**URBST 370: Service Learning Practicum**

**&**

**URBST 372: Fieldwork in Environmental Studies**

**(Service Learning Internship Seminar)**

**Spring 2018**

W: 6:30-8:20 p.m., Room: PH 253

Professor Melissa Checker (mchecker@qc.cuny.edu)

Office: 250M, Powdermaker Hall

Co-Professor Christina Kosmidis (Christina.Kosmidis@qc.cuny.edu)

Office: 250M, Powdermaker Hall

Office hours: Wed. 1:00-5:00 pm or by appointment

Graduate Assistant: Marty Kirchner

e-mail: marty.kirchner@gmail.com

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In this course, students simultaneously engage in a “Service Learning Internship” and attend a weekly seminar. This combination of academic learning and practice culminates the Environmental/Urban Studies major by helping students connect Environmental/Urban Studies concepts with work-life experiences and by preparing them for active civic participation and careers in Environmental/Urban affairs.

Service Learning Internships depart from traditional internships in the following ways:

* In a Service Learning Internship, you do "real" work that contributes meaningfully to the activities of your work site and make you part of their "team".
* A Service Learning Internship includes academic reading material that is directly relevant to, and which is enhances your experiences at your job placement.
* A Service Learning Internship is limited to one of our existing Community Partners. The advantage of this is that we have already established ongoing relationships with these organizations and ensured that students will be well mentored and academically engaged during their internship.
* Students’ job descriptions are designed to benefit students and organizations equally.
* Internships include a semester-long project which allows students to pursue a specific area of interest and provides a concrete, tangible outcome to our Community Partners. Projects also ensure that students are not faced with “downtime” or overly administrative responsibilities.
* The course instructor plays an active role in ensuring that Service Learning Internships are mutually beneficial. This role includes regular site visits and conversations with community partners as well as students.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**: In this course students:

* Learn how to integrate Environmental/Urban Studies theory and experience
* Learn how to apply knowledge gained in Environmental/Urban Studies courses in the work world
* Learn how to extract meaning from experience
* Learn to be an independent and active learner
* Learn about the provision of public services in New York City
* Learn how to work collaboratively with others
* Strengthen personal and professional skills
* Strengthen career-building skills (resumes, cover letters, job interviews, etc.)
* Strengthen critical thinking and problem-solving skills

**COURSE FORMAT:**

Students must complete at least 70 Service Learning Internship hours over the course of the semester (usually that means 7-10 hours/week, for 7-10 weeks) as well as attend class regularly.

Service Learning Internship Placement

Your placement experience is structured by the roles and responsibilities that the host organization agrees to, your own interests and learning objectives, and this course design. It is essential that the relationship between the student and the host be as reciprocal as possible.

All students must complete and sign a **Service Learning Agreement**, also signed by their supervisor, by the deadline specified below, in order to receive course credit.

Seminar Meetings

Our seminars will directly connect classroom learning to your experiences in the field. They will include analyses of assigned readings, Service Learning highlights, professional development and presentations by members of the class. We will also collectively discuss, reflect upon and problem-solve issues that arise in your job placements.

In our discussions, we will integrate scholarly and community “voices” which are not always included in academic or public debates. During our meetings, we will work hard to express our views and to listen to the views of others.

***Regular attendance in class and at your Internship is essential to your success in this class.***

**TECHNOLOGY:**

This course uses a website hosted by wordpress (<http://environmentalstudiesfieldwork.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/>) This site will house your syllabus, your reading assignments, announcements and the course blog. In other words, it takes the place of Blackboard.

To access the site, you must first register for qwriting here: <http://qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/>

Click on Register on the top left corner of the page and fill in your info. using your **QC EMAIL** account. Once you have registered, please send me an email and I will add you to the course website!

**E-DEVICES POLICY:**

You are NOT permitted to use your cell phones, laptops, BlackBerrys, tablets, e-readers or any other electronic equipment in class. If you wish to refer to your readings during class (you shouldn’t necessarily have to), then you can print them and bring them with you, or take notes on them and bring your notes to class. The logic behind this rule (really, it’s neither arbitrary nor insane), is that recent studies (see below) show that students do better in class when they are not distracted by their devices. For more information, I encourage you to read the following articles:

<http://web.stanford.edu/class/linguist156/laptops.pdf>;

<http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom>;

<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581.abstract>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/why-digital-natives-prefer-reading-in-print-yes-you-read-that-right/2015/02/22/8596ca86-b871-11e4-9423-f3d0a1ec335c_story.html>

I am willing to debate this rule if you can bring me peer-reviewed, published studies that contradict the findings I’ve linked here. Otherwise, there are no exceptions to my rule. Statements like, “But I can’t read my own handwriting”, “I forgot how to write by hand” or “if I don’t check my phone every five minutes, I break out in hives” are a waste of time.

**COURSE READINGS:**

Readings will be posted to the course website (in the folder marked “Course Materials” approximately one week in advance of the date they must be read. This is a “co-created” course. That means that as the semester progresses reading materials will be determined by you, the students. After the first three weeks, one or two students per week will be assigned to act as “Professor for a Day,” assigning our course reading materials (with my guidance) and leading discussion. See below for more details about how this works.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT:**

Assignments are designed to encourage structured academic reflection upon our Service Learning experiences outside the classroom and to create an active learning community in class. Because this class is experiential as well as academic, your full participation in all assignments is essential.

Weekly Reflections (35%)

Weekly reflection papers should be written according to the instructions below. There are 8 opportunities to write a reflection paper. Reflection papers are due every week that we meet at the beginning of class. Responses are not allowed on the day you are acting as “Professor for a Day” and in addition you may skip any 3 reflections during the semester, depending on your own schedule. As a result, you are responsible for 5 total reflections over the course of the semester, each worth seven (7) points.

Each response MUST include BOTH parts as described below.

1) Internship Reflection (2 pts)

* Record the date and times you worked at your internship and briefly describe your activity.
* Reflect on how your activities for the week contributed to the mission of the organization. In addition, in what ways can you relate any of your Environmental/Urban Studies courses or reading materials (past or present) to what happened at your internship, or to the issues that your organization is addressing?

The key to effective reflections is to write immediately and frequently – don’t leave it until the day of class.

2) Reading Reflections (5 pts)

* Along with each assigned reading, I will occasionally post questions to help *guide* your reading and thinking.
* Be sure to respond to all of the readings assigned for a particular week.
* PLEASE NOTE: YOUR TASK IS **NOT** TO GIVE A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE READINGS OR SIMPLY ANSWER THE POSTED QUESTIONS. INSTEAD, IT IS TO SITUATE THE READING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE ASSIGNED READINGS FOR THE CLASS. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU ARE TO OFFER INSIGHTS, COMMENTS AND CRITIQUES AND POSE IDEAS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOPIC OF THE DAY.

Weekly Reflections should be 2-3 pages, typed in double-space with one-inch margins. They are due in ***e-mail*** ***before the start of class***. **Please email them to Marty Kirchner --** **marty.kirchner@gmail.com****.** He will grade them, show them to me for review and send them back to you.

Reflections will be graded based on how well you engage in critical thinking about your Service Learning internship and how well you relate the major concepts from this and other Environmental/Urban Studies courses to your Service Learning internship work.

Course Blog (15%)

You will create at least 3 blog posts (roughly one per month) that link to news articles, videos, podcasts, interactive maps, data sets and/or research reports that are relevant to either our course discussions or to your service learning internship.

* Each link must be accompanied by a sentence or two explaining why you thought it was important enough to share with the public.
* Your links need to be reputable. That means you cannot link to a random website or blog, but link to some source that disseminates verifiable, factual information from at least one recognized expert.
* For sample posts, see my own posts on our course blog, and/or see the blog from last semester (you can link to it from the home page of our course site).

You must also write 1 comment per month on another student’s post. To receive credit for your comment, you must:

* Comment on a different person’s post each time.
* Write something relevant to the post (i.e. reflecting that you actually went to the link and thought about it).

Instructions for how to post on wordpress will be distributed in class and gone over in our in-class training sessions.

Presentations (10%)

* “Professor for a Day”/Course Co-creation (10%)

Each week, one or two students will be in charge of choosing course readings. The readings will be based on a general topic that corresponds to your Service Learning internship placements. Remember that you will be assigning reading materials for the whole class – and that your classmates will have to write response papers based on those readings. That means that you need to prepare well ahead of time.

Generally, it works like this: About two weeks ahead of your assigned week, we will meet at the end of class or online to discuss specific questions that pertain to your internship, and which you want to learn more about. I will guide you towards databases, etc. where you can find academic reading materials that address those questions. Over the next few days, you will look through those databases and find a couple articles that seem interesting. You will then send those articles to me ***8-10 days ahead of your assigned week***. I will then work with you to choose an article that is suitable for the entire class and I will post it to the course website, along with a reading guide and specific response questions.

On your assigned day, you will lead class discussion by explaining to the class how your experiences inform the reading, and how the reading informs your experiences. You may also think of discussion questions to ask the rest of the class. You may also assign relevant videos, news articles, etc. in addition to the reading, and they can serve as one of your blog posts.

* Final Presentation (5%)

On **May 8**, we will hold our Service Learning Internship Poster Session. Instructions are posted on the course website.

General Participation & Course Administration (5%)

* **Full participation** in all class assignments and discussions is expected.
* **Resume** – preferably before the semester begins, you must meet with someone from the Office of Career Services and Internships to critique and revise your resume.
* **Service Learning Agreement** – must be completed and signed by the due date.
* **Timesheets** – each week you will record the day and hours worked, and the number of hours remaining in your internship. Instructions will be discussed in class.

Semester Project (20%).

This assignment synthesizes your academic and service learning. Please see the *Semester Project description and proposal form* on the course website for more details. Along with your Project, students will also turn in a one- to two-page reflection that addresses questions such as, “What were the most important things I learned?” “What kinds of new insights did I gain?” “How did I contribute to the mission of the Community Partner organization I worked with, and what are the implications of that organization’s work?” **NOTE:** **THIS CAN ALSO INFORM YOUR FINAL PRESENTATION.**

Final projects and project reflections should be submitted to the course instructor, either in hard copy or by e-mail. They are **DUE** **MAY 8**.

Community Partner Supervisor Evaluation (15%)

Your supervisor must return the completed form to me at the end of your internship. Your job is to make sure your supervisor has the form and knows to send it to me. Forms can be found on the course webpage. They are **DUE MAY 8**.

**CLASS SCHEDULE** (*subject to change*)**:**

The final schedule for presenters will be posted as soon as your internships are established. Even so, it is likely that the syllabus will change, in response to your interests, your work experiences, and my perceptions of what the group needs to work on. Be sure to check the Course website and your QC EMAIL ACCOUNTS regularly for updates and announcements.

1/30 **Course** **introduction**

2/6 Reflections on the “sociological imagination,” internships and volunteerism

* Goffman, Erving. Introduction to The Presentation of Self *In* Everyday Life. Erving Goffman. 1959. Doubleday Anchor Books.
* Mosle, Sarah, “The Vanity of Volunteerism” (2000)
* Thompson, Derek. [The Murky Ethics and Crystal Clear Economics of Unpaid Internships](http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/05/the-murky-ethics-and-crystal-clear-economics-of-the-unpaid-internship/256940/). *The Atlantic*, May 9, 2012.
* Wordpress training (**just this once** -- *please bring laptops if possible*)

2/13 Nonprofits in political economic perspective

* Lu, Jiahan. Which Nonprofit Gets More Government Funding? (2015). *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 25(3), 297-312. PLEASE SKIM
* Su, C. (2012). Who’s Budget? Our Budget? Broadening Political Stakeholdership via Participatory Budgeting. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 8(2), 1-14
* Rhodes, Carl and Peter Bloom. [The trouble with charitable billionaires](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/may/24/the-trouble-with-charitable-billionaires-philanthrocapitalism). *The Guardian*. May 24, 2018.
* ***Service Learning agreements due***

2/20 Professor for a Day presentations/topic(s) to be announced

 Readings to come

2/27 NO CLASS

3/6 Professor for a Day presentations/topic(s) to be announced

 Readings to come

 ***Semester project proposals due***

3/13 NO CLASS

3/20 Professor for a Day presentations/topic(s) to be announced

 Readings to come

3/27 NO CLASS

4/3 Professor for a Day presentations/topic(s) to be announced

 Readings to come

4/10 NO CLASS

4/17 Professor for a Day presentations/topic(s) to be announced

 Readings to come

4/24 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

5/1 Professor for a Day presentations/topic(s) to be announced

 Readings to come

5/8 **Final presentations DURING FREE HOUR!**

***Supervisor evaluations due***

***Semester projects/write ups due***