

# Students

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### **What is Service-Learning?**

Service-learning is a way for you to take what you are learning in class and apply it in a real-world setting. This should help you better understand the course and the concepts your instructor is trying to convey. You will be asked to consider the lessons you learn in class when you are at your service placement. For example, what principles that you discussed in class are you seeing at play at your service site? How do the readings that you do for class relate to your experiences at the service site? What does it mean when what you learn in class doesn't agree with what you learn in class? You will be asked to complete some activities in addition to your service that allow you to make the connections between the coursework and the service. This may take the form of response papers, formal essays, group project, class presentation, reflection journals or other project.

### **Do I have to do service?**

Whether service is required of all students in a particular class is at the discretion of the individual instructor. Some classes require service of all students; others provide students the option of doing service or another assignment, such as a group project. Students who do not complete their service in its entirety or at all will not receive the credit for that portion of the class, as indicated on the syllabus.

Hilbert College believes that service-learning is an important academic exercise that intensifies student learning, reinforces classroom concepts and promotes citizenship. Beginning with the class entering in the fall of 2013 (with a projected graduation of 2017), students will be expected to complete service-

learning as part of a course as a requirement for graduation. Students are encouraged to complete service-learning as it is offered to avoid issues later in their academic career.

### **How do I know what courses offer service-learning?**

Courses offering service-learning will be listed on Hilbert College's Service-Learning page ([www.hilbert.edu/alumni/service-learning](http://www.hilbert.edu/alumni/service-learning)), as well as on a special page in the course schedule. Most courses that offer service-learning will be listed in these spots; however, some courses that are not listed as service-learning may contain a service-learning component, at the discretion of the instructor.

### **I don't have a car. How do I get to a service site?**

Many service sites are located on bus routes; there is a bus stop at the main entrance to Hilbert. Students can find information about the bus routes at [www.nfta.com](http://www.nfta.com). Students can also pick up bus schedules at the Switchboard, located at the main entrance to Bogel Hall. Students can also consider car-pooling with other students to the service site. Some sites are located near Hilbert's campus to make it easier for students who don't have reliable transportation to get to their service sites. Please contact your instructor or the service-learning coordinator if you have transportation concerns.

### **I need to do service in two of my classes. Can I use the service that I do for one class for both requirements?**

Service-learning is an academic activity. Just as you wouldn't use a paper you wrote in one class to meet the requirements of a second class, each class requires its own service. If each class you are taking requires 20 hours of service, you will be expected to complete 20 hours for each class (for a total of 40 for the semester). However, sometimes the service can be done at the same site, depending on the nature of the classes and the type of service you are performing. Always check with your professors and the service-learning coordinator before assuming this.

### **How are service sites determined?**

Service sites are specially selected by your instructor and the service-learning coordinator because there is a relationship between what the community organization does, the sort of service you will be expected to perform, and what your instructor is hoping you get out of your experience. Community partners identify the areas and types of service where they could use student assistance, so all student service should meet a community need. A list of service opportunities should be provided to you by your course instructor.

### **Can I choose my own community partner?**

In most classes that include a service-learning component, a list of community partners and projects will be provided. Students will be able to choose the service site they would like to work at from this list.

Community partners are selected for many reasons. The first reason is because there is a demonstrated need for students with skills gained from a particular course. Secondly, the community partners selected

by your professor and service learning coordinator are familiar with the principles of service-learning and understand the benefits and complications of working with college students. Most service sites have been pre-screened to ensure they are appropriate, safe and a positive environment for students. Occasionally, students can choose their own community partner. Students should always check with the course instructor or service-learning coordinator before beginning service at a site of the student's choice.

### **I volunteered over the summer. Can I use that as my service-learning?**

It's great that you are interested in serving the community. Because service-learning attempts to draw connections between the classroom and real world situations, service should be done in the semester the course is being taught. This allows the students to take classroom lessons and see them applied, rather than trying to retrofit a student's experiences with classroom concepts.

### **I have a problem with my service site. What should I do?**

First, talk to the contact at the community agency to try to solve whatever issues are coming up. Many times, problems are just the result of a lack of communication or misunderstanding. Share the course syllabus, service objectives or project description with your community partner so they know exactly what you are learning. Community organizations often host students from multiple classes or schools, so sharing information with the community partner is helpful to ensuring that you are getting the type of service experience that both you and the community organization expect. If you say you are going to show up at a certain time for your service, make sure you do! Community partners are limited on resources, especially time. Please be respectful of their time and yours by honoring whatever commitments and arrangements you make.

You should also let your instructor or the service-learning coordinator know of any potential issues so they can help you sort the issues out if you are not able to do so yourself.

Please remember that you are representing Hilbert through your service and you should maintain a professional appearance, demeanor and communication throughout your interactions.

### **I am having trouble contacting my service site. What should I do?**

Whenever possible, multiple ways of contacting an organization are provided to students. Students should be pro-active and continue to call, email or fill out the online queries until they hear back. However, students also must realize that the community organization is providing a number of services and programs, often with limited staff. The existing staff might not be able to respond immediately to student inquiries. Additionally, the community partner may not be able to accommodate students who wait until the last minute to start their service or who want to serve at very specific times. Sites sometimes have background checks, orientations or other trainings that are required before a volunteer can begin to serve. If communication continues to be a problem, please let your instructor or service-learning coordinator know **before** the end of the semester!

**Where is Hilbert's Service Learning Office located?**

Hilbert's Service-Learning Office is located in Franciscan Hall, Room 104, adjacent to the Career Lab and Student Life.

**How can I contact the Service-Learning Coordinator?**

Ellen Oman, Hilbert's Service Learning Coordinator, can be reached at (716) 649-7900 ext. 356, [eoman@hilbert.edu](mailto:eoman@hilbert.edu) or in Franciscan Hall 104.