The Mindich Program for Engaged Scholarship

Engaged Scholarship Course Guidelines

Course Characteristics

The community engagement component of an ES course is integrated into the course irrespective of the course structure or approach to community engagement. It is important to emphasize that the community engagement component of an ES course is integrated with the intellectual content of a course; the service or community engagement component is not additive and is not an activity.

Community engagement is tied to the scope of the course and its content, is reflected in the course purpose/mission, and is therefore be evident in areas such as course structure, learning goals, instructional methodologies, reading, assignments, lectures and discussions.

Students' academic accountability and accountability to the community are essential components of ES courses. Students demonstrate engagement with course content, understanding of course concepts, proficiency with appropriate methods, and a grasp of relevant skills, while thinking critically about what / how they are learning in the course. In an ES course, students demonstrate engagement with a community, understanding of the community context, proficiency with appropriate strategies for engaging with community members, and grasp relevant skills for carrying-out their work in/with community, while thinking critically about what they are learning in the community and how it connects to what they are learning in the classroom. These goals are reflected in course design, instructional methodologies, assessment methods and assignments. Connecting the classroom and community learning experiences are evident in how, when and where students interact with faculty and teaching fellows outside of the academic context and/or how teaching staff communicate with community collaborators throughout the course. This provides the structures students need to bring their academic learning into the community, and learning in and with the community into the classroom.

There are seven essential components of ES courses:

- Readings that reflect diverse voices, perspectives, ways of knowing and making meaning

- Assignments that challenge students to integrate academic learning with their experience and learning in/with the community context
    - Example: Critical reflection (can be written, oral, online, etc.)
- Engagement in/with a community throughout the semester (not a stand-alone assignment)
- Substantive engagement with/in a community over the semester
- Academic work (e.g.: a presentation, final paper, other product or deliverable) that is presented to, discussed or otherwise shared with community members or partners
- Interaction between community members or partners, and teaching staff regarding students' experience in/with the community.
    - Examples: Site visits by the teaching staff; class visits to partner or service sites; individual tutorials, one-on-one or three-way meetings/discussions on site; student led tours of their community organization/program or neighborhood; check-ins between teaching fellows and community partners/mentors

Experiential public service/community engagement

The service/community engagement component of an ES course may take a variety of different forms as long as they are beneficial and rewarding for students, community members/partners, and faculty. The MPES invites applications across the spectrum of community engaged curricular strategies.

There are numerous ways to integrate the experiential community engagement component into academic courses, and elements of different approaches may be combined within a single course. Examples of approaches include, but are not limited to:

- Links to existing service programs***:*** Students engaged in an existing service program, such as through the Phillips Brooks House Association (PBHA) and Public Service Network (PSN) may continue their ongoing service work or sign-up to volunteer for a program as part of the course.
    - Example: SOC-STD 68 EC: Education and Community in America: Universities and Community Engagement, 1890-2016 and (2) SOC-STD 68CT: The Chinese Immigrant Experience in America

- Collaboration with an organization/s or program/s not connected to Harvard***:*** A new collaboration/s is developed for the course. All students in the course can engage with the same program or organization for the duration of the course.
    - Example: MUSIC 176r: Music and Disability

- Outreach: Students engage in activities such as education and diversity efforts that link course content to social issues and the achievement of socially relevant outcomes. For example, students could engage in efforts to improve STEM education through professional development that improves the ability of teachers in the P-12 grades to teach science, or activities that can increase scientific literacy among the public or provide opportunities for public engagement with the sciences and technology.

- Pipeline Program***:*** Common in the STEM fields, students engage in activities or develop a short, time-bound program to motivate young people and encourage future study in a specific discipline, and/or interest in pursuing a career in a particular field. Example: Outreach, tutoring, enrichment, and exposure efforts could focus on increasing enthusiasm among youth, particularly youth from underrepresented minority groups, to pursue studies in diverse fields.

- Internship placement***:*** The teaching staff places students in community organizations for the semester where they work a specified number of hours a week (eg: 2-4) or over the semester (~24). Students could work individually or in small groups at each site.
  - Example: SPANISH 59: Spanish in the Community

- Volunteering***:*** Students volunteer for an organization/program throughout the semester and are required to work a specified number of hours a week (eg: 2-4) or over the semester (~24). Students may or may not select the organization to volunteer for.
  - Example: GOV 1359: The Road to the White House (Engaged Scholarship section)

- Defined experience or structured encounter***:*** Students engage in a regular, structured encounter that can be tied to an experience or process that lasts for the duration of the course. For example, students work together with community partners on an effort to revitalize a neighborhood through arts installations; students meet with community partners to play or create music collaboratively (as opposed to playing for community members, teaching musical performance, music theory or composition)
  - Example: MUSIC 176r: Music and Disability

- Defined Project***:*** The faculty member identifies a project for/with an organization, and students work as a single team or in small teams to conduct a small scale project over the course of a semester. Projects could entail, but are not limited to, evaluation, curriculum development, the design of multimedia materials and tools, workforce development training, curriculum design, or the development of a communications plan, internal data collection, program monitoring tools and systems.

- Community-Collaborative Research Projects***:*** A faculty-student-community team carry out an applied research project that is responsive to community interests, needs or priority action areas. Community-collaborative research projects link inquiry and action, and are often focused on local advocacy, increasing organizations' understanding of their communities of service, and improving an organization's ability to serve them. Faculty, students and community partners can work together on all aspects of the study. Faculty should work with community partners to conceptualize a project in advance of the start of the semester and secure IRB approval, if necessary. Projects and methods could include, but are not limited to, community health assessment, small-scale data collection employing survey research methods, community readiness assessments, stakeholder assessment, environmental health assessment, exploratory or descriptive qualitative research, Photovoice, photo novella, community mapping, charrettes, social network mapping and analysis, spatial data collection and analysis.

- Co-facilitation***:*** A community partner co-facilitates a course, providing students with the opportunity to learn from the expertise of both faculty and community, and engage with course concepts that are informed by community perspectives and context.

- Co-learning***:*** Community members and stakeholders could be regular participants in a course alongside enrolled Harvard students throughout the course of the semester. This provides students with the opportunity to learn with and engage with community members while developing student-learner relationships with classmates outside of Harvard.

Course type and structure

ES courses may employ a seminar, lecture or other format of the faculty member's choosing. Seminar courses and discussion sections have a recommended cap of 12-16 students to reflect the hands-on and more intimate nature of ES courses.

Course may be structured in a variety of ways. Some suggestions include:

- Class with the professor 1x/week + meetings or class off campus 1x/week, either with the professor and/or the Teaching Fellow
- Class with the professor 1x/week + student meetings related to course work/semester project 1x week, possibly attended by the Teaching Fellow and/or a community partner
- Class with the professor 1-2x/week + work off-campus outside of scheduled class time
- Class with the professor 1x/week + class facilitated by a community member/partner 1x/week, either on or off campus
- Class with the professor 1x/week + individual weekly or bi-weekly discussion sections or meetings with the Teaching Fellow
- Class with the professor 1x/week + structured weekly or bi-weekly sessions with the Teaching Fellow, either with the whole class/section or a small group

Learning Goals

ES courses have specific learning goals: What are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that the course fosters? How will the course influence students' thinking, skills, values, awareness, etc. Learning goals should use measurable action words of the faculty member's choosing. Examples include:

Explain	Demonstrate	Analyze	Formulate	Discuss
Compare	Differentiate	Describe	Name	Assess
Evaluate	Identify	Design	Define	List

Learning goals are based on a single objective (no compound objectives, i.e.: list and discuss). Course assignments reflect how students will demonstrate achievement of learning goals

Examples of possible learning goals (based on an urban community health course)

- Discuss the implications of federal population health improvement targets (ie: Healthy People 2020) on health disparities and efforts to advance health equity
- Evaluate the strengths and challenges of behavior modification as a tool for improving the public health in under-resourced and medically underserved communities
- Explain the philosophical differences between behavioral and health equity approaches to public health improvement
- Describe the differences between asset and deficit based models of public health improvement
- Analyze an urgent question in urban health using an appropriate theoretical framework
- Present a contextualized argument articulating a stance on a pressing public health topic that reflects the extant literature

Assignments

Assignments should integrate course content and the service/community engagement component of a course. Faculty are encouraged to incorporate creative assignments that allow students to demonstrate understanding of course topics and their real-world relevance. Examples include journals/diaries, portfolios, oral presentations, posters, photography, photo essay, pod-casts, blogs, student-led discussions or activities, videos/film and media presentations.

Reflection: Reflection can help students make sense of their experiences in the community context. Reflection challenges students to think critically, not simply to narrate or describe, and it may be written, oral, or presented with video or other media. Written reflection may be unstructured/open-ended or structured/directed, and prompted with a question/s or quotes from a text. Personal reflection is valuable learning tool as it allows students the opportunity be introspective. Structured intellectual reflection that challenges students to connect what they are learning in the classroom with what they are learning in the community, is strongly encouraged. The Mindich program supports the letter grading of structured or intellectual reflection.

There are four characteristics to reflection in academic courses:

The "Four Cs" of Reflection:

- ***Continuous:*** part of the course throughout and not just take place at the end
- ***Connected:*** encouraging students to link their service/community experience with the academic content of a course
- ***Challenging:*** fostering students ability to dialogue and discuss community issues
- ***Contextualized:*** to ensure topics are meaningful and appropriate in relation to what students experience in the community.

(Source: Eyler, J., Giles, D. E. Jr., & Schmiede,A.(1996). *A practitioner's guide to reflection in service-learning: Student voices & reflection*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University)

Community and Reciprocity

The concept of community is broad and inclusive. For the purposes of the Mindich Program, community may defined by location/neighborhood, demographics, faith/religion, immigrant status, culture, heritage, occupation, participation/enrollment in a program, organizational involvement, or any other characteristic/s by which it distinguishes itself as a distinct community group.

ES courses may be ground in established or new partnerships or collaborations. They may build on existing service programs at Harvard, or serve as the springboard for new relationships with communities and partners not connected to Harvard.

Reciprocal Relationships: ES courses should have a clear community benefit. Incorporating service into the academic lives of students so they can "have an impact" or "make a difference" in the world is valuable, important, and a cornerstone of the Mindich Program. However, benefit to community is a key principle of the Mindich Program for Engaged Scholarship and should be evident in ES courses- if students and faculty are "making a difference" in communities, it is vital to articulate what, exactly, that difference entails. What constitutes the positive impact? What is the underlying improvement or benefit to community? Examples of how community partners and members may benefit from an ES course include:

- Improved extracurricular resources and opportunities through academic enrichment (eg: afterschool programming)
- Increasing the academic and career aspirations of youth through exposure to Harvard resources and engagement with subject matter not afforded by the P-12 experience
- Enhanced cultural resources through instrumental music and performance arts instruction and performance
- The beautification of neighborhoods through public arts installations (e.g.: murals)
- Environmental improvements (e.g.: park clean-up, tending gardens)
- Technical assistance to improve organizational operations
- Improved organizational capacity by developing the skills of staff (e.g.: research methods and analysis)
- Improvements to organizational infrastructure (e.g.: program monitoring tools and systems)
- Addressing community data needs with original research and local data collection
- Increasing organizational capacity and the human and social capital of community partners and stakeholders by bringing Harvard resources (students, faculty, material) into communities to respond community-identified interests and needs
- Opportunities for personal and professional growth and development among community collaborators through collaboration on research
- Increased skills and resume enhancement for community collaborators through engagement with rigorous projects

IRB Oversight (if applicable) and Ethical Issues in ES Courses

ES Courses that entail the collection or analysis of data on/from human subjects may be subject to IRB review and approval prior to beginning the course or project. Information on the Harvard Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research (CUHS) and all IRB requirements are available at: http://cuhs.harvard.edu/

In particular, ES courses that are project based or consist of community collaborative research may be subject to IRB oversight. The Office of the MPES will work with faculty at all stages of the course development process to identify course components and projects that may require IRB review, to support faculty interface with the IRB, and provide guidance for faculty preparation of any materials for the IRB.

There are various ethical issues inherent to entering community settings which may arise as students and faculty interact with community members and partners, and enter community/non-Harvard spaces. For example: students conducting interviews with community members, implementing community-level interventions, health promotion activities "targeting" so-called "at-risk" populations, and any activities that are "problem based" raise questions about power, insider/outsider status, and socio-cultural boundaries. Ethical issues are often, but not always, obvious, and sometimes go unnoticed in spite of our best efforts to identify and address them. The Office of the MPES will work with faculty at all stages of the course development process to identify potential ethical issues and address them as needed prior to course implementation.

Harvard Policy on the Protection of Minors (if applicable)

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The Harvard Policy for the Safety and Protection of Minors may apply for ES courses that entail contact between Harvard students and minor children under the age of 18. Faculty should review the Harvard policy to ensure compliance. The Policy on the Safety and Protection of Minors is available through the Harvard Youth Protection Office at: http://youthprotection.harvard.edu/policy

All Harvard affiliates interacting with minors as part of their work or scholarship for or at Harvard must follow the guidelines for interacting with minors. The policy also sets out expectations regarding the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect.

In general, additional requirements, including training and background clearance (e.g: criminal and sex offender screens) are based on the amount of risk involved. Factors that may require background screens and training include, but are not limited to:

- One-on-one interactions between a lone adult (Harvard students count as adults, even if under 18 themselves) and a minor child or group of children behind closed doors
    - Does not include one-on-one interactions in public spaces, such as a library
- Physical contact
    - Such as in sports
- Overnight experiences

Organizations and programs working with faculty on courses that entail contact between Harvard students and minor children under the age of 18, and which do not have an existing connection to Harvard, should be registered through the Harvard Youth Protection Office. Registration may be completed online at: http://youthprotection.harvard.edu/register-a-program. Faculty are responsible for ensuring compliance with Harvard University rules and regulations regarding the protection of minors.