



HEALTH & COMMUNITY: SERVICE-LEARNING ROTATION

MEDS 3050

Course Directors:

David S. Askew, Ph.D., Dept. of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine

Fran Larkin, Center for Community Engagement

David.askew@uc.edu

larkinfp@ucmail.uc.edu

There is one required in-class orientation for this class on the first Monday of the semester, 4-5 pm, E-255.

There are no other regularly scheduled in-class meetings, unless requested.

Course description

MEDS 3050 is a one-semester community service experience for students pursuing health-related careers. The syllabus follows a service-learning approach, in which volunteer work at a community agency is paired with an independent project that is entwined with faculty-directed programmatic activities. These activities include weekly online reflections, workshops on database searching, writing literature reviews, and outcome presentations. Students should contact the course directors prior to the start of the semester in order to identify a community partner. This can be an agency of your own choosing, or one that we help you to find based upon your interests. To begin the placement process, please complete the following form: [Community Service Placement Form Link](#).

Your work at the agency will be two-fold: (1) Routine weekly volunteer service responsibilities that benefit the community partner and (2) an independent community service project that you develop in consultation with your agency supervisor (details are provided at the end of the syllabus). At the end of the semester, the student will submit a written progress report and presentation outlining work accomplished in areas (1) and (2). This experience will develop organizational and critical thinking skills, prepare students to interact with racially and culturally diverse societies, increase awareness of health problems that are influenced by social, economic or cultural factors, improve team working skills, and cultivate a life-long commitment to civic and ethical responsibility.

Covid precautions: All students enrolled in community service coursework will develop a [remote service contingency plan](#) in cooperation with their agency supervisor. If there is another shutdown, the student would implement their remote contingency plan in order to continue to provide service to the agency.

Course objectives

- List the social, economic or cultural factors that impact public health

- Describe the need of a community agency from a national and local perspective
- Develop a proposal to address an unmet need
- Write a literature review that critically evaluates the issues confronting a volunteer agency.
- Effectively communicate project outcomes in oral and/or poster presentation format.
- Describe how a project has enhanced personal knowledge of civic and ethical responsibility, as well as sensitivity to cultural diversity and social justice in the community.
- Describe how a project has fostered a critical self-reflection of personal identity and sense of vocation.

Prerequisites: You must be placed with an agency in order to obtain permission to register.

Time commitment: The expectation is 4 hours per week for each credit hour enrolled. This includes travel time, time spent at home or the library working on your project. Students should follow the operating calendar of the agency that they serve. If a community partner is performing normal operations on a day that conflicts with a student’s personal schedule (or UC’s schedule), the student is expected to serve on that day (or to negotiate with the agency to make up the time in a mutually agreeable way).

Academic integrity: University rules about code of conduct will be enforced.

Office hours: To maximize your time at the agency there are no regularly scheduled class times, other than the first orientation. If you wish to get advice about your project, send me an email and we will set up a time to chat. As a general rule, my office hours for this course are every Monday at 4 pm, either in my office (MSB1256A) or via Zoom.

Special accommodations: If a student requires a special accommodation to participate at an agency they should register with U.C. Accessibility Services prior to the start of the semester.

Pass/fail option, audit policy, and withdrawal policy: There are no pass/fail or audit options for this class. Withdrawal procedures follow U.C. guidelines.

Grading

Table-1: Graded assignments

Weekly assignments	20%
Final written report/presentation*	20%
Community partner evaluation of student performance	60%

*Since the final report/presentation is based on work performed at the agency, the grade for these two items may be reduced if we receive negative feedback from the community partner that impacts what is presented in these assignments.

A	94-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59
A-	90-93	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66		
		B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63		

General information about what to expect during the course

Students will work with their agency supervisor to develop a plan of volunteer service. This will be paired with weekly course assignments (online) to challenge you to think about your agency in depth.

The exact nature of your volunteer work will be determined in consultation with your agency supervisor, keeping in mind that a backup plan for remote activities must also be developed in the event of a shutdown. Your agency work will involve two components:

- **Routine weekly service.** This includes any activity that you do on a routine basis: tutoring students, making phone calls, delivering food, mailing brochures, trash cleanup, etc.
- **Individual project.** This is developed in consultation with your supervisor, forming the basis for your final written report and presentation. Projects vary tremendously depending on the type of agency. For example, they may be promotional (generating brochures, social media, educational videos), educational (writing detailed literature reviews to assist the agency staff, generating a syllabus for training/education, or brochures), informational (writing questionnaires to determine awareness or knowledge of a subject), or quantitative (analyzing data to understand why something occurs), or financial (fund raising with defined goals). The common feature is that all projects share the goal of generating something that didn't exist before.

MEDS 3050 schedule

WEEK	ASSIGNMENT
1	Orientation (in-person, MSB E-255) Assignment 1
2	Assignment 2
3	Assignment 3
4	Assignment 4
5	Assignment 5
6	Assignment 6
7	Assignment 7 Midpoint supervisor meeting
8	Assignment 8
9	Assignment 9
10	Assignment 10
11	Assignment 11
12	Assignment 12
13	Assignment 13
14	Oral or poster presentations
15	

Guidelines for the preparation of written and oral/poster presentations

Your written reports will be in 2 sections. A suggested template is below.

Part I: Routine community service responsibilities

1. Name of your agency:
2. Mission of your agency:
3. Routine community service:
 - List the routine duties that you performed at the agency that were not part of your individual project. This can be a bulleted list, as long as there is sufficient explanation of what the activities entailed.

Part II. Individual project

Page numbers are for double-spaced and can be adjusted depending on what it takes to tell you story.

1. **Abstract** (250 words or less): A condensed summary of a project that allows a reader to get the idea of a project's goal and outcome without having to read the entire document.
2. **Background/significance** (3-5 pages): Review the background literature that is relevant to the mission of your agency and your specific project. For example, in the case of addiction services:
 - What defines addiction? What types of substance abuse does your agency deal with?
 - What is the problem of addiction from a 'big picture' perspective (ie nationally, or worldwide)?
 - What is the scope of the problem locally?
 - Why does this problem exist (i.e. what are the economic or societal factors that contribute to this situation? Are there health disparities that impact this problem?)
 - What solutions are needed? – this last section should lead the reader directly into the project aims. i.e. your aims should address a small part of what you have stated to be the need.
3. **Project aims** (1/2 page): List 1-3 aims that you pursued during the semester. List each aim as a short title, using strong verbs that can be linked to clear outcomes. For example: "create, design, assemble, select, determine, apply, demonstrate, calculate, explain, write etc". Avoid vague language like "know, appreciate, hope, understand, appreciate, etc". For example:
 - Aim 1: Develop a learning strategy to increase the ability of illiterate adults to read X
 - Aim 2: Implement a learning strategy to increase the ability of illiterate adults to read Y.Under each Aim title, write a short paragraph to clarify what the aim is about.
4. **Approach** (1-2 pages): What methods did you use to accomplish each aim? Did the project involve statistical analysis?
5. **Results** (2-3 pages)

Describe the final outcome. Indicate what objective criteria you used to conclude that the project was a success or not. If the project was not a success, explain why you think it did not work. If the project had to be changed along the way that is ok, just explain how and why it changed. Example: All 50 clients were tested by the National Center for Adult Literacy to determine their level at the start of the semester. At the conclusion of the training, each client was repeat-tested and 40/50 clients improved by one level.
6. **Obstacles encountered:** Describe any obstacles and how you addressed them.
7. **Limitations and future directions:** Describe any limitations and what needs to be done moving forward.
8. **Skills developed.** Describe hard or soft skills that you developed as part of this experience.
9. **References.** Aim for at least 25 references

Note regarding individual projects that involve literature reviews for the agency: Some of you may have a literature review for your project. The goal of this is to take advantage of UC library resources (not available to the agency) to provide information that will be of use to agency staff. This is distinct from the final written report.

Guidelines for the final oral presentation and/or poster presentation

Use the same sections described above for the final written report, condensing them into the format of a powerpoint or a poster.