



Community Service Project

PRAC 3000 (3 credits/ 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Morocco: Arabic Language and Community Service

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

The community service course aims at allowing students to use their academic achievements as well as their personal input in practice in order for them to gain knowledge and professional skills in their field of studies. It helps students gain a real training experience in an international framework to develop a deeper interest in a specific professional development and apply the “classroom education” to the real world. The course is an academically-directed, for-credit, training program through which students will gain practical voluntary work experience under both academic and professional supervision and guidance. Throughout the summer term, the course will focus on combining academic coursework with the work experience. These two strategies, theoretical and professional, are designed to complement each other. The course will focus on the ethics and the cross-cultural experience as well as on methods to fieldwork study and writing an academic paper. The course is structured in a way that enables students to do community service, while allowing contact hours for the accompanying course lectures and meeting sessions.

Course Objectives

The *Community Service Project* course has an interdisciplinary, integrative, and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

- Experience the “world of work and volunteering” and get the opportunity to understand oneself, one’s future choices and enforce the education students have been given in the classroom;
- Combine theoretical knowledge and academic experience with practice;
- Facilitate students’ engagement with the host community while learning from it;
- Show understanding of the NGO life and the volunteering process in Morocco;
- Demonstrate understanding of volunteering practice and community service ethics;
- Complete a three-credit course by attending the weekly sessions directed by the Academic Director and produce weekly reports as a work journal to help process the experience, learn from it and produce the final research paper;
- Share some skills and knowledge needed by the NGO/local community such as computer use, database planning, website maintenance, children’s games, etc;
- Establish channels of cross-cultural communication by sharing perspectives on the diversity of culture and society in home community and country.

Placements are contingent upon the students' past experiences, personal interests as well as the availability of opportunities in any given summer; flexibility is essential. The community service comprises academic components including:

- Community Service weekly reports, field research, and analysis
- Participation in weekly meetings to learn from professionals in the field, discuss the ethics of doing field study with an NGO in Morocco, as well as acquire the necessary tools to write an academic paper based on the community service.

Course Requirements

The final written project, the weekly reports and students' participation count for 70% of the final grade. Students' performance and attitude are very important and constitute a large part of the NGO supervisor's evaluation which is 10% of the course overall grade. Students are expected to practice and maintain a professional behavior at work, including showing respect, manners, timeliness and appropriate dress code. Attendance during the community service and weekly course hours is rigorously required and counts for 20% of the final grade. Any unexcused absences will systematically result in a lower grade, if not in the failure of the course.

Required Readings:

Howe, M. (2005). *Morocco: the Islamist awakening and other challenges*. Oxford University Press.

Understanding Children's Work Project (UCW). (2003). "Understanding Children's Work in Morocco."

Slyomovics, S. (2005). *The performance of human rights in Morocco*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage Publications.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

The final grade will be based upon the following:

Descriptions of Assignments:

Project Paper (40%)

Students are expected to submit a final project paper based on a topic of their choice under the Academic Director's supervision. Progress will be monitored by weekly meetings that will help focus and advise the students about the practical realities of the local situation. The paper should be relevant to the community service experience and must be supported by academic research. Students may use interviews and research materials. The community service project paper is in English and should be 8-10 pages long.

Weekly Reports (20%)

The weekly reports consist of student submissions to the Academic Director of the records of their personal experience in the community service, combined with a descriptive record of their daily work as well as a detailed analysis of the fieldwork based on daily informed observations and NGO employees' interviews/conversations. The weekly reports are key elements in the process of the experience and the final academic research paper, as well as a self-assessment of the students' personal and professional achievements within the host organization.

Attendance and Active Participation (20%)

Attendance to all sessions and service hours is mandatory and part of the final grade. Unexcused absences and failure to attend any scheduled meetings/activities will affect the course grade. Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

Oral Presentation (10%)

The oral presentation will allow students to talk about important and interesting aspects of their learning experience in an engaging way. Students will be able to share their feelings and personal thoughts. Students will have 15 minutes to present their project, including what they have achieved in an informative and creative way. Visual aids are strongly encouraged, as well as the use of the Arabic language.

Attitude and Performance (10%)

The community service supervisor from the NGO will be submitting regular reports to the Academic Director. Their evaluation is as important as the AD evaluation about students' on-site performance, the development of the learning process as well as an assessment of students' attitude, communication skills, respect of the NGO's regulations and respect of rules of conduct as well as the respect of the host country's values and the host organization's practices.

Assessment:

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|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Project Paper | 40% |
| Weekly Reports | 20% |
| Attendance & Active Participation | 20% |
| Oral Presentation | 10% |
| Attitude and Performance | 10% |

Grading Scale:

| | |
|-----------|----|
| 94-100% | A |
| 90-93% | A- |
| 87-89% | B+ |
| 84-86% | B |
| 80-83% | B- |
| 77-79% | C+ |
| 74-76% | C |
| 70-73% | C- |
| 67-69% | D+ |
| 64-66% | D |
| below 64% | F |

Student Expectations

Academic Policies: SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially based program; we hold ourselves, and our students, to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.