

SUNY BROCKPORT VIETNAM PROGRAM
COMMUNITY SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

The Community Service course is an experiential education course that provides for students the ability to both provide actual services through existing organizations in Danang and to integrate prior and concurrent learning through relevant activities. Each student spends about 340 or more hours during the semester in community service activities. The course instructors are members of the Program Staff. Administrators and staff members of various organizations in Vietnam provide direct supervision.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course are expected to:

1. Demonstrate an ability to interact productively with Vietnamese staff in service settings;
2. Demonstrate an ability to interact constructively with government officials in Vietnam;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the delivery of a variety of services to those in need in Vietnam;
4. Demonstrate a willingness to engage tasks that will benefit recipients of service identified by the Danang Union of Friendship Organizations, Program Staff, and administrators of service organizations in Vietnam;
5. Demonstrate the use of Vietnamese language in service activities;
6. Demonstrate a knowledge of and a sensitivity for Vietnamese culture and traditions in their activities;
7. Demonstrate a willingness to share personal knowledge and skills with others in a manner that benefits the community of Danang;
8. Demonstrate an ability to identify community needs.

COURSE DESIGN

The following are the sites and activities presently used for this course:

Loving House - Nursing Home: This is run by Catholic nuns. There are 32 homeless residents; most of them are in their late 70s and 80s. They are a happy crew. These decent elderly have to work to feed themselves: growing mushrooms, raising livestock, gardening, making tofu and making soy milk are their main sources of income.

Time: Monday from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

The students are expected to:

1. Build a productive and a trustworthy relationship with residents and staff;
2. Talk and share joys and sorrows (all the residents are most willing to teach the American students Vietnamese language);
3. Help the residents do gardening; plant and harvest mushroom; make tofu and soy milk; shuck peanuts; gather needles for fire, weed and water plants;
4. Provide daily services (massage, cut their finger nails and toe nails; make their beds; clean the floor, fold their clothes; do needlework, cut hair).

Peace Village - Agent Orange Group Home: This is run by the Danang Agent Orange Fund. Because of its limited resources, there are only 18 children, variety in age from 5 to 21. They may have more in future, this depends upon their funding. They differ in disabilities. Some of them are deaf and mute, some of them are mentally retarded, most of them have difficulties in integrating themselves into the community. They are sent here for a six-month program.

Time: Tuesday from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

The students are expected to:

1. Work with other students for group activities (for half an hour);
2. Identify strengths and weaknesses of each individual kid (one student will be in charge of from one to four kids depending upon the number of students in each semester);
3. Develop concrete plans to help their clients with social skills.

Visit to Agent Orange victims in Hoa Vang district: Each week one or two AO kids will be visited (also depending upon the number

of students in that semester). The list of the AO kids to be visited is identified by the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (a government agency).

Time: Thursday from 7:30 am to 11:00 am

The students are expected to:

1. Interact with the children;
2. Spend time with their families to learn about their families' history and needs;
3. Help the children and the families also with chores.

English language instruction at the Friendship Union:

Friendship Union is SUNY Brockport's partner in Vietnam. There is one or two classes in each semester. Each class includes about 40 students. There are at least two students in each class. They are varied in ages and language backgrounds. Many of them are university students while the others are government officials. Their goals are to improve their language skills, to learn about America and its people and also share their perspectives of Vietnam and its people, and to build friendship with American students. This, therefore, is not merely a "teaching" process, this is also a learning process.

Time: Monday and/or Wednesday from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

The students are expected to:

1. Assist local students and government officials to develop their language skills;
2. Open themselves up to their students and be willing to learn from them;
3. Build a firm bridge of friendship and understanding with local residents.

Community service activities also include service at ***Hoa Van Leprosy Village***. It is the delivery of medicine, food, school supplies and play items to this village. This is done once each semester. The Village Chief orients students to the disease of leprosy, the organizational structure, the services provided and needed, and the history of the village. The students also engage constructive interaction with local residents and children.

The students visit and bring gifts to 520 families working and living at ***Khanh Son***. This is a city garbage dump. People work from

dawn until it gets too dark to find plastic. They sleep in the garbage piles. The students have a chance to see their lives and interact with them.

The students also provide community service through various **other activities** that also contribute to the welfare of others in Danang. These activities may include constructive interaction with neighbors in the Program House neighborhood, volunteer services in settings, and services identified by the Friendship Union as useful to the improvement of the community.

Assignments and Grading

Each student will keep a journal during the semester. The journal will include highlights of the course activities on a daily basis. This will include what the student thinks are the highlights of course activities for the day and how these have contributed to the achievement of the course objectives.

The students will be graded on an “A” (Excellent) to “E” (Not acceptable or very poor) scale.

- A Excellent
- B Very Good
- C Good
- D Poor
- E Very poor

The final grade will represent the evaluation of the instructor and will be arrived at after a discussion with the student at the end of the course. This discussion will include a review of the journal. The discussion will include a mutual evaluation of the student’s achievement of each course objective.

Attendance

Students are expected to actively participate in all course activities. The course is designed to provide the student with a variety of experiences that not only provide important services to members of the community but also provide the student with an opportunity to integrate that learned in other Program courses. A student who

refuses to participate in course assignments or activities may fail this course.