Service Learning Program
Spring 2013 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. Refreshments will be served at each of the reflection sessions. We hope to see you there!

Embarking on a Journey: A Start of Service Reflection
February 13, 4:30pm-6:00pm, 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. Participants in this session will explore their own emotions, reservations, prejudices, initial impressions, hopes, and goals for this semester of service.

Writing Our Life Story: The Personal Impact of Service Learning
February 21, 3:00pm-4:30pm, AMU 227

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. This session will enable them to discover the gifts they possess, so that they can find the way of life that matters – a life that’s true to who they are, but about more than themselves. In the session, students will reflect on their service thus far and important questions such as: Who am I? Who do I want to be? How can my unique skills, gifts, talents and passions address community need? How should I choose a major? What is my story?

Recognizing the Bigger Picture: The Danger of a Single Story
March 24, 2:00pm-3:30pm, AMU 163

Sometimes, despite our good intentions, sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, ableism, and ethnocentrism can blur our ability to develop relationships with our community and prevent us from seeing the bigger picture. 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 unconscious stereotypes of those we’re serving or the stereotypes they might have against us. Participants will reflect on what it means to allow stereotypes to tell a single story about an individual or population of people. Conversation will explore what we have learned, both academically and personally during the past semester. How have our service learning experiences helped or hurt our understanding of stereotypes? Can we see more than just the single story surrounding the population we worked with?
Could there be an End: Exploring Macro-Level Social Justice Issues
April 12, 12:30pm-2:00pm, AMU 227
Discussion will focus around social justice issues on a macro level. What have you learned about poverty, homelessness, etc. in your service learning experiences? What do these problems mean to you both as a student and within the context of your vocational path? Do you see a role or responsibility for yourself and other students in taking action? Is there a foreseeable end to these social justice issues, and how might it be attained?

Living Our Faith(s): Service Learning in a Spiritual Context
April 15, 4:30pm-6:00pm, AMU 227
Serving our fellow humans is a core value of all faith and spiritual traditions. How do you see your beliefs come alive during service learning? Do you see the face of God in those you serve? How do your beliefs shape who you are and your relationships with others? Discussion during this reflection will focus on how spirituality is both challenged and enhanced in the quest for social justice, a process by which individuals of all faiths create a just and humane world by sharing time and resources, reflecting on their role within the broader context of all humanity, and exploring systematic change through education and advocacy. People of diverse faiths, beliefs, and spiritual backgrounds are encouraged to attend and share their perspectives.

Making a Difference: The Change from Charity to Justice
April 24, 6:30pm-8:00pm, AMU 227
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April 30, 5:00pm-6:30pm, AMU 227
While it is important to meet our community members’ immediate needs by providing them with necessities like food or shelter, it is also important to take a step back and ask why those people are in need of our assistance. What about society keeps these people in their present situation? What are some of the root causes of the issues they are facing? How can I, as a student, make a real and lasting impact? This reflection session will discuss and answer some of these questions. We define both “charity” and “justice” and then work to understand the balance of the two. We will analyze the root causes of a number of social justice concerns and discuss how we can move beyond providing charity and begin working for justice.