

Group Service-Learning Project Agreement/Proposal

Before you can begin your collaborative fieldwork and service-learning project, you need to propose your idea to me for approval. Also, you need to agree on some details about your group and how you plan to communicate. For this proposal, I would like your group simply to write up answers to the following questions. This document does not have to be very long, but it should be professional-looking and demonstrate adequate preliminary thinking. I need one proposal from your entire group. (Work together.)

1: What social/community issue or concern will your group be working on?

Describe briefly what issue of concern your group will be addressing through your service/activism work. (Think about issues of social and/or economic justice, environment, democracy, community, etc. Think about how you want to make your community—if not the broader world—a better place.) It's important that you be very specific here. A properly narrowed issue is essential to your success in this project.

2: Why is your group interested in this?

Explain how your group became interested in this issue? What conversation led up to this agreed upon area of study and service? What does your group already know about this matter?

3: What organization will you work with?

This project requires that you work with a community organization or agency already engaged with this issue. Identifying a reputable organization that your group can partner with here will also help ensure that you have properly narrowed your issue of concern, so that it is “actionable.” What do you know about the organization you selected? What thought and decision-making went into selecting this organization? Have you made contact? What's the next step to get involved in working with them?

4: Who are some of the informants of your study?

Remember, this service-learning project is also ethnographic fieldwork research. Informants are the people you will be talking to or interviewing in order to gain an insider's perspective of the group and/or issue you are hoping to better understand. Do you have an idea of who some of these informants might be? If so, name them, describe them.

5: What challenges do you expect?

What are some of the problems or challenges you expect to encounter in doing this project. What are your plans now for overcoming those challenges? A plan is essential, as these will be *your* challenges. Work together to anticipate them and plan to overcome them.

6: What are your questions and how will you get inside?

What are some of the questions you plan to ask informants in order to uncover the “culture” of the people, place, or event you are studying? How will you get closer to the issue at hand to better understand it? Be specific. Brainstorm an early list now to jump-start your thinking. What kind of information do you think you will need to gather at the field site to answer the question of *what's going on here* in a deep and satisfying way? What other sources might you use to penetrate the insider perspective? Where might you go to find those sources?

7: What do you hope to learn or teach from this experience?

A good ethnographic study will result in both the researcher's learning and the teaching of others. What do you hope to learn from this study and then teach through your final research portfolio?

8: When will your group meet together?

The secret to success with this project (or any project) is effective *communication*. Part of that requires that you meet with your group members in person. For this project, you need to meet at least three times between now and April 30. List three dates and times when your group will meet on campus. Figure it out. (Once I know these times, I can reserve a room for you to meet in.)

Due Date

This proposal document is due as scheduled during the class meeting time. It must be typed and signed by every member of your group indicating your agreement to work together on the project you've outlined by answering these questions.