

Integrating Academic Knowledge in Community Service at Lingnan University

The Office of Service-Learning in Lingnan University helps course instructors develop curricula that incorporate service learning. Currently, courses involving service learning include courses in Arts, Business, and Social Sciences, as well as the Common Core. To satisfy the service learning requirement at Lingnan University, students are generally required to carry out 30 hours of community service (including training), complete documents related to service learning (such as pre-service and post-service questionnaires), and pass at least one course containing the service learning component. An example of the course integrating service learning component is Law and Governance

(CLC9006). One of this course's main goals is to cultivate students' understanding of core issues and debates about government, law, society, and their inter-relationship particularly in the context of Hong Kong.

Distinctive Features:

- ✔ Combining lecture learning with fieldwork practicing in the course design
- ✔ Conducting service learning with community projects
- ✔ Contextualising social issues in real-world context

Intended Learning Outcomes (LO):

For students taking the Law and Governance course:

- I. Understand fundamental concepts and approaches to different constitutional and criminal justice systems.
- II. Acquire solid knowledge of the legal order, particularly regarding its historical evolution and contemporary practices in Hong Kong.
- III. Critically assess the issues related to government, law and society; present and discuss their arguments effectively in intellectual debates both verbally and in report writing.
- IV. Form logical opinions and sound judgments on social-political issues.
- V. Develop the skills to write an argumentative academic essay on a selected topic in the course.

Coursework Teaching & Learning Activities:

- ✍ Lectures (Week 1-14)
- ✍ Service-learning opportunity on a pre-determined project
- ✍ Presentation
- ✍ Project report
- ✍ Final examination

Assessment Approaches

| Name | Learning Activities | Weight | Aligned LO | Type | Generic Skills |
|-------------------|---|--------|--------------------|-----------|---|
| A1 Presentation | Students work in groups on a predetermined project, and the information collected is presented in class by each group | 20% | I. II. III. IV. | Summative | Critical thinking; Communication |
| A2 Project Report | Each group working on the predetermined project is required to write a project report based on the data they collected from their service-learning. | 20% | I. II. III. IV. V. | Summative | Critical thinking; Communication, Problem solving |

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| A3 | Class Participation | Students will be graded according to their degree of class participation and other relevant contributions to class discussion. | 20% | I. II. III. IV. | Formative | Communication, Critical thinking, Self-management |
| A4 | Final Examination | Testing students' understanding of the basic concepts, case studies, and debates encountered in the course. | 40% | I. II. III. IV. | Summative | Study skills, Critical thinking |

Assessment Type

Formative and summative assessments are employed in the course. The combination of assessment methods examine student learning progressively, but the focus on summative assessments particularly encourages students to evaluate their overall experience in the course.

Assessment Focal Areas

Communication & Collaboration Skills: Students have to work in groups. In the presentation (A1) and group report (A2), students have to work together on a predetermined topic and have to communicate well to complete the assessment. While working together, students have to mutually agree on work plans, divide individual jobs and discuss details, thus enhancing their communication and collaboration skills. By assessing class participation (A3), students are encouraged to communicate with each other and with the teacher in the course. Students have to contribute, raise questions and participate in debates or discussion. Communication and collaboration are assessed in various ways in the course.

Knowledge Application: Students are expected to apply what they have learnt in lectures to their service experience. As the project report (A2) assesses students on data they have collected based on their

service learning, students can employ theories and concepts they have learnt to their experience during the service. Meanwhile the final examination (A4) requires students to understand core concepts, cases and debates in the course. Students have to apply what they have learnt in lectures and service project to answer questions in the final exam, and provide their own explanations to arguments.

Reflection: Reflection on personal growth and the work accomplished in the course is encouraged in the presentation (A1) and group report (A2). In these assessments, students are required to use data collected from the service or their own experience. Thus they can reflect on their experience, what they have done, and their achievements and failures throughout the service. During the final examination (A4), students are also invited to look back on what they have gained throughout the course as they revise. This provides space for students to reflect.

Assessment Standards/ Sample Rubrics

There is no assessment rubric available for CLC9006, but there are rubrics set by the Office of Service Learning at Lingnan University.

| Assessment Indicator by the | Item | Unsatisfactory (1-2) | Satisfactory (3-4) | Very Good (5) |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1. Subject-Related Knowledge | a. Identification of knowledge: Matching classroom knowledge with authentic situation, better understanding of subject matter in context | Unclear about the connection of theory and the service. | Able to express some connection between theory and the service. | Can explain the connection between theory and the service with concrete examples most of the time. |
| | b. Application of knowledge: Applying course material in the project | Does not apply theory to service at all. Or application is often inappropriate. | Able to apply theory to the service and explain how they apply it. | Can apply theory to the service most of the time and explain the application process in details. |

c. Importance of subject-matters:
Finding course material useful. Using the knowledge learnt from class in everyday life or after college.

Does not understand the course materials and seldom use it.

Understand the course materials and use it in their daily life occasionally.

Fully understand the course materials and able to develop own perspective based on both theory and the service and apply it beyond the course.

2. Communication Skills

a. Sensitivity:
Using different strategies to communication with different groups, recognizing the need to adjust communication patterns.

Not aware of the needs of others and seldom adjust own way of communication.

Aware of the needs of others and adjust own way of communication; always use appropriate and respectful language.

Always aware of the needs of others and adjust own way of communication accordingly; also motivate group members to do the same.

b. Expressing ideas:
Having the confidence to express the ideas and thoughts in front of supervisors, instructors, classmates, etc.

Need encouragement to contribute ideas and do not have confidence in talking to others.

Able to offer ideas that contribute to the group.

Offer useful and concrete ideas and show acceptance and tolerance by encouraging a diversity of ideas in the group.

c. Discussing in groups:
Recognizing the value of group discussion in bringing resolutions to problems, relying on teamwork.

Often argue with teammates; do not let others talk; want to have things done their way and do not listen to other approaches.

Generally listen to others; make obvious effort in understanding others' ideas.

Always listen to others and; make obvious effort in understanding others' ideas. Help them develop their ideas while giving them full credit.

3. Organizational Skills

a. Practice organizing:
Activity planning, proposal writing, creative activities, time management

Need considerable assistance in planning and designing a project or task from start to finish: rarely get things done by deadlines and group has to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of the poor time management.

Need assistance in planning and designing a project or task but have well-defined objectives: usually use time quite well throughout the project. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities.

Lead the planning and designing of a project or task with well-designed objectives and outcomes; use time well throughout the project to ensure things get done on time. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities.

b. Ability to lead:
Managing activities, solving problems, adaptability, and delegation.

Manage the project badly and have a poor division of labor and preparation.

Manage the project quite well and have a good division of labor and preparation.

Manage the project very well and have very good division of labor and preparation.

c. Empowered to lead:
Feeling like their abilities can make a difference, wanting to resolve problems and lead that campaign

Lack of personal sense of responsibility in resolving community issues.

Acknowledge one's responsibility to the community in terms of issues pertinent to the service and express a commitment to working towards specific solution(s).

Acknowledge one's responsibility to the community in terms of issues pertinent to the service and express commitment to working towards specific solution(s). Encourage others to get involved too.

4. Social Competence

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| <p>a. Increasing tolerance: Reducing negative stereotypes, intercultural competence, appreciating other cultures, etc.</p> | <p>Occasionally demonstrate intolerance of individual differences in terms of race, culture and gender.</p> | <p>Recognize and tolerate individual differences among most people.</p> | <p>Accept all people and tolerate individual differences, make effort in learning more about others.</p> |
| <p>b. Developing connection: Connecting with the community, connecting among students, deeper personal relationships in general</p> | <p>Demonstrate a limited connection with service agencies, service targets and other students.</p> | <p>Demonstrate a connection with service agencies, service targets and other students.</p> | <p>Demonstrate connection with service agencies, service targets and other students; actively pursuing deeper relationships with others.</p> |
| <p>c. Understanding others: Personal values, personal efficacy, appreciating of one's own culture</p> | <p>Does not understand other stakeholders' values and cultures as well as the situation in the society.</p> | <p>Able to understand some of the stakeholders' values and cultures as well as the situation in the society and give examples.</p> | <p>Fully understand some of the stakeholders' values and cultures as well as the situation in the society and is able to explain the situation.</p> |
| <p>5. Problem-solving Skills</p> | | | |
| <p>a. Identifying problems: Seeing problems and knowing the issues</p> | <p>Have difficulty identifying the problems</p> | <p>Able to identify problems</p> | <p>Able to identify and clearly explain problems and solutions, and actively engage in solving them.</p> |
| <p>b. Framing the problems: Understanding causal complexity, showing critical thinking</p> | <p>Only able to partially explain a problem and has difficulty gathering relevant information</p> | <p>Able to explain a problem, sometimes with assistance, gather and think about relevant information and offer responsible analysis.</p> | <p>Able to explain a problem independently, critically gather and think about information, and offer insightful analysis.</p> |
| <p>c. Resolving the problems: Offering solutions to problems and providing well-grounded justification</p> | <p>Always rush into solutions without defining problems or seeking alternatives; use the same resolution method(s) most of the time.</p> | <p>Can identify a variety of solutions, but sometimes need help in choosing an appropriate one. Can take up responsibilities in solving problems.</p> | <p>Can identify a variety of solutions, compare them and choose the most appropriate one to improve the situation, empower team members to effectively solve problems and implement solutions.</p> |
| <p>6. Research skills</p> | | | |
| <p>a. Generating questions: Understanding how and when to ask questions. Focus on enquiry</p> | <p>Reluctant to ask questions.</p> | <p>Ask questions relevant to enhancing own understanding and learning.</p> | <p>Creatively ask insightful and challenging questions that enhance own understanding and learning.</p> |
| <p>b. Gathering information: Knowing how and where to gather relevant information. Demonstrating basic research skills.</p> | <p>Need assistance in locating relevant information; use few types of printed, electronic and internet resources.</p> | <p>Usually locate relevant primary and secondary sources of information; use a wide range of printed, electronic and internet resources.</p> | <p>Can locate relevant primary and secondary sources of information most of the time and independently; use extensive range of printed, electronic and internet resources.</p> |
| <p>c. Understanding importance of research: Understanding the importance of doing research and how it can contribute to knowledge</p> | <p>Do not understand the importance of doing research.</p> | <p>Show a basic understanding of the importance of doing research.</p> | <p>Demonstrate an exceptional understanding of the importance of doing research.</p> |
| <p>7. Civic orientation</p> | | | |

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| a. Empathy: Being able to put oneself in others' shoes, showing awareness of different social issues | Are not aware of the issues in society and even if they are, do not quite care about them. | Are aware of many social issues and show personal concern towards them. | Are aware of most of the social issues and show deeper concern towards them. |
| b. Social responsibility: Understanding that community happenings are related to one's life. Appreciating the concept of global citizenship. | Do not think that it is their responsibility to participate in services and help others. | Understand that it is their responsibility to serve the community. | Acknowledge that it is everyone's responsibility to serve the community. |
| c. Future civic action: Showing commitment to volunteering and willingness to help those in need. | Are not committed to the service and do not show readiness to do more after the course/project. | Express a commitment to the service and show a willingness to continue involving in community services even after the course/project. | Express a commitment to the service and show a willingness to continue involving in community services even after the course/project. Also encourage others to do so. |
| 8. Other Personal Competence | | | |
| a. Attendance | Participated in only some group meetings/activities. | Participated in most group meetings/activities. Provided leadership when asked to. | Participated in all group meetings/activities, assumed leadership role as necessary. |
| b. Team role fulfillment | Did some of the work assigned by the group. | Did most of the work assigned by the group. | Did the work that was assigned by the group. |
| c. Punctuality of work submission | Work is usually late. | Work is mostly done on time. | Work is done on time or even early. |
| d. Quality of service/product | Work tends to be disorderly, incomplete and not accurate. | Work is generally complete, meets the requirements of the task. | Work is complete, well organized, contains very few errors. |

Source: Office of Service Learning, Lingnan University (2016)

Teacher's Stories

Dr. Tam Wai-keung, Department of Political Science, Lingnan University

Professional Engagements

Dr. Tam is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Lingnan University. He specializes in comparative politics, law and society, public policy, and the political economy of development. His book, *Legal Mobilization under Authoritarianism: The Case of Post-Colonial Hong Kong*, received Honorable Mention from the Committee for the Distinguished Book Award for 2014 of the Sociology of Law Section of the American Sociological Association.

Motivation

Dr. Tam shows interest in creating an interactive learning environment, encouraging students to participate actively in class and motivating students

to think analytically. He believes that service learning “provides a real context for students to be exposed to and explore course-related social issues more deeply and authentically”. For Dr. Tam, service learning allows students to learn knowledge and skills that would not be possible to learn through lectures. He also believes that through service learning, students can become keen and capable to serve the community.

Challenges

Students face a heavier workload as they have to attend lectures as well as service sessions. This also adds to teachers' workload, to prepare for both teaching and services. In addition, some may doubt the appropriateness of assessing students with a final examination. As the course focuses on service learning, having an examination as an assessment method may undermine the meaning behind servicing the community.

Students' Side of Stories

- ✔ “Well service-learning is about dealing with the minutiae of the law, while all my other classes just seem to be theory. And it is good

to see the theory into practice on a day-to-day basis, so that’s a huge difference. Practically, it is actually getting the work done.” (Student J, Jan 2013)

Featured Video

- ▶ Make A Difference through Service-Learning <https://youtu.be/TSwlO-s6Y5U>

References

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- Office of Service Learning, Lingnan University (2016). Faculty Members. <https://www.ln.edu.hk/osl/faculty.php>
- Law and Governance (CLC9006) course syllabus: <http://www.ln.edu.hk/polsci/docs/1718CLC9006.pdf>