



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
*Where leaders learn*



# **COMMUNITY BASED SERVICE-LEARNING: WHAT, WHY, HOW**

**ONLINE SHORT COURSE**

# COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE-LEARNING

## INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, Service-learning has gained increasing attention from different disciplines across Universities. Students grow as citizens, communities benefit from an active and eager to learn group working within their organisations towards a mutually agreed upon goal, and universities enhance their social responsiveness. Service-learning proposes a synergy between academic learning and service activities with local communities. Creating a space where both learning and service take place in mutually beneficial and transformative ways poses a unique set of challenges for teaching and learning.

Incorporating a community based service component in a given course can be daunting. For lecturers who are already running a course with a community based service component many challenges may have arisen. And, like any course, even the best community based service-learning course will from time to time require some refreshing or adjustments to be made.

In this accredited short course lecturers are given the theoretical and practical tools to design, reimagine and refine a community based service-learning course.

## PURPOSE

The What Why How course is designed to support the development of innovative, impactful and transformative community based service-learning courses, as well as cultivating critically reflexive engaged lecturers.

By unpacking the what, the why, and the how of community based service-learning, the course aims to equip lecturers with the theoretical and practical tool to design and run successful community based service-learning courses in their discipline. The course aims to:

- 1) Give lecturers a clear understanding of the scope of community based service-learning
- 2) Introduce lecturers to the theoretical underpinnings and contestations surrounding community based service-learning
- 3) Enable lecturers to design, implement, assess and evaluate a community based service-learning course

# WHAT, WHY, HOW

Community engagement is now considered to be a core function of higher education institutions. As lecturers consider how to align their teaching and learning strategies with community engagement practice they often turn to service-learning. But few academics know where to start or how to further develop service-learning courses. This

course systematically unpacks the what, the why and the how of community based service-learning so that lecturers can design, re-curriculate or improve their own service-learning courses.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Introduction to the course; Building your network	Module 1: Introduction to Community-Based Service-Learning	Module 4: Community-Based Service-Learning Partnerships	Consolidation week	Module 7: Evaluation for Community-Based Service-Learning
	Module 2: Community-Based Service-Learning Theory	Module 5: Student Preparation for and Support During Community-Based Service-Learning		Module 8: Ethical Considerations and Research Opportunities in Community-Based Service-Learning
	Module 3: Curriculum Development for Community-Based Service-Learning	Module 6: Community-Based Service-Learning Assessment		Module 9: Final Assignment

## COURSE STRUCTURE

### *Contact Sessions*

The course consists of 9 modules: 8 content modules and one final assignment module, as well as two networking assignments. The first week is an introduction to the course, to the course site, and getting to know your peers. There will be three short assignments in Week 1. Week 2 and Week 3 will cover 3 modules each. Week 4 is a Consolidation Week and Week 5 covers the last 3 modules. Each module has 1 lecture and 1 short assignment. For example: Week 2 covers modules 1, 2 and 3, so there will be 3 lectures and 3 short assignments, that week. Live discussions will take place every week on Fridays.

### *Online Learning*

The first week is set to promote exchanges between you and your peers and to introduce you to the course and course site. All of the 9 modules have detailed online self-study components and assignments that students will be expected to work through in their own time.

### *Module Assignments and Final Project*

Each module has an associated assignment that must be submitted to the course facilitators for formative assessment at the end of each week. The module assignments all form stepping stones to preparing the final project, in which students are expected to design and detail all aspects of a community-based service-learning course. The table below breaks down the assignments for each week.

Week	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
<b>Assignment</b>	3 Assignments	3 Assignments	3 Assignments	No Assignments	2 Assignments + Final Project

## COURSE FACILITATORS

Your course facilitators are from the Epistemic Justice and Engaged Research Group, housed in the Community Engagement Division at Rhodes University, South Africa.

Dr Sharli Paphitis ([s.paphitis@ru.ac.za](mailto:s.paphitis@ru.ac.za)) and Dr Joana Bezerra ([j.carlosbezerra@ru.ac.za](mailto:j.carlosbezerra@ru.ac.za); tel: 046 603 7712)



## CERTIFICATE

Accredited Short-Course Certificates from Rhodes University will be issued to those who complete all assessment tasks for the course and pass the final assessment. A certificate of attendance will be issued for those who do not successfully complete the final assessment.

## COURSE CANDIDATES & ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

This course is aimed at higher education staff, teachers or practitioners who are interested in learning how to develop a service-learning course for students, as well as anyone who already runs a service-learning course looking for the tools to refine it.

All students must have at least an undergraduate degree (or equivalent experience). Students must be teaching a course to students either in a higher education or secondary school setting, or planning to do so after the course. Students must have a good internet connection and access to a computer. All students must be fluent in English.



## COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the scope of community-based service-learning;
- Demonstrate critical engagement with the theoretical underpinnings of community-based service-learning;
- Demonstrate critical engagement with the process of designing a community-based service-learning curriculum for their discipline;
- Demonstrate critical engagement with the process of drafting a memorandum of understanding for a partnership with a community-based organization for a service component in an academic course;
- Demonstrate engagement with techniques for student preparation and support in community-based service-learning
- Demonstrate critical engagement with the process of designing an assessment strategy that aligns with a community-based service-learning course curriculum;
- Demonstrate critical engagement with the process of drafting an evaluation strategy that aligns with a community-based service-learning course curriculum;
- Demonstrate reflexive engagement with ethical considerations related to community-based-service-learning

An number of critical cross-field outcomes will be met through the course:

- Organize and manage themselves: through scheduling their own times for learning and keeping up with the online content and tasks;
- Collect, analyse and evaluate information: through engagement with the readings, documents, case studies and assignments;
- Communicate effectively: through participation in the forums and discussions;
- Use science and technology: through engaging with the online teaching platform and experimenting with digital modes of assessment for community based service-learning;
- Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive: through engaging with readings and course material to think about students, community partners and the development of a community-based service component in a course.

## ASSESSMENT

Students will be expected to demonstrate the achievement of the course outcomes through a series of module assignments as well as a final project. The course will be assessed in both formative and summative ways.

The course comprises two network assignments and 8 module assignments (1 assignment per module). The module assignments will be assessed formatively as they form stepping stones to preparing the final project, in which students are expected to design and detail all aspects of a community based service-learning course. Formative assessment will also take place during contact sessions and in online forum spaces, where there will be ongoing dialogue and engagement between/among students and facilitators relating to the course content and assessment tasks.

At the end of the course students will draw on their module assignments in preparing the final project for summative assessment. The lecturers/facilitators will examine the final project, and in some cases may be subject to the assessment of an external examiner. A grid for the assessment of the final project in line with the outcomes of the course will be shared with students for reference in preparing the final project as well as reflection throughout the course on their progress in module assignments.

## FEES

Course fees for 2020 is R3600. Rhodes University staff can apply for a full fee waiver.

