

PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY GATEWAY STUDY AWAY TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION LIVING AND LEARNING IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

JANUARY-MAY
4 CREDITS

Instructor of Record: Mrs. Candice Hughes

General Course Goal: To frame study away in Trinidad & Tobago as a total learning experience

- To continue your cultural orientation and community service through guided reflection
- To learn through exposure to unfamiliar experiences

Learning objectives – Students will:

1. Identify things (people, objects, institutions, situations, beliefs, ideas) that are different in T&T and the sources of these differences. (cultural knowledge)
2. Analyze in what ways experiences in T&T are similar to and different from the similar experience at “home.” (perception of difference)
3. Examine a set of critical incidences that occurred during the program that have resulted in eye-opening experiences and learning opportunities. (self-awareness)
4. Demonstrate how they learned to interact effectively and appropriately with Trinibagonians in their culture and the experiences that led them to this discovery/knowledge. (bridging cultures)

Course Assumptions:

1. Intercultural learning is foundational
2. Intercultural learning needs to be largely experiential (questions and problems encountered can lead to deeper understanding).
3. Intervention by a mentor is required throughout the program in order to move students toward suspending judgment until they have a fuller cultural picture from which to understand/evaluate what they are seeing, hearing and experiencing
4. Intercultural understanding leads to better community relations and development

Course description:

This course, (taught alongside the experientially-based Caribbean Culture and Society course), is designed to assist students in acquiring a broader understanding of what it means to live and learn in Trinidad and Tobago, and how community relations can be fostered. It includes the experiences of a short homestay, as well as regular weekly community service at a venue of a student’s choice that is monitored by the venue supervisor and Ms. Hughes, and arranged by Ms. Ramchand. This course builds on 5 broad areas of experience each student on the program will have and provides an opportunity to talk about and analyze these experiences, comparing them to similar experiences the student has already had at home or on their home campus.

Opportunities for discursive comparison – each are readily available in the course of the program:

1. Homestay experience (cf. own home living experience)
2. Classroom experience and learning styles (cf. PLU class experiences)
3. Free time/extra-curricular experience (cf. home campus experience)
4. Ritual and performance (compare with religious, cultural and/or political rituals and performances of home communities)
5. Community-based education (service learning component) (cf. volunteer activities at university or college, in town where university is located/where student is from)

Some Service placements are

- Cyril Ross Nursery
- St. Mary's Home
- Autistic Society of Trinidad and Tobago
- Home for the Aged
- Tunapuna Hindu School
- Princess Elizabeth Home for Disabled Children
- Institute of Marine Affairs
- Animal Shelter
- Emperor Valley Zoo

Required Reading:

Horace Miner, "Body Ritual among the Nacirema." *The American Anthropologist*, vol. 58 (1956), pp. 503-507. <http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~thompsoc/Body.html>

Reflection 1: The Charlotteville Village Experience

Write a two-three paged response (double spaced) in which you reflect upon your experience in Charlotteville in the following ways:

- 1) In what ways did the community structure and its members' roles seem similar to or different from your own community in the US?
- 2) What community values seemed to be the most important to people with whom you spoke?
- 3) Tell of one incident that led to an "aha moment" for you.
- 4) Analyze your own experience in adapting to life in "a small place." In what ways do you feel you succeeded in interacting in a Trini way? In what ways do you feel you did not succeed?

Begin your essay with a brief description of Charlotteville and its apparent socio-economic position.

The writing style should contribute to the sense of a formal, yet personal essay. Proofread for elegance, clarity, flow and of course typos.

Reflection 2: Homestay Experience

Write a two-three paged response (double spaced) in which you reflect upon your homestay experience in the following ways:

- 1) In what ways did the family structure and its members' roles seem similar to or different from that of your own family in the US?
- 2) What family or community values seemed to be the most important to your homestay families?
- 3) Tell of one incident that led to an "aha moment" for you.
- 4) Analyze your own experience in adapting to life in your Trinidadian family. In what ways do you feel you succeeded in interacting in a Trini way? In what ways do you feel you did not succeed?

Begin your essay with a brief description of **your** family, their geographical location and their apparent socio-economic position.

The writing style should contribute to the sense of a formal, yet personal essay. Proofread for elegance, clarity, flow and of course typos.

Reflection 3: The Classroom experience and learning styles

Write a two-three paged response (double spaced) in which you reflect upon your experience in your Classroom in the following ways:

- 1) In what ways did the classroom structure and its members' roles seem similar to or different from your own in the US?
- 2) What learning styles seem to be most effective for the people with whom you spoke?
- 3) Tell of one incident that led to an "aha moment" for you.
- 4) Analyze your own experience in adapting to life as a person of minority or majority. In what ways do you feel you succeeded in interacting in a Trini way? In what ways do you feel you did not succeed?

Begin your essay with a brief description of the University and its apparent socio-economic position.

The writing style should contribute to the sense of a formal, yet personal essay. Proofread for elegance, clarity, flow and of course typos.

Reflection 4: Reflection: Free time/extra curricular experience

Write a two-three page response (double spaced) in which you reflect upon your experience in your free time in the following ways:

- 1) In what ways do Trinbagonians spend their free time and why? How are these similar to or different from home?
- 2) What made you choose this activity to spend your free time?
- 3) Tell of one incident that led to an "aha moment" and hence a learning opportunity for you.

- 4) Analyze your extra-curricular experience in adapting to life in the Caribbean. In what ways do you feel you succeeded in interacting in a Trini way? In what ways do you feel you did not succeed?

Begin your essay with a brief description of the activity and with whom you went.

The writing style should contribute to the sense of a formal, yet personal essay. Proofread for elegance, clarity, flow and of course typos.

Reflection 5: Reflection: Ritual and performance (religious, and/or political rituals)

Write a two-three paged response (double spaced) in which you reflect upon your experience in your free time in the following ways:

- 1) In what ways did the religious event and its members' roles seem similar to or different from a religious event you have experienced in the US.
- 2) How was your presence perceived? Did you feel welcomed or accepted? What factors contributed to your acceptance or non-acceptance?
- 3) Tell of one incident that led to an "aha moment" and hence a learning opportunity for you during the event.
- 4) Analyze your own experience in adapting to life in a multi-religious society. In what ways do you feel you succeeded in interacting in a Trini way at the event? In what ways do you feel you did not succeed?

Begin your essay with a brief description of the event.

The writing style should contribute to the sense of a formal, yet personal essay. Proofread for elegance, clarity, flow and of course typos.

COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION LIVING AND LEARNING IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Reflections about Community-based education (service learning): Students will draw from their service learning experience to keep a weekly journal about what they have learned during their volunteer time.

Students are required to

1. Complete twenty-eight (28) hours of volunteer service in a community organization (20%)
2. Keep a log and a journal of your service activities, following the instructions below. Your journal will be read and evaluated at the midpoint and the end of your service project (20%)

The Log:

You are required to keep a log book of your attendance to your service institution. Each entry should note the **date** and **time** of your service work and a summary of your activities. It **MUST** be signed by the supervisor at the institution each day you attend.

The Journal:

Your journal will allow you to document your activities and reflect on your experiences. Write in your journal every week, shortly after you have completed your service activity. You must complete one descriptive or reflective exercise each week. Write approximately one page for each exercise. The first three exercises and the last two exercises are designated below. For weeks 4 through 6, choose a topic from the lists provided. Choose a combination of at least one social and one personal issue.

First exercise: Complete this before you begin your service project:

Write a short (2 or 3 sentence) response to each of the following questions:

- a. How do you define service?
- b. What are your feelings about doing service in Trinidad?
- c. What do you expect to learn from you service in Trinidad?
- d. What do you think the role of values will be in your service work?
- e. How do you think people will perceive you when you are doing your service work?
- f. What problems of difficulties might arise? Do you anticipate any cultural clashes?

Second exercise: Complete this after your first service experience.

Describe, in detail, the location, the setting, the people, the activities, and any positive or negative feelings you are having. Record your first impressions of the site and any anxieties you can envision at this point.

Third exercise:

Describe the organization in which you are volunteering and how it defines and communicates its mission. Describe the people who work there, and what they do. If you can, find out their education, experience and training. Describe the clients or customers of the organization. Look for any patterns related to age, gender, ethnicity, ability and social class.

Fourth to Sixth exercises:

Choose one topic from the list provided (One from either social OR personal). Write on a different topic each week and it must be one topic from each category.

Seventh exercise:

Write a summary of your service experience. What did you learn about Trinidadian culture and society, about the organization and people you worked for or with, and about yourself. Review your early journal entries describing your hopes, fears and first impressions of the organization. How have they played out? Describe any special experiences, insights or highlights of the project.

Eighth exercise: Evaluate the organization and the experience.

What are the strengths of the organization in which you completed your service? If you were responsible for managing the organization, what would you do differently? What changes (in people and in Trinidadian society) would have to take place in order for this organization to meet its mission more effectively?

Evaluate your experience as a volunteer in this organization. Describe the best things that happened and the worst. What did you contribute to the organization and the people involved with it. What did you learn about yourself? What will you do with the knowledge you gained from this experience.

Topics for exercises 4 through 6

Social Issues

1. What are you learning about Trinidadian people and Trinidadian society, as a result of your service experience?
2. If your organization deals with a social problem, discuss some possible causes of the problem. What are some things that could be done to alleviate the problem?
3. What do you see as the real mission of the organization you are working with? What functions does it perform for Trinidadian society? Does it make a positive, negative or neutral contribution?
4. Discuss how your organization may contribute to maintaining economic, ethnic, gender and or age stratification in Trinidad. Or how it helps to alleviate stratification.

Personal Issues

1. Describe a person in your organization who you find to be particularly interesting or particularly difficult or an activity you find particularly rewarding or challenging.
2. How does your service project relate to your future educational, life or career goals?
3. Describe an interesting, amusing, intriguing event, comment or interaction you experienced or witnessed during your service project.
4. Complete the following: When I tell my family and friends about my service project in Trinidad I will say.....

Final Presentation (30%)

- a) Students will prepare a final presentation (**power-point or conventional, photos encouraged**) drawn from their service experience. This will be done based on group presentations of your service experience. The presentation should demonstrate what you have learned about and how understand more deeply
 - i. your time in Trinidad and Tobago
 - ii. US culture
 - iii. and yourselves

Grading System:

Students enrolled in the Living and Learning course are asked to note that your academic work for this course will be assessed as follows:

1. Monthly Meetings/Workshop 5%
2. Structured Reflections 25%
3. Final Presentation 10%
4. Community Based Education 60% Includes:
Completion of 28 service hours (40%)
Journal (20%)

Total Possible Points (UWI system):

GRADE	GRADE POINT	% RANGE
A+	4.3	90-100
A	4.0	80-89
A-	3.7	75-79
B+	3.3	70-74
B	3.0	65-69
B-	2.7	60-64
C+	2.3	55-59
C	2.0	50-54
FAIL E	1.3	35-49
FAIL	0.0	0-34

Credit: student will earn 4 semester hours of credit for this course which will appear on the transcript as a 4 credit COOP course, titled, Living and Learning: Trinidad and Tobago.