University of St. Thomas
HNRS 3391
Community Service Project
Fall 2016
Syllabus

♦ Mission Statement

We are the University of St. Thomas, the Catholic university in the heart of Houston. We are committed to the Catholic intellectual tradition and the dialogue between faith and reason. By pursuing excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service, we embody and instill in our students the core values of our founders, the Basilian Fathers: goodness, discipline, and knowledge.

We foster engagement in a diverse, collaborative community. As a comprehensive university grounded in the liberal arts, we educate students to think critically, communicate effectively, succeed professionally, and lead ethically.

♦ Course Details

• Instructor: Rev. Dempsey Rosales-Acosta S.S.L., S.T.D.

• Email: drosale@stthom.edu

• Office Hours: Thursday 9:30 am - 11:00 am, 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm., and by appointment (use the email).

• Office: Hughes House #201

• Weight/Times: 3 credits (3-0-0): Thursday 5:30 pm – 8:15 pm

• Classroom: Sullivan 102.

♦ Requirements

• Seventy five (75) hours of Service Work on a Project Approved by the Honors Program Committee.

• Reflective Journal of Service Work Experience

• Classroom participation.

• Synthetic paper

• Class Presentation on assigned reading

♦ Grading
• Service Project: journal and evaluation = 50%
• Synthetic paper = 20%
• Student led-discussion = 15%
• Class participation = 15%

♦ Social Service Project Guidelines

• Goals
a) To learn reflective practical action.

b) To learn how work is to be sanctified through dedication to excellence and the spirit of service.

c) To learn the connection between self-development and service to others.

d) To manifest the university’s commitment to the Houston metropolitan area and to strive to foster the common good of the local, state, and national communities.

e) To exist with, to understand, and to defend the weaker and marginalized members of our society.

• Objectives:

    Each student must be able to plan and complete a period of service to people in need, coinciding with a semester of study and reflection on contemporary problems of social justice. This will include:

1. A service project where the student will either:

   a) Participate for a semester in some ongoing project of a social service organization

   b) Or, create a project to be sponsored by a social service agency or other appropriate institution, organization, or group. This could be organized around some skill or training that the student has to offer an agency.

    Important notions to take into consideration:

    • The service project is not an internship undertaken for the purpose of professional development, but an exercise in bringing a liberal arts education to fruition through active engagement with human and societal problems.

    • Service placements are chose by the students or assigned by the Honors program Committee. In the semester prior to taking this course, the student should have investigated service opportunities and presented a project to the Honors Program for approval. Please see Dr. Hall for this procedure.

2. A reading list including works on the meaning of service, social justice, and work from 20th century novelists, philosophers, social critics will be assigned. See the list as follows:
• Joseph Langford, Mother Teresa’s secret fire (our Sunday visitor).
• Dorothy Day, selected writings. Edited by Robert Ellsberg. Orbis press

3. A 20 to 30 pages journal to record the experiences of the project, to reflect on the meaning, and to interpret them in light of the student’s in liberal arts education, with particular reference to the reading list. Your journals should contain the following complements for elements to them:

• Observations of your place of service, a description of the people, their life circumstances, etc.
• Reflections on the reasons for social service.
• Integration of the philosophical and theological foundations for social and political action.
• Drawing connections between the books used in class, what is going on in the world, and all the things that are going on in your lives.
• Why participation social service activities the same as being a part of the good life in Catholic thought.

4. Student led class sessions with the books assigned for the course of the problems and issues that they raise are discussed. Each student would be a discussion leader and will prepare a two to three page handout for the class with a list of some key themes and passages for discussion. The student leader will present a summary of key ideas and then facilitate discussion.

5. The each student will prepare 10 to 12 page paper in which he/she synthesizes major ideas of the readings pertaining to service to the marginalized and suffering in the modern world. The paper should identify and elaborate on 4 to 6 ideas about the service you have learned, integrating the course readings.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2016

September 1
Theme: Introduction

September 8
Theme: Mother Teresa
Book: Secret Fire, part one.
Student:

September 15
Theme: Mother Teresa
September 22
Theme: Mother Teresa
Book: Secret Fire, part two.
Student:

September 29
Theme: Mother Teresa
Book: Secret Fire, part three.
Student:

October 6
Theme: John Paul II
Student:

October 13
Theme: John Paul II
Book: Video
Student:
Other: Hand in Journal for midterm review

October 20
Theme: John Paul II
Student:

October 27
Theme: Dorothy Day
Book: Video and introduction of the book of selected writings
Student:

November 3
Theme: Dorothy Day
Book: Selected Writings: pages 205-232
Student:

November 10
Theme: Dorothy Day
Book: Selected Writings: pages 187-203.
Student:
November 17
   Theme: Jan Vanier
   Book: Jan Vanier: Essential Writings: pages 59-120.
   Student:

December 1
   Theme: Jan Vanier
   Student:
   Final Paper submission
   Journal submission