

## SW 248 Literacy for the New Millennium: A Service Learning Externship

Naperville Campus

Donna Jones Ilsley  
School for New Learning  
DePaul University  
150 West Warrenville Road  
Naperville, IL 60563-8473

**Text:** ***How Can I Help?***  
Ram Dass & Paul Gorman  
Alfred S. Knopf  
New York 1987

**Suggested Reading:** ***Savage Inequalities***  
Jonathan Kozol  
New York: Harper Perennial, 1992

(630) 548-9378 Naperville Campus Number  
(630) 548-1963 Naperville Fax Number

Work number: (815) 394-5081; Cell Phone (815) 739-3686  
djones-ilsley@rockford.edu

Donna has been a member of the Visiting Faculty for the School for New Learning since 1998. Her Certificate of Advanced Study is from Syracuse University in Education. She has a Master's degree in International Studies from the School of International Service at the American University in Washington, D.C. Her doctoral research is in the field of adult education and women's studies. Donna is the Associate Director of the Jane Addams Center for Civic Engagement at Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois.

### **Competencies**

L-10, 11

### **Course Description**

This course offers students the opportunity to integrate community service with academic learning. The service learning component involves students in community service projects that address the needs of people dealing with the issue of literacy. Students will keep journals that allow them to reflect on the social, moral, and ethical issues of their service learning experiences. Students will also be required to donate 20 hours of service working with people who are actively dealing with the issue of literacy as a personal journey within our society

The new millennium provides us with an excellent reason to reflect on our culture. This course examines what it means to be literate in a human way. Students will be asked to critically reflect on how a modern technological society, as exemplified by the United States, determines what it means to be educated. The following questions are examples of discussion questions:

What does it mean to be literate in our culture?

Sample Definition: A person who is literate is able to negotiate his/her world and understand the conditions of other worlds.

Can literacy be divided into categories? Cultural, spiritual, functional...

What does it mean to be an educated person in our culture?

Do test scores define the person?

Is there one curriculum that is appropriate for everyone?

Is there one subject that everyone should take? (E.g., ethics)

Should everyone be able to speak English?

People will reach their own definition of what it means to be literate and compare it to the definition (s) provided by our culture. This exploration will involve working one on one with an individual in the midst of a literacy learning experience or working with (a) small group(s) of learners in a basic adult education organization. The research,

externship, and service learning projects can encompass a variety of formats from life histories, to artistic exploration depending on the students' focus. If the student chooses Externship and/or Service Learning, there is a minimum requirement of 20 hours outside of class working with a social service organization for which literacy is a component.

### **Learning Experience**

Students will be asked to read the assigned readings for each class, participate in class and blackboard discussions, contribute to the class through a presentation, submit a written assignment, keep a written journal, and dedicate 20 hours of service as part of the externship experience with people who are dealing with literacy.

### **Competency Statements**

#### **L-10 Externship: Can reflect on the learning process and methods used in an experiential project.**

You will be able to develop experiential learning strategies and examine your understanding of the origins and meanings of social and economic inequality in American society. You will fulfill this competence by successfully completing 20 hours of service at a community based organization. Through participation in classroom discussion, personal reflection, and journaling about your service experience, you will, be able to develop experiential learning strategies and examine your understanding of the meanings of literacy in our culture.

#### **L-11 Can critically reflect on one's own assumptions and analyze the structural causes of social and economic inequality.**

You will demonstrate this competence by examining your own beliefs and assumptions about literacy, poverty and inequality throughout the quarter. We will explore our concerns about service work, our personal reactions to our service experiences, and draw connections between issues raised by course readings/discussion and our service learning projects. In doing so, we will examine the structural causes of literacy.

### **Directions for Written Assignments**

All written assignments should follow the accepted practices of Standard English grammar and usage. The paper and the journal should be typed and double-spaced. The paper should have a formal bibliography with at least five references. I will uphold the university guidelines concerning academic integrity. These may be found in the Student Handbook or on the DePaul Web site.

### **Criteria for Assessment**

***Classroom and Blackboard participation*** will involve reflective conversations with other members of the class to work out the questions with the readings and the meaning of our individual experiences. How well did your questions and comments advance your own learning and support the learning of others in the class? Engaged participation is very important. The assessment will strive to embody the four qualities of clarity, integrity, flexibility, and empathy. (10% of your grade)

***The paper and the 20 hours of service:*** The paper is to be 7-10 pages in length. It will be a combination of reflection and research, in which you critically examine your definition of literacy in light of your personal experiences. You can juxtapose the definitions against the myriad of social issues that emerge from the service learning. Use your journals to help complete this paper by illustrating the learning process you were experiencing as you performed the service, participated in class discussions, and reflected on the reading. How well does your written work show that you understand the issues of the class and the competence? To what extent are you able to integrate the class discussions, reading materials, and your service experience into your written work? How clearly, concisely and completely are you able to express your ideas in writing? If you choose express your experience through the arts or music, this assignment could become a performance project (plays, poetry, dancing, music) or a display of photos or video in front of the class. As a performance, it would also satisfy the presentation requirement. However, even if you choose a multi media presentation, it will need to be accompanied by a short paper acknowledging your thoughtful choices. The paper and/or the performance needs to be accompanied by a bibliography with at least 5 scholarly resources listed. The paper is due at the last class session. (50% of your grade)

***The presentation*** can be made alone or in collaboration with others. It can reflect the thoughts revealed in your research paper and/or be a reflection of your service experience. It can be a presentation of your paper. It can be a story of your learning journey through the Externship. How well have you incorporated insights from research,

readings, and service into your own learning process? How clearly, concisely and completely are you able to express your ideas in your presentation? Presentations should last approximately ten to fifteen minutes. The presentations are due the last session of class. (20 % of your grade)

***The journal*** is for your personal reflection where you can chronicle your experience and the evolution of your perspectives. It will be turned in at the last session. There will be journal assignments to help the writing process. You may also create your own journal without the reflective prompts that I provide. Each journal entry should be approximately one to two, preferably typed, pages in length. There will be a total of **2** journal entries handed in. If you follow the guidelines you can pick which questions you want to explore. In addition you will participate in the Blackboard discussions when we are not meeting formally in a classroom. The Blackboard Discussion topics will be handed out during the first class and also be posted on Blackboard (20 % of your grade)

**Grading:** At the end of the quarter you will be given a Pass/Fail grade. If you need to take an Incomplete for the class, you must follow the new DePaul SNL policy.