

Course Syllabus
AFS 490 - Africana Studies and Community Involvement
3 Credit Hours

Instructor:	Dr. Craig C. Brookins	Dates:	Fall Semester, 2007
Classroom:	Internship Site & Online	Time:	By Arrangement
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Course Overview

The experiences of people in the African Diaspora have been greatly characterized by the involvement of community members in their communities. The Africana Studies curriculum, particularly for those students choosing the *Community Option*, emphasizes the lived experiences of people within their communities as key to the creation of knowledge and skill development. Accordingly, this course provides an interdisciplinary and experientially based opportunity for students to engage in community and classroom-based experiences that examine issues of relevance to African American people (or communities in the African Diaspora). Students will be expected to apply and examine concepts addressed in class to their own practical experience in service others. The meanings that students assign to this service-learning will embody the values, beliefs, attitudes, and ideas that are central to definitions of democracy, social justice, civic resiliency, self-help, and public life.

Course Objectives

The student will:

- Learn knowledge and interpersonal skills that are essential to successfully working with agencies and organizations within communities.
- Apply this knowledge and those skills while working with community organizations and agencies under the supervision of the instructor and those professionals in their chosen area.
- Come to understand how Africana Studies and interdisciplinary approaches are used to understand and address social and community problems.
- Use the information learned and experienced in this course to improve understanding of communities and organizations to be more effective in their interactions with others and the physical environment.
- Participate in Service Learning (involvement in community activities that complement your classroom studies in an effort to increase your academic skills through applying what you learned in the classroom to the real world) by seeing the applications of school based learning to real life situations, including the world of work.
- Through reflection and critical analysis, evaluate the learning and project experiences and accomplishments.
- Generate some product or documentation that illustrates what meaning has been gained from the experience as connected to course content.

Required Readings

- Packet under course name on electronic reserve (or see attached).
- Kozol, J. (1995). Amazing Grace. New York: Crown. (\$12.00)
 - Can be purchased online (e.g., Amazon.com, bn.com, etc.)

Course Basics

In this course, students engage in public or organizational service within agencies or organizations in the Triangle area (or beyond) that serve or have a significant presence in African-American communities. In their written work and class discussions, they will reflect on both the purposes of that work as well as on its limits as a response to specific needs within the community or organization and more general problems of social welfare and social justice. Students will also explore issues of social responsibility and citizenship in the professions and business world in relation to the social problems that they become acquainted with through their community work.

Classroom Component

In-class sessions will be subsequently arranged once students have secured their internship site. Most discussion will take place online and at the request of the student(s).

Community Service Component

Students will spend a minimum of **10 hours a week** at selected community or organizational sites. The sites may be located in the Triangle area. A limited number of site agreements with local agencies will be arranged through the Africana Studies program but students are encouraged to consider identifying a site of their own choosing that more specifically fits their interests. Sites may be in a number of arenas ranging from the human services to the corporate world. **Students, their site manager, and the instructor will sign a memorandum of understanding that outlines the mutual expectations for the service-learning opportunity. Five (5) grade points are awarded for successful participation in the internship per week for a total of 75 points for the semester.**

Requirements and Assignments

Full attendance, completion of assigned readings, and active participation in the internship are the basic requirements for this course. Course work consists of three (3) written reflections completed each week during the semester, with the final weeks devoted to producing an outline of a project to be completed during the **second section of the course (IDS 498 – Independent Study)**. A final essay will also be required and is to be based on examples from the service experience, observations "in the field," and relevant points from course readings. The written reflections will be graded and returned every other week. A weekly e-journal will document hours spent at the community site, reflections on the experience, and address any issues and problems that may arise.

Staying in Contact

Students are **required** to check their e-mail every day for messages from the instructor or their classmates. Office hours are by arrangement but students should not hesitate to ask to meet with the professor.

Reading Assignment #1: Identifying, Securing & Benefiting from Your Internship (10 Points)

Read the readings listed below. Write a thoughtful response paper to describe:

- (1) How closely did the readings reflect your experience in identifying and securing an internship?
- (2) Name at least 5 things from the readings that are important to getting the most out of your internship experience.
- (3) Name at least 3 of the ethical and legal issues that apply to **YOUR** internship site.:

1. Syllabus and Readings:
2. Moore, D. T. (1992). Perspectives on learning in internships;
3. Sweitzer, H. F. & King, M. A. (1999). Understanding yourself as an intern;
4. Green, M. E. (1997). What is in it for you? Setting your internship goals;
5. Baird, B. N. (1999). Ethical and legal issues.

Weekly E-Journal**1.) Purpose:**

The purpose of the journal entries are to: (a) allow the instructor to keep in touch with what you are doing on a weekly basis; (b) alert the instructor early on in the process to any problems or concerns that you might have; and (c) encourage you to reflect how your day-to-day experiences relate to the larger issues raised in the course.

2.) To whom should it be sent:

To the instructor: craig_brookins@ncsu.edu

3.) Due Date:

By noon of the Monday following the just completed week.

4.) Subject Heading of the e-mail journal entry.

Since I may receive several hundred messages from students over the course of the semester, in order to help keep things straight, it is very important that you use the following conventions for the subject line of your journal entry:

LASTNAME WEEKXX JOURNAL

WEEKXX refers to the week about which you are **reporting**, regardless of when you are sending the message. WEEK01 refers to the first week of class, and so on. Please use WEEK01 rather than WEEK1, because that makes it easier to sort messages. (Look at the Course Topics section to see numbering for the weeks).

What if not much is happening?

Even if not much is happening, please send a message telling us so. If we do not hear from you, we will not know what is going.

5.) Format of the e-mail message:

Name:

Week:

Hours volunteered/worked this past week:

A. Summary of Activities and Significant Events

Please provide a description of the major ways in which you spent your time, and of any critical events with supervisors, coworkers, and so on. We don't want an hour by hour account. A description in a couple of sentences is fine.

B. Reflection on the past week

Presumably, you are spending some time reflecting on what you have been doing and observing, and how this fits with issues raised in class, with your career aspirations, with your views of Africana Studies, and so on. In a couple of sentences, please share your reflections, insights, comments or feelings about one issue or theme about which you have been thinking this past week. Some possible topics (but certainly not all) are:

- The main function, social problem, or other issue your organization is addressing;
- the supervisory process
- how your personal skills and interests fit with the kind organization and career emphasized by your organizational site
- issues raised in class or in class readings

C. Questions or concerns

Any problems or issues about which you would particularly like to get input from your academic supervisor? Any particular skills that you would like to develop further?

6.) Grading of E-mail Journal.

Each post will be graded satisfactory (✓, ✓+, **OR** ✓-). A check or check plus means good job. A check minus means that a bit more detail is desired. An unsatisfactory will occur if the journal does not arrive by the due date, or does not have all the elements requested.

Written Reflections

The written reflections consist of assigned tasks in description and analysis. They are integral to each week's class discussion. Your written reflections will always have something to do with (1) the course readings, revealing your thoughts about authors' arguments, including relevant personal observations or experiences, and (2) your on-site work in the community. The reflections should be composed carefully and in complete sentences. All work should be typed on computer. Remember to save repeatedly as you are working, and always save work on both the hard drive and a floppy disc; never save work in only one place, because if something goes wrong you'll have to rewrite everything. Be prepared to type 3 or more pages each week.

Written Reflection #1

Choose an event(s) from your first or second visit (or, if continuing, a current visit) to your community placements and describe it (them) in detail. Construct a moment-by-moment narrative that catches both the details of the social environment as well as your actual experiences - what you were doing, thinking, and feeling at the time of the instance(s) being described. Include in your descriptions what others appeared to be experiencing as you observed them at the time. Others names should be changed in order to protect confidentiality. Try to choose event(s) that seem to really capture how you and others are viewing one another.

Written Reflection #2

First identify a "community" that you have experienced. It is entirely your choice what counts as "a community" for you in this discussion, but you have to identify why you believe what you have chosen counts as a "community." On the back of this page, there is a fairly extensive list of key issues regarding the meaning of "community" as viewed from a sociological perspective. Each of these could be the topic of an extensive study. Look through the list; some of these issues will resonate with your understanding of the community that you have identified; others will not. Take one or more of these issues and reflect for a couple of pages on your experience of this "community."

Themes for exploring the meaning of "community"

- In what respects is community a part of a person's life?
- How do people express feelings of attachment to or detachment from their communities? What do these expressed feelings reveal about the characteristics of a community?
- What is the relationship between the physical meaning of community - its boundaries, central markers, etc. - and the subjective meanings of community - how it's perceived and felt about?
- How are the factors of population, density, or heterogeneity relevant to the experience of aspects of community life?
- How is one's social role or status a factor in one's perspective of one's community?
- What do differences between persons' characterizations of the same community indicate about the places being discussed or about their social positions within these places?

- Is the location of the people one associates with on various levels - friendship, familial relations, fellow workers, etc. - a significant factor in one's perception of one's community?
- What are the circumstances under which various members of a community associate with one another, and how is this indicative of the type of community one lives in?
- What are the social circumstances under which one feels that one does or doesn't "belong" to a community?
- What are different forms of community "involvement," and how is this a way of understanding the phenomenon of "community" and its significance in a person's everyday life?
- How do members of communities define and discuss "community issues," and how is this significant for our understanding of types of community?
- How does community change influence one's life and relations with others?

Written Reflection #3

Reactions to Amazing Grace

In this entry, please produce a set of reflections on the first four chapters of Johnathan Kozol's "Amazing Grace." Focus your attention on what "grabs" you in the book, and how what you read may relate to what we have read about or discussed in the course thus far. For each of the four chapters, organize at least part of your reflections around (1) what "shocked" you the most, (2) what acts or persons did you particularly admire, and (3) how would you tackle the problems that are revealed in the chapter if you had the resources [what resources would you need]?

Also in this entry, either as a separate section or integrated (if you desire), you should include a set of descriptive reflections on your experience in the community service setting thus far - focusing on initial impressions, perceptions, concerns, and relationship-beginnings - all of the sort of things that Kozol is focusing on also vis-a-vis his own experience in his setting.

Try to produce a solid three pages for the entire entry - more if you like!

Directed Reading List (10 Points)

Identify at least 5 references (only one can be web-based) that focus on the topical area of concern for your internship agency. Read and provide an annotated bibliography of those references. These readings will subsequently be used for the *Final Essay* (see below).

Project Outline (10 Points)

Students are expected to complete a project in coordination with their internship site that is mutually agreed upon by them and their supervisor. Typically, this project is completed during the 2nd internship semester (IDS498 – Independent Study). The parameters on this project are broad however students should be in periodic communication with the course instructor and the

site supervisor throughout the semester to explore and discuss ideas. A Project Outline is due near the end of the 1st semester and will be worth 10 points.

Final Essay

We want your final essay to be based upon an investigation of a topic or issue that is related to the general subjects of community and community involvement. We are open to any suggestions in class: we recommend the two alternatives of either conducting one or more interview, or conducting library research. When you go to write the essay, use examples from your "data," community service experience, experiences in class, and, of course, course or outside readings to develop your points. The essay should be a minimum of 5 pages in length.

Some possibilities:

Explore the topic of social responsibility in a profession or type of business by (1) interviewing one or more persons on the issue [perhaps a professional in a selected field; or an administrator at your site] or (2) investigating the topic through library research.

Explore the topic of individuals' sense of belonging to the "Black community" through (1) interviews - perhaps using the interview schedule that was introduced in class (would be interesting to do this with folks at your community site) or (2) library research on the topic of community.

Explore the topic of "community service" through (1) interviews - perhaps interviewing different persons' sense of you at your site (another idea would be to design a questionnaire on the topic and selecting a group to administer it to - you could run a "focus group" as well), or (2) library research on the topic of community service. This general topic could break down in several ways - e.g., the debate over the President's national service legislation, the views of members of a specific "community" on the topic of service, different views on the concept of "service," etc.

Final Essay: Suggested Guidelines

I. Introduction (approximately 1/2 - 1 page)

A) You should begin with a clear introduction to the theoretical focus of your paper. What specific issue will this paper address?

B) After you establish your theoretical problem for the reader, go on to describe the primary subject matter being analyzed - which means the kinds of examples that you will be discussing.

II. Main Analysis (approximately 3 pages)

In this section you are presenting and interpreting examples from your investigations. In your analysis you are expected to make creative use of ideas and examples from course or outside readings - and, of course, feel free to include examples from your community service

experience.

III. Conclusion (approximately 1 page)

What have your analyses contributed to our understanding of the topic? Discuss ways to further explore some of your ideas. Can you think of ways to further research the points made in the paper? Your paper should end on a fresh note: opening up further lines of inquiry.

Final Presentation (20 Points)

The final oral presentation is based on the Final Essay and will be done in-class during finals week. It will be worth 20 points.

Grading

<i>Points</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
75	Community Service (5 points per week for seeking and participating in an internship)
10	Reading Assignment #1: Identifying & Understanding Internships
30	Weekly E-Journal (2 point for each week)
30	Written Reflections (3)
5	Directed Reading List
10	Project Outline
20	Final Essay
20	Final presentation (individual meeting with instructor)
200	Total Points

As per University policy, +/- grades will be given for this course according to the criteria provided below. In general, however, the scale will be as follows:

% of Points	Grade	% of Points	Grade
100 - 96%	A+	89 - 76%	C+
95 - 92%	A	75 - 72%	C
91 - 90%	A-	71 - 70%	C-
89 - 86%	B+	69 - 66%	D+
85 - 82%	B	65 - 62%	D
81 - 80%	B-	61 - 60%	D-
		Below 60%	F

Course Policies

Attendance: Africana Studies values student attendance in courses and expects attendance in all courses from the very first day of class. Attendance AND Participation for this course will be judged based on the information you provide in the weekly e-journals and in consultation with your supervisor.

The only exceptions to this policy will be for excused absences as defined by university regulations. Per university regulations excused absences include sanctioned anticipated Page 9 situations and documented emergency situations. Anticipated situations (participating in an official university function, court attendance, religious observances, or military duty) **must be submitted in writing at the beginning of the semester or within one week of the anticipated absence.** Emergency absences (student illness, injury or death of immediate family member) must also be documented by Parents and Family Services (5-2441). It is your responsibility to obtain the appropriate documentation for your professor on excused absences. If you have further questions on university regulations, consult the following web page:

http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/academic_policies/attend/reg.htm.

Academic Integrity: Strict standards of academic honesty will be enforced according to the University policy on academic integrity. I expect that student's signature on any test or assignment means that you have neither given nor received unauthorized aid. Consult the following website for further details:

<http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/ncsulegal/41.03-codeof.htm>

ADA Statement: Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information, see http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/

For the policy, see:

Http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.1.php

Africana Studies Equity Statement: All persons, regardless of age, race, religion, gender, physical disability or sexual orientation shall have equal opportunity without harassment in Africana Studies courses and programs. Any harassment should be reported immediately to either the classroom instructor or the program director.

Schedule, Assignments & Readings¹

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics and Activities</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
1 Aug 22 nd	Course Overview and Syllabus Review	<i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
2 Aug 29 th	Seeking, Identifying & Understanding Your Internship	<i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
3 Sep 5 th	In-Class	<i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
4 Sep 12 th	In-Class	<i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
5 Sep 19 th	In-Class	Reading/Writing Assignment Identifying & Understanding Internships <i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
6 Sep 26 th	In-Class	Internship Contract <i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
7 Oct 3 rd	In-Class	1st Written Reflection <i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
Oct 10 th	Spring Break	
8 Oct 17	In-Class	2nd Written Reflection <i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
9 Oct 24 th	NO CLASS	<i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
10 Oct 31 st	NO CLASS	<i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
11 Nov 7 th	NO CLASS	3rd Written Reflection <i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
12 Nov 14 th	In-Class	Directed Reading List In-Class Discussion of “Amazing Grace” <i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
13 Nov 21 st	NO CLASS	<i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
14 Nov 22 nd	NO CLASS	<i>Weekly E-Journal</i>
15 Nov 28 th	Final Essay & Project Outline November 30, 2007 <i>Weekly E-Journal</i>	
Finals - Day TBD	Final Presentation	

¹ Subject to some changes