



Bonner Center for Civic Engagement

Community-Based Learning Syllabus: Elements and Principles

A well-crafted syllabus for a course with a community-based learning (CBL) component should have:

- A course description which includes description of CBL experiences, approach for the course, and student responsibilities
- A statement of the learning objectives for students that are directly related to the community component
- A statement of the specific need the activities meets and anticipated outcomes for students and community partners
- Nature of projects/assignments related to the community experience including opportunities for reflection, both structured and unstructured, in the form of assignments, journal writing, discussions, and other mechanisms explicitly described
- Readings/discussions/presentations/speakers related to the community experience
- Direct and deliberate connections between the academic content and the community experience
- A statement of assessment criteria of community experience as an explicit component of determining course evaluation and grade

In addition, there are some principles of good practice related to community-based learning and course design that you should keep in mind:

- Credit is given for learning, not for service.
- Do not compromise academic rigor.
- Set learning goals for students that drive the selection of community opportunities.
- Provide a course environment that incorporates (integrates) community learning.
- Minimize the distinction between the student's community learning role and the classroom learning role.
- Re-think the faculty instructional role.
- Be prepared for uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes.
- Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course (using collaborative, communal learning strategies).
- Provide students with the link to the "Resources for Community-Based Learning Students" page on the CCE's website
 - <https://engage.richmond.edu/courses-scholarship/students/index.html>

Resources

- *Praxis 1: A Faculty Casebook on Community Service Learning* by Jeffrey Howard
- *The Promising Syllabus* by Ken Bain