IDAP Service Learning
Course

Syllabus

Facilitators: Patricia Lazicki and Oliver Ferguson

The 2013 International Development and Agribusiness Program (IDAP), a service learning project, will focus on the topic of post-harvest handling (processing, storage, distribution) in the rice value chain in Sierra Leone. Students will work in teams to identify and catalogue how rice is harvested, the conditions under which they are stored and estimate the amount of product being lost. The student teams are expected to work with local NGOs and/or farmer organizations which deliver services to farmers and interview farmers, applying qualitative research methods of assessment.

The Service Learning course is modeled on the principles of ENG 315, Learning in Community (LINC) course from the UIUC College of Engineering, which is an interdisciplinary, inquiry guided service learning course. The Philosophy of LINC Philosophy promotes learning as an active process from the teacher's and from the learner's points of view. Teachers and students have a strong responsibility to one another and to community partners.

The objective of the course is to produce a report that results in meaningful learning for the ADM Institute for the Prevention of Post-Harvest Loss. The goal is to expand our understanding of the extent of post-harvest losses as well as the practices and constraints which contribute to losses.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this service-learning course, you can expect to improve your project planning skills and to contribute to important problems that benefit a nonprofit, community partner. Specifically, you should be able to:

1. Understand your team, including your abilities and interests and how to use them in a project.
2. Understand the issue of post-harvest loss more deeply; be able to explain key issues and opportunities for the prevention of post-harvest loss.
3. Plan, propose, and implement a project for a client/partner.
4. Understand and apply project skills, including questioning, listening, defining a problem, proposal writing, team work, meeting skills, group problem solving (generating ideas, analyzing alternatives, decision making), taking responsibility, practicing leadership, dealing with adversity and conflict, and reporting and presenting your work.
5. Learn through inquiry and conduct research, including understanding and being able to explain how you learn in the context of a problem-based team project.
6. Evaluate your work and work done by others; and
7. Appreciate the diversity of individuals in team project work.

Topics

1. Understanding your team: team skills and interests, team contracts, conflict, evaluation
2. Understanding your partner: mission, vision, clients, history, successes, analysis of issues
3. Conducting your project: proposing, implementing, adapting, and initiating creative innovations
4. Learning through inquiry: individual research - what will you learn to enhance your project?
5. Evaluating your results: giving and receiving feedback, documentation, reporting, and transitions
Policies

Appreciation for and Utilization of Diversity: We value the diversity represented by the participants in this course, including that represented by our community partners. Our diversity is a primary source of ideas and perspectives, and you will work in teams to practice the use of that diversity. We expect that students will work together to assume a variety of roles and to regulate themselves in distributing work tasks, effectively drawing on each other’s skills, interests, and strengths, and interacting in a collaborative and collegial manner.

Ethics and Integrity: We expect you to uphold the highest ethical standards, be honest, and practice academic integrity. This includes doing original work and citing sources used. As representatives of your University, you are expected to behave in compliance with organization policies and community norms and to do your best to be consistent and reliable. Student interactions in the community impact future relationships and the willingness of community partners to work with the University. Thus it is imperative that you conduct yourself in a professional and ethical manner and that community partners are treated with respect and dignity. Keep in mind that the service experience should be reciprocal in nature — you are not the only one who has something to offer to the relationship(s). Look for opportunities to learn from others.

Assignments are to be submitted at the beginning of the appointed class times, late assignments will be reduced 10% per day; journal assignments will not be accepted later than one week after the due date. This course combines service with learning. Assignments are not busy work, but rather means to those ends. Each assignment has an important function in this course. In a more traditional course if you choose to slack on an assignment you are simply hurting yourself and losing a few points. In our service learning course, if you are irresponsible, you are failing the partner and your team. We are striving to develop lasting relationships with our partners, so your performance is very important.

Project Assignments

1. Develop and execute a project proposal, the purpose of the proposal is to come to an agreement about what the main goals of the project are, how to execute the project and what the major challenges are facing the execution. You also gain experience in proposal writing and persuasion. Begin by asking what is needed, what makes sense, what will have a lasting impact. The proposal should include:
   a. Executive summary – the key elements of each of the proceeding sections, placed at the beginning of the proposal background - issues analysis and other key elements of the partner profile (above)
   b. Objectives and justification – specific goals, what you aim to accomplish, and why it is important and worthwhile
   c. Scope, deliverables, broader impact –the range and constraints of what you will and will not do, what the ADM Institute will actually have as a result of the project and the wider implications for the Institute and others
   d. Timetable – A project schedule that shows how you will accomplish your objectives with well-defined milestones and deadlines by the end of the semester
   e. Division of responsibilities – specific duties that will be done by each member of your team and a justification of their roles based upon their expertise and/or what they will learn to become qualified (include a summary of learning through inquiry research projects here)
   f. Backup plans – what you will do when things go wrong
   g. Resource estimate – what resources do you need for this project?
2. To make a **professional presentation** of your findings to a group of stakeholders in Sierra Leone. You also have the opportunity to gain feedback about your project and then edit your final written report before submission.

3. Submit a **final written report**. The purpose of the final written report is to document your work and deliverables, plus it will become the starting point for subsequent projects. The report should include:
   a. Executive summary – one page that includes the most important information from below
   b. Table of contents
   c. Partner profile – updated and revised version of assignment #1, above
   d. Project proposal – updated and revised version of assignment #2, above
   e. Deliverables – include your results, outcomes, and/or solutions;
   f. Resources used – summary of work and expenditures used to implement the project.
   g. Learning – summary of the collective learning experience of the team.
   h. Recommendations – next steps for continuation of studying post-harvest loss prevention in Sierra Leone.
   i. Appendix – Any documents referenced and anything else to document your work.

4. **Journal**

   Regular reflection that involves description, analysis, and interpretation will help you construct meaning from your experiences and will create opportunities for you to examine your beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors as they relate to your involvement in community-based project work. The reflection journal will enhance your learning by enabling you to 1) keep a record of your progress on the project, 2) actively integrate and apply what you are learning to lived experiences, 3) enhance your reflective and analytical writing skills, and 4) develop new insights and perspectives through iterative examination of major concepts. Write about your experiences, observations, and learning. Your entries should follow the DEAL model (Describe, Examine, and Articulate Learning) to structure a quality reflection, including the following steps: 1) Describe your experience objectively, 2) Examine your experience through reflection on specific learning objectives (e.g., academic enhancement, personal growth, civic learning), and 3) Articulate Learning (analyze and interpret the experience).

**Grading**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Proposal</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Paper</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Through Inquiry Report</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Course Total</td>
<td>1000</td>
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**Required Reading:**


## Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Project phase</th>
<th>Assignment/ training topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 18-24</td>
<td>Group formation/ proposal</td>
<td>Appreciating and using diversity -- participant strengths inventory. Groups are developed. Project introduced, elements and tasks collaboratively identified, allocated to groups/members. Elements of proposal covered. Intro to journals/ learning log. <strong>Journal 1 due at the end of the week.</strong></td>
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<td>development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 25-Mar 3</td>
<td>Group formation/ proposal</td>
<td>Learning through inquiry process. Ideas for methods of inquiry. Listening and asking the right questions. Self-awareness in learning... Bloom’s Taxonomy. <strong>Proposal draft due at the end of the week.</strong></td>
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<td>development</td>
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<td>Mar 4-10</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Proposal feedback. Elements of professionalism -- in academics, writing, dealing with various community members, ie farmers, professors, extensionists, etc. (focus Sierra Leone, bring in USA a bit.) Parts of LTI report, format of a scientific paper. <strong>Journal 2 due at the end of the week, also final proposal.</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 11-17</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Questions about LTI, time for reflection. Review successes and failures of different inquiry methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 18-24</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Feedback on LTIs. Evaluating divergences (if any) of actual project from proposal, re-connecting to original goals, identified needs. Group dynamics, addressing conflict. Issues in cross-cultural communication.</td>
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<td>March 25-31</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Informal presentation and initial evaluation of results. Critically reflect on inquiry methods. Pool conclusions/ knowledge from various groups, observe how they comment on or enrich each other and discuss any conflicts. Also, (if needed and they can't get it any other way...) methods of analyzing and presenting quantitative and qualitative findings. Elements of the final report. <strong>Journal 3 due at the end of the week.</strong></td>
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<td>April 1-7</td>
<td>Analysis and report writing</td>
<td>Elements of an effective results/ product presentation (content, design, context etc.. SL and USA). Address specifically different needs of different audiences (ie academics, farmers, extensionists etc), if applicable. <strong>(Validation workshop possible?)</strong></td>
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<td>April 8-14</td>
<td>Analysis and report writing</td>
<td><strong>Professional Presentation at Njala or Freetown. Journal 4 due at the end of the week.</strong></td>
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<td>April 15-21</td>
<td>Analysis and report writing</td>
<td>No formal content; time to work on final report, ask questions.</td>
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