organization (for this assignment)? _____

When (date and time) and where (address) will you participate? _____

Include some written verification of your commitment. This may be a letter on the organization's letterhead, a note on a business card, or some other.

Signature of Interviewee _____

CONSENT TO PHOTOGRAPH, FILM, OR VIDEOTAPE FOR NON-PROFIT USE

I, _____, hereby consent to my participation in interviews, the use of quotes, and the taking of photographs, movies or video tapes by students of Tri-County Technical College Social Problems (SOC 205) course.

I also hereby grant to the right to edit, use, and reuse said products for non-profit purposes including, but not limited to, educational/public service, and health awareness.

I also hereby grant the right to use said products in print, on the internet, and all other forms of media.

I also hereby release Tri-County Technical College and its agents and employees from all claims, demands, and liabilities whatsoever in connection with the above.

Signature: _____ Date _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

If Subject is under 18:

Parent/Guardian printed name: _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____