From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life.
--Arthur Ashe

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.
--Mahatma Gandhi

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.
-- Rabindranath Tagore

Course Overview: Welcome to a non-traditional course, where the emphasis is on learning by doing, and success is measured not by grades, but by your level of engagement. This two-credit course is designed to provide structure and guidance for your service at one or more non-profit organizations within the community, with an emphasis on the kinds of personal growth that take place during such activities. Through guest presentations, StrengthsQuest self-study, TED talks, and class discussions you will explore and deepen your understanding of the inter-related concepts of “leadership” and “service.” This course is P/F. It has no traditional papers, and no exams. So I will look to your journals and to your final Power Point presentation and to your capstone essay (more about them below) as important representations, analysis, and self-assessments of what you’ve done and what you’ve learned. The course is designed for students in their first term at the University, and is limited to students who live in Hinman College.

This is a designated Community Engaged Learning (CEL) course: a credit-bearing academic course in which students are involved in a community setting such that the experience is linked to course content, enriches learning, and benefits the community in some way.

Course Leaders:
Al Vos, Faculty Master of Hinman College, and professor of English
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Casey Marlow, Teaching Assistant, student in Binghamton’s Master of Public Administration Program

Course Objectives and Outcomes: by the end of this semester you will....
--know how to find opportunities for service and civic engagement both on and off campus
--begin to know the “real” Binghamton, and give new meaning to the phrase “go downtown”
--describe, analyze, and evaluate your own engagement with greater Binghamton
--deepen your commitment to social justice and addressing community needs
--support the development of service and leadership as core values of Hinman College
--experience the dynamic interrelationship of service and leadership
--have a foundation for ongoing service and leadership activities throughout your years at Binghamton University and beyond

Mentors:
Each of you will be paired with a student mentor who has significant experience in service and/or leadership activities. Virtually all the mentors will be alums of this course and/or leaders in Hinman.

You and your mentors are expected to meet on a periodic basis, with a heavier concentration of meetings during the beginning of the semester. Meet with your mentor outside of class once during the 1st week of classes and again during the 2nd week. After these first two meetings, it is expected that you will continue to meet periodically throughout the rest of the semester, including at a minimum one mid-semester meeting. Some suggested conversation topics:
Learning about service and leadership opportunities
Navigating OCCT and BC bus systems
Learning about the surrounding community
How to find service projects that match your passions and interest

Over the course of the semester, you are encouraged to attend some structured social or service event(s) together (ex. Late Nite Binghamton, service project, First Friday downtown, etc.)
Course Expectations and Requirements

- **Get involved** in the course. Be pro-active.
- Do **email** regularly; check Blackboard daily. Think of the Blackboard web-site for our course as its communications hub. There you will always find the latest, most reliable word about all facets of the course.
- **Come to class** each week for workshops, info sessions, and/or discussions of issues and topics relating to community service and leadership. Occasional readings and exercises from websites as basis for discussions. More than two unexcused absences can adversely affect your grade.
- **Regular consultations with an experienced mentor** (see “mentor” above)
- An **initial personal statement**. One page; due at 2nd class (Wednesday, Sept 9). Possible topics: what do you hope to gain from this Practicum? What has been your past experience with service/leadership? What motivates you? What are your guiding values and goals? What are you passionate about?
- **A minimum of 15 hours of service during the semester at a non-profit organization.** This Practicum strives to get you “outside the bubble,” engaged with the greater Binghamton community. Choose from a range of organizations which are partnering with this class.
- **Weekly journal entries.** Keep a journal in which you reflect on your experiences and engagements with the community in this Practicum. In particular, write a journal entry after each time you go to volunteer with an organization or agency, but your journal should not be limited to those occasions. Make this journal an ongoing record of all aspects of your experience in this Practicum. Put the emphasis on reflection and analysis, not simply on facts and narrative. You can be poetical, visual, creative, narrative, etc. In short, express yourself, analyze, dream, surprise your readers. At each class hand in copies of your journal for the previous week.
- Completion of a self-study of personal abilities and interests, using the on-line **STRENGTHSQUEST program**, with follow-up self-study activities. Cost: $10.00 for access code and access to interpretive materials, payable to Al, who will coordinate with STENGTHSQUEST administrators.
- **PowerPoint presentation to the class on your service site.** (end of the semester: details to come)
- **Capstone reflective essay** and self-assessment of your experiences and personal growth. This is the culmination of your semester’s activities within the course, and thus a really important essay. (end of semester: details to come)

Class events already scheduled (activities we’ll do together as much as possible, as whole class):

- Sept 4 (Friday), 6:00-9:00: First Friday in downtown Binghamton
- Sept 7 (Monday, Labor Day), 12:30-4:30: a United Way “Day of Caring” project at Chenango Valley State Park
- September 20 (Sunday): CHOW Hunger Walk (fundraiser). 1:00 p.m. registration, walk at 2:00; BU campus
- Oct 8 (Thursday), 12-4:00 in Mandela Room. Center for Civic Engagement’s Showcase of Community Organizations

Among events and field trips we’ll probably do together in the course of the semester:

- Apple picking sometime in late September/early October
- Make dinner for the residents of the Binghamton Rescue Mission
- Service at Project Concern
Schedule of Class Sessions (subject to change; for latest version, see Blackboard)

Week 1 (Sept 2). Introduction to course. Plans for future events: First Friday outing (Friday, Sept 4); United Way Day of Caring service project at Chenango Valley State Park (Monday, Sept 7, 12:30-4:30). Presentation by HCC leaders on hall government opportunities/elections. Ice-breakers & team-builders. Connect with your mentors who are able to attend class. Assignment for next time: (1) write your initial personal statement (see above); (2) meet with your mentor outside of class; (3) monitor B-Line, and go to at least three GiMs (General Interest Meetings) of campus organizations that sound interesting to you, and come to class ready to report on your visits. 4) Review list of service sites available to the class and prioritize your choices.

Week 2 (Sept 9). Sign up for service sites in the community. Ice-breakers & team-builders. Connect with mentors who are able to come to class. Discussion of OCCT and BCT bus systems: how to get to your service site. Reports on your GiM visits. Planning for CHOW walk on campus (Sunday, September 20). Introduction to resources of the Center for Civic Engagement; Christie Zwahlen on protocol and etiquette for these contacts. Campus field trip to Center for Civic Engagement. Assignments for next time: 1) contact your service site, and begin service as soon as possible. 2) continue to monitor B-Line, and go to at least three more GiMs of campus organizations that sound interesting to you, and come to class ready to report on your visits. 3) do assignment #1 Getting to know Binghamton, part 1 (see Assignment folder).

Week 3 (Sept 16). Reports by class members on your service sites and activities; troubleshooting any issues. Guest presentation on journal writing (tentative). Processing Assignment #1. Planning for CHOW walk on campus (Sunday, September 20). Plan class apple-picking field-trip (Wednesday, Sept 23, or Saturday, September 26). Assignment: 1) continue your service at your community organization. Don’t forget to journal!

Week 4 (Sept 23): No class (Yom Kippur). Continue your service at your community organization. Email an update and journal entry on your service activity to Al and Casey.

Week 5 (September 30): Bring $10 to class for Strengths Quest program. Class field trip to Binghamton History Center and Roberson Museum. Assignment for next time: 1) continued service at your community site; 2) complete Strengths Quest questionnaire, to develop your SQ profile. Don’t forget to journal! 3) do Assignment #2: Getting to know Binghamton, part 2 (see Assignment folder)

Week 6 (October 7): Reports by class members on your service sites and activities; troubleshooting any issues. Processing your StrengthsQuest profiles, with Jen Keegin (tentative). Discussion of Assignment #2, Getting to know Binghamton, part 2, with Lea Webb (tentative). TED talks on leadership and service: "Everyday Leadership" (Drew Dudley) and "Being young and making an impact" (Natalie Warne). Prepare for Oct 8 “Showcase of Community Organizations.” Don’t forget to journal!

Week 7 (October 14): Guest presentations by Hinman alums Merrit Hartblay and Dave Hubeny (tentative).

Week 8 (October 21): Guest presenters from the Binghamton Rescue Mission, about homelessness, community needs, and community service organizations.

Week 9 (October 28): Field trip to the Binghamton Rescue Mission, and service project: making dinner and engaging with the residents about their life stories and life lessons.

Week 10 (November 4): TBA

Week 11 (November 11): TBA

Week 12 (November 18): TBA. In class: presentation by APO reps. Intro to class presentations on Dec 2 and 9. Intro to capstone reflective paper (see separate folder).
Week 13 (November 25): no class. Thanksgiving break.

Week 14 (December 2): In class: presentations by class members on their service site.

Week 15 (December 9): presentations by remainder of the class on their service site. Opportunity for feedback on the course. Celebration and sharing with food. Mentors invited back.
Connecting the Themes of this Practicum:
Service, Leadership, Civic Engagement, Personal Growth

Note: class workshops and activities, both inside and outside the classroom, will emphasize sometimes one theme, sometimes another, but they are interrelated. This conceptual model is a representation of those interrelationships, and suggests the over-arching structure or design of the various things we will do in the course.

Civic Engagement:
understanding your community, researching local issues

Service Projects:
becoming active and involved

Leadership:
becoming a change agent; impacting others

Personal Growth:
knowing yourself; identifying your interests and passions