

New Course and Course Change Proposal Form

Part 1 – Course Justification

Department	Course Prefix	Number	Title of Course	Credit
Academic Affairs	EXL	3010	Service Learning Practicum	1-3

A. Course Description and Objectives:

1. This course is designed to provide provided MTSU students with the opportunity to enrich their respective classroom experiences by taking part in projects designed to promote community service and self-discovery. The subject of the course will vary according to the instructor, but all projects will promote service and discovery learning, as well as the components necessary for successful service-learning projects: preparation, action, reflection, and celebration. While many service-learning projects may incorporate local school children, others may focus on non-education needs in the MTSU and surrounding community. As a multi-discipline endeavor, faculty from all colleges and departments will be encouraged to develop both discipline-specific and broad-based initiatives.

Background on Service Learning -- In *Discovering Leadership Through Service*, Rocky Mountain Institute for Leadership and Advancement editors Kris Binard and Lynn Hertrick Leavitt address how service-learning embraces vision, collaboration, and change as integral values in a discovery learning environment. They assert, "a shared vision is essential to foster commitment of individuals and effectively address community issues In order to provide meaningful service and make a difference in the community, individuals must work together to achieve a common goal." Ultimately, "engaging in service-learning enables people to practice their leadership skills and empower others to create positive change in their community." As Binard and Leavitt note, "the pedagogy of service-learning is different from the traditional lecture-driven, content-based, and faculty-centered curriculum. Service learning provides students with hands-on meaningful experiences which combined with reflective exercises, enhance critical thinking." In addition to embracing the opportunity to reflect on themselves as thinkers, learners, and citizens, students participating in service-learning projects have demonstrated an increased ability to synthesize academic and community worlds.

2. The objective of the course is to offer MTSU students valuable experience as mentors and leaders in an atmosphere where their presence and efforts can fill a community need. By emphasizing cultural and historical relationships in a community setting, participating students can enrich their learning by approaching the campus and public communities as learning laboratories. Such enrichment will ultimately enable participating students to function as leaders

and citizens with experience in how to integrate civic awareness and engagement into their academic and professional pursuits.

B. Course Justification

1. The projected enrollment of each course section will be fifteen (15) students.
2. Students will have a unique opportunity to participate in a project-based, interactive service learning partnership with a community entity while synthesizing skills learned in other classes. These partnerships will enable students to enrich their learning by approaching the campus and public communities as learning laboratories in which they gain hands-on experience in a field or occupation. An enrichment course such as this one will enable these students to build on contexts and to develop leadership qualities they can later implement as mentors. Additionally, the service-learning experience will encourage participating students to develop a community commitment and civic identity.
3. The Academic Master Plan outlines MTSU's desire to seek and promote excellence in three areas: notable academic quality, business and institutional partnerships, and a student-centered learning environment. This course may encompass all three of the Master Plan initiatives in a fashion that will ultimately benefit all parties involved. Ernest Boyer, a leader in student-centered learning, foresees that universities will need eventually to provide "a larger, more integrative vision of community in higher education, one that focuses not on the length of time students spend on campus, but on the quality of the encounter, and relates not only to social activities, but to the classroom, too."
4. The Experiential Learning Scholars Program (EXL) is an MTSU initiative that is designed to enhance student learning through providing hands-on learning opportunities. This practicum will provide an opportunity for students to participate in service-learning projects and earn credit toward designation as an Experiential Learning Scholar. (The EXL Scholars program requires students who want a designation on their transcripts to complete 16-18 hours of EXL designated courses.)
5. The change in prefix designation from UNIV to EXL will help to align the service-learning practicum with other similar experiential experiences.

C. Course Integrity

1. To enroll in EXL 3010, students must first complete twenty-four (24) hours of academic coursework. Prospective students must receive permission from the EXL 3010 instructor before enrolling. EXL 3010 will exist as an general elective course that could potentially be adapted to support an existing major or minor, as is the case with the Leadership Studies Minor if an academic department wants to allow credit toward the major for this course.

2. This course may be taught by any faculty member, provided s/he completes the paperwork required to be approved by the EXL Scholars Program director (through the EXL Advisory Committee). The application requires the faculty member to submit an outline detailing the nature of the service-learning partnership, as well as the intended activities and goals of the service-learning project on file. This information will also be kept on file and monitored by the Service-Learning Coordinator.
3. Available classroom space and equipment are sufficient for this course, as the location will vary depending on the faculty member's discipline. Faculty members will be encouraged to explore alternative locations for their class meetings.

D. Course Costs

1. Funding necessities will vary depending on the nature of each EXL 3010 project, but EXL 3010 instructors will be encouraged to devise their projects in a spirit of self-sufficiency. Some funds will be required to cover copying costs incurred during the course, and projects may also require office or other supplies. The EXL program offers limited budgets not to exceed \$150 for students for projects through a competitive grant process.
2. Instructors supervising this course may choose to pursue federal, state, or community-based grants to help support particular projects. Instructors may also pursue discipline-specific grants. Such grants could be used to defray any new costs related to partnership activities.

E. Comments

None.

Part II – Course Outline

Department	Course Prefix	Number	Title of Course	Credit
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2. The objective of the course is to offer MTSU students valuable experience as mentors and leaders in an atmosphere where their presence and efforts can fill a community need. By emphasizing cultural and historical relationships in a community setting, participating students can enrich their learning by approaching the campus and public communities as learning laboratories. Such enrichment will ultimately enable participating students to function as leaders and citizens with experience in how to integrate civic awareness and engagement into their academic and professional pursuits.

B. Outline of Course Topics

This course could be taught by any faculty members, provided s/he secures approval from the EXL Scholars Program Director (through EXL Advisory Committee). Prospective faculty must complete an application form and provide an outline detailing the nature of the service-learning partnership, as well as the intended activities and goals of the service-learning project. This information will also be kept on file and monitored by the Service-Learning Coordinator.

C. Activities Required of Students

Students will be required to participate in a project-based service-learning partnership with a community entity. The projects themselves will vary depending on partner needs and student interest, but each project will produce an end product that will reflect the input and effort of all participants. Each project will have a stated goal, but all partnership projects will emphasize synthesis of ideas and subjects within various disciplines.

Students will be required to complete a journal consisting of responses to specific prompts and reactions to their respective service-learning projects. The sequence of journal entries is designed to encourage students to think in depth about things that are commonplace to them and to explore their experiences in greater depth. Their discoveries will be shaped into the final self-reflective essay, which will range in length from eight (8) to ten (10) pages.

D. Evaluation Procedures

Students will keep a journal documenting their classroom, preparation, and collaboration experiences. This journal will record data for the self-reflective essay each student will submit at the end of the term.

Students will be evaluated on the quality of their journals and self-reflective essays, their commitment to and participation in their respective Service Learning projects, and in other areas of class participation. Students will receive a grade of either "Pass" or "Fail" in the class.

E. References and Text

Texts will vary with the instructor teaching the course.

F. Justification for Graduate Credit When a Course Is Dual Listed

G. **Catalog Description**

EXL 3010: Service Learning Practicum. One to three credits. By permission of instructor. Provides students an opportunity to take part in service-learning projects with community partners. Pass/Fail. (May be repeated for a total of up to six (6) credits.)