Fall 2011 Reflection Sessions

Reflection is an integral part of service learning and student attendance for at least one session is HIGHLY encouraged. Many professors have made attendance mandatory for their classes. Students are welcome to attend as many sessions as they would like. Mark your calendars now and be sure to save the date for the topic(s) that relate to your course. These reflections are specifically geared towards service learning experiences. We hope to see you there!

**Journey: A Pre-Service Reflection**
Wednesday, September 14, 6:30-8pm, AMU 227

Service Learning is like no academic assignment that you have had before. Through service we are asked to confront our own values and vulnerabilities, the inequality of our society, and harshness of marginalization. We will be asked to learn from the city and apply our new knowledge to coursework. Instead of only reading about theories and concepts in class, we will be asked to test, feel, and observe those concepts in real life. This new experience is bound to take you out of your comfort zone. Veteran service learning students will share some of their own reflections of how they made sense of their experience. Participants in this session will explore their own emotions, reservations, prejudices, hopes, and goals for this semester of service.

**Connect: Creating Common Ground**
Tuesday, October 11, 12:30-2pm, AMU 227

Sometimes, despite our good intentions, sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, ableism, and ethnocentrism can blur our ability to develop relationships with our community. How do we overcome these cultural frictions and work in solidarity with our neighbors? How do we go beyond seeing those we serve as “others” and realize our shared humanity? This session will explore “the elephant in the room” that makes it difficult to engage, whether it’s our unconscience stereotypes of those we’re serving or the stereotypes they might have against us. Participants will reflect on what it means to be a part of this urban community and how Milwaukee’s history impacts our service today. Conversation will explore the positive and negative impact we can have in our semester of service.

**Enhance: Diving Deeper**
Tuesday, October 25, 5:30-7pm, AMU 227

Have you ever been given an assignment where you were told to reflect on your service learning experiences, but found it difficult to expand past thinking, “It made me feel good about myself,” or “It made me appreciate what I have”? We are often asked to move past surface-level responses in reflection, but what does it mean to dig “deeper”? How do I do it? What difficult questions do I need to ask? This session will explore ways to expand personal reflection and connect our experiences and ideas discovered in service to those of a “bigger picture”. Using the Ignatian examen, participants will learn to better embrace and fully understand the greater significance of their experiences, and how it connects to our Jesuit mission.
Relate: Interfaith Experiences of Service
Friday, November 4, 11:00am-12:30pm, AMU 163

Serving our fellow human is a core value of all faith traditions. How do you see your faith come alive during service learning? How are your spiritual beliefs expressed or conveyed through actions? How do you manage to see the face of God in the atrocities that you encounter at your service site (homelessness, domestic violence, etc)? How can we utilize the tenets of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam to best serve and learn from others? This reflection focuses on how spirituality is both challenged and enhanced in the quest for social justice. Individuals of all faiths create a just and humane world by sharing time and resources, reflecting on their role within a broader humanity, and exploring systematic change through education and advocacy. Participants will discuss how their faith plays a role in their service learning through both their thoughts and actions. They will talk about the successes and difficulties they have seen at their service sites with people of different spiritual backgrounds working towards the same cause. We will explore how interfaith groups are using service as a tool to become leaders for social change. People of diverse faiths, beliefs, and spiritual backgrounds are encouraged to attend and share their experiences.

Expose: Unveiling a Polarized Nation
Monday, November 14, 4:30-6pm, AMU 227

In today’s world, it is evident that many Americans are polarized on opposite ends of the political spectrum, and have differing opinions regarding a variety of social issues. Understanding the roots of our values and beliefs towards social justice is an essential part of our experiences. In this reflection session, we will explore where political biases originate (backgrounds, education, faith, parental influence), and how this can reinforce stereotypes in regards to immigration, education, the environment, health care, and other issues. We will discuss how our polarized nation does not only describe our politics but can even characterize our views towards service, and how to most efficiently compromise. Participants will explore these ideas in relation to their service learning sites: Have you seen these stereotypes appear at your service site, either on a personal level or amongst those you are working with? Have political views interfered with people at your site successfully working towards the same goal? How do we consciously overcome these stereotypes at our service and fight against this polarization?

Discern: The Paths Before Us
Thursday, December 1, 6-7:30pm AMU 163
-OR-
Monday, December 5, 6:30-8pm, AMU 227

Please note that you should only attend one of these two sessions, you will not receive double credit for attending both

Vocation is our call to live life with intention, integrity and generosity in the context of the world around us. This reflection session is meant to encourage Service Learners to take a real look inside the socially-aware individuals they are becoming through their service. In the session, students will reflect on their semester of service and the larger impact it will have on their lives. With the semester ending, we will ask the questions: Now what? How do I take my experiences from service learning and incorporate them into who I am and who do I want to be? How can my unique skills, gifts, talents and passions address community needs? Previous service learners will share their story of how service learning has affected their vocation, whether their job is centered around being socially-aware and socially-active or whether they simply incorporate service into their lifestyle outside of work.