

# Community-Based Learning Course Design Worksheet

As you design a community-based learning course, the questions below can help guide your preparation. Be sure to address each of the following topics and communicate relevant information with your community partner(s) and students. Review all relevant policies and suggested materials in detail as you plan course content and activities.

Contact the Community-Engaged Learning Program Director at the Center for Social Concerns (Dave Lassen, [dlassen@nd.edu](mailto:dlassen@nd.edu)) with any questions.

## Phase 1 - Initial Planning (9-12 months before the semester begins)

1. As you begin designing (or redesigning) a community-engaged course, consider the following items/topics.

- Budget Requirements
- Celebration and Demonstration
- Curriculum and Assessment
- Goals and Objectives
- Liability Issues
- Media Coverage
- Participant Roles
- Scheduling
- Structure
- Supervision
- Timeline
- Training
- Transportation
- Prepare for Reflection

2. Begin to identify potential community partners. Review the organizations listed in the Center for Social Concerns' [Community Partner Directory](#).
3. Consider contacting the Community-Engaged Learning Program Director at the Center for Social Concerns, Dr. Dave Lassen ([dlassen@nd.edu](mailto:dlassen@nd.edu)) to discuss course design principles and potential community partners.

## Phase 2 - Initial Course Design (6-9 months before the semester begins)

1. Review similar sample syllabi posted on the Center for Social Concerns' Faculty Resource Portal.
2. Review the following questions as you draft your syllabus in collaboration with your community partner(s).

What course learning objectives could relate to work with community members/organizations?

What do you want your students to gain from this experience?

How will you prepare/train/orient students for work in the community?

What types of community-engaged work would be appropriate for course learning objectives?

What local community organizations do work consistent with the course activities described above?

What types of structured reflection activities would be most appropriate for course activities and work in the community?

How will you assess students' community-engaged activities?

How will you recognize students, community partners, and the community impact of this course?

3. Complete a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each community partner.

### **Phase 3 - Orientation Planning (3-6 months before the semester begins)**

1. Identify the information students will need to know about each community partner and their work with that organization.
2. Review existing student training/orientation materials available through the University, including the Center for Social Concerns.
3. Collaboratively determine whether the community partner or the university can more effectively provide each required orientation element.
4. Draft any necessary original training materials and share them with community partner(s).
5. Schedule any orientation/training sessions that will take place outside of regular class sessions.

## Phase 4 - General Checklist (1-3 months before the semester begins)

1. Identify which of the following statements accurately describes your course, syllabus, and community partnership(s).

- The community-engaged portion of the course is academically rigorous and appropriate for students' academic progression.
- All community-engaged activities and deadlines are clearly communicated in the course syllabus.
- All community-engaged activities, deadlines, and evaluations were created in equitable collaboration with relevant community stakeholders.
- The value of all community-engaged activities has been clearly identified by relevant community stakeholders.
- Students' activities in the community contribute directly to their final grade for the course.
- Students are empowered to collaborate with community partners to achieve course and partnership goals.
- Students are evaluated for their effectiveness in integrating course material with community-engaged activities, not just for completing required service.
- Students are asked to engage in structured reflection activities throughout the semester to process their community-engaged activities and integrate them with course materials.
- All student activities are consistent with university risk management procedures and policies, including those detailed in the Center for Social Concerns' [Guide to Risk Management](#).

## Phase 5 - Starting the Semester

1. During one of the first class sessions of the semester, do the following:
  - Introduce community-engaged learning pedagogy and the community-engaged component of the course.
  - Describe the goals and motivations of all community-engaged activities required by the course.
  - Explain how students will be expected to demonstrate their learning and how their community-engaged work will be assessed.
  - Have students identify and begin necessary waivers and background checks.
  - Consider inviting the Community-Engaged Learning Program Director (Dave Lassen, [dlassen@nd.edu](mailto:dlassen@nd.edu)) to introduce community-engaged learning pedagogy and related resources from the Center for Social Concerns.
  - Introduce all structured reflection activities, expectations, and deadlines.
2. Invite a representative from each community partner to speak to students to introduce them to the structure, mission, and goals of their organization and community.
3. Ensure that students attend orientation activities with their community partner(s).

## **Phase 6 - During the Semester**

1. Contact the community partner at least once a month to exchange feedback on all course-related activities.
2. Regularly assess course-related activities and recommend revisions as necessary.
3. Engage students in dialogue through their structured reflections. Provide regular feedback to reflection submissions.
4. Collect data on the community impact of student work.

## **Phase 7 - At the End of the Semester**

1. Have students present their work to representatives from each community partner.
2. Evaluate the community impact of student work and present a general assessment of course outcomes to community partners.
3. Review your course with the Community-Engaged Learning Program Director and/or Assistant Director from the Center for Social Concerns.
4. Celebrate your collaborative partnership!