



SVL 490UA

SERVICE LEARNING

COURSE DESCRIPTION

SVL 490UA Service Learning is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to engage thoughtfully and ethically with individuals and groups from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The course emphasizes the development of intercultural understanding without reinforcing stereotypes under the guise of cultural difference. As a guiding theoretical framework, the course draws on the concept of contact zones—spaces of social, cultural, and linguistic exchange that simultaneously separate and connect communities.

Through this framework, students undertake a semester-long, community-based service-learning project focused on a contact zone within the host context. While abroad, students engage in academic inquiry and sustained service with the local community, with particular attention to Spanish-speaking communities in Spain, Argentina or Puerto Rico. The course integrates classroom instruction, community-based work, and structured reflection to support students' communicative competence development in Spanish, deepen their understanding of the local sociocultural context, and contribute meaningfully to the communities with whom they work.

SVL 490 follows a service-learning model in which students learn through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that address community needs, are integrated into the academic curriculum, and include structured opportunities for reflection that extend learning beyond the classroom (Corporation for National and Community Service, 1990). Students are required to participate actively both inside and outside the classroom and to complete community service on a 6–8-hours weekly basis throughout the semester, totaling 95–100 hours. Detailed project guidelines will be provided in class and elsewhere in this document.

Course objectives and activities include:

- Analyze intercultural encounters within the host community using the theoretical framework of contact zones, identifying power relations, cultural negotiation, and mutual influence.
- Participate in a minimum of 95–100 hours of community service that addresses authentic community needs while demonstrating ethical engagement and cultural humility.

- Synthesize academic readings, classroom discussions, and field experiences to produce informed analyses of social, cultural, and linguistic issues in the host community.
- Demonstrate communicative competence in Spanish (i.e., linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discursive, and strategic competence) by interacting appropriately and effectively with members of the host community, using language that reflects awareness of cultural norms, context, and communicative purpose in real-world service-learning settings.
- Evaluate personal cultural assumptions, identities, and positionality in relation to service-learning experiences and intercultural encounters.
- Collaborate effectively with classmates and community organizations to design, implement, and assess a semester-long service-learning project.
- Document and evaluate the outcomes of community engagement through structured reflection, demonstrating both student learning and community impact.
- Explain the role of service-learning as a model for civic engagement, social responsibility, and global citizenship.

REQUIRED READINGS

Books:

- Batlle, R., Escoda, E., Cuñado, M. J., García Laso, A., Martín Sánchez, D. A., & Prats, D. (2019). 100 buenas prácticas de aprendizaje-servicio. Inventario de experiencias educativas con finalidad social. Santillana.
- Livermore, D. (2012). Liderar con inteligencia cultural: El nuevo secreto para el éxito. Amacon.

Academic Articles:

- Álvarez Castillo, J. L., Martínez Usarralde, M. J., González González, H., & Buenestado Fernández, M. (2017). El aprendizaje servicio en la formación del profesorado de las universidades españolas. Revista Española de Pedagogía, 75(267), 199–217.
- Díaz Iso, A., Gutiérrez Fernández, N., & Barrenetxea Mínguez, L. (2023). Conectando teoría y práctica: la metodología de aprendizaje-servicio en la didáctica de las lenguas en educación superior. Aula Abierta, 52(4), 343–350.
- Gil-Gómez, J., Moliner-García, M. O., Chiva-Bartoll, Ó., & García López, R. (2016). Una experiencia de aprendizaje-servicio en futuros docentes: desarrollo de la competencia social y ciudadana. Revista Complutense de Educación, 27(1), 53–73.

- Martínez, P., Fuentes, J. L., & López, E. (2025). El aprendizaje-servicio en la universidad europea: un análisis de su desarrollo actual. Revista Iberoamericana de Aprendizaje-Servicio, 19, 37–58.
- Mayor Paredes, D. (2019). El aprendizaje-servicio como eje articulador de procesos de desarrollo personal-estudiantil y social en el estudiantado universitario. Perfiles Educativos, 41(166), 124–140.
- Mella-Núñez, I., Quiroga-Carrillo, A., & Comesaña, J. C. (2021). Aprendizaje-servicio y desarrollo cívico-social en titulaciones universitarias del ámbito educativo: preparando al alumnado para la práctica de una educación inclusiva. Educar, 57(2), 363–377.
- Pérez Cabello, A. M., & Oliva Pérez, F. J. (2021). El aprendizaje servicio mediante segundas lenguas: diversidad y diversión. En P. Úcar Ventura (Ed.), Estudios sobre la diversidad y la globalización: Imbricaciones culturales y traductivas (pp. 379–392). Comares.
- Salgado-Robles, F. (2020). Relación entre tipo de programa académico en el extranjero, competencia intercultural y adquisición del léxico por aprendices de español como lengua de herencia. In P. Taboada de Zúñiga Romero y R. Barros Romero (Eds.), Perfiles, factores y contextos en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de ELE/EL2 (pp. 1013–1026). Santiago de Compostela University Press
- Salgado-Robles, F. (2014). Desarrollo de la competencia estratégica oral en español como segunda lengua mediante el aprendizaje-servicio en el Bluegrass de Mexington. Estudios de Lingüística Aplicada, 59, 125–148.
- Tejada, J. (2013). La formación de las competencias profesionales a través del aprendizaje servicio. Cultura y Educación, 25(3), 285–294.

EVALUATION

1. Attendance and Participation	20%
2. Written Reflections	30%
3. Academic Article Presentation	20%
4. Final Project	30%

Attendance and Participation: Active participation and your regular attendance, both in class and at your site visits, are required for successful completion of this class.

SITE VISITS: By agreeing to volunteer with these community agencies, you are engaging in a serious commitment that affects many more individuals than you or your classmates (see page 6 of this syllabus). All cancellations or changes to site visits must be discussed with and approved by the site coordinator well in advance. Unexcused absences from



site appointments are not allowed and may result in your withdrawal from the course. Grades will be determined according to the rubric on page 7 of this syllabus.

Written Reflections: Through our Google Classroom account, each student will carry out three (3) reflective essays (10% each) in Spanish. These essays will be graded according to quantity (minimum 500–600 words each) and quality of language, as well as on their content (i.e., (1) information regarding tasks accomplished, (2) linguistic and intercultural challenges, and (3) brief comments about the visit, on page 8). No assignments will be accepted after the published due date/time.

Academic Article Presentation: Throughout the semester, each student will prepare and give one oral presentation (20 minutes approx) based on an assigned academic paper. All students are expected to participate in the Q&A session. Presentations will be evaluated according to the criteria outlined on page 9 of this syllabus.

Final Project: The final project consists of a 15–20 minute in-class presentation or a recorded video in which students critically analyze their semester-long service-learning experience. Drawing on course readings, theoretical frameworks, and classroom discussions, students will apply key concepts such as contact zones, intercultural communication, communicative competence (including linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discursive, and strategic components), cultural humility, and civic engagement.

The project should demonstrate the student's ability to synthesize academic inquiry with experiential learning by examining reciprocal learning processes, including what the student learned from the community and how the service work contributed to community goals. Students are expected to reflect critically on intercultural encounters, power relations, and personal positionality within the service context.

The final project must be submitted via Google Classroom. Grades will be assigned according to the criteria provided on page 10 of this syllabus.

COURSE CALENDAR

PART I: KEY CONCEPTS

	CONTENT, READINGS, & ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1	• Course Introduction • Batlle et al., 1
Week 2	• Livermore, 1

	• Presentation #1
Week 3	• Livermore, 2 • Batlle et al., 2 • Reflection #1
Week 4	• Livermore, 3 • Batlle et al., 3
Week 5	• Livermore, 4 • Presentation #2
Week 6	• Livermore, 5.1 • Batlle et al., 4 • Reflection #2
Week 7	• Livermore, 5.2 • Batlle et al., 5
Week 8	• Livermore, 6.1 • Presentation #3
Week 9	• Livermore, 6.2 • Batlle et al., 6 • Reflection #3
Week 10	• Livermore, 7.1 • Batlle et al., 7
Week 11	• Livermore, 7.2 • Presentation #4
Week 12	• Livermore, 8.1 • Batlle et al., 8 • Reflection #4
Week 13	• Livermore, 8.2 • Batlle et al., 9
Week 14	• Livermore, 9.1 • Presentation #5
Week 15	• Livermore, 9.2

	• Battle et al., 10 • Reflection #5
Week 16	Final Project

COURSE CONTRACT

Working in the community is an important commitment. Organizations depend on you. Clients depend on you. Failing to fulfill your responsibilities will seriously affect your final grade.

Community Volunteering

- Duration: Each student will volunteer 95–100 hours with a partner community organization. Students must maintain a log recording their daily hours and the cumulative total to date. The instructor may request this log at any time during the semester.
- Schedule: It is the student's responsibility to coordinate with the organization's staff regarding the day(s) and time(s) they will volunteer each week.
- Transportation: Students are responsible for traveling to the work site by private or public transportation. Travel time to the site does not count toward service hours.
- Punctuality: Students must arrive on time. If a student is late or absent, the staff of the partner organization will inform the course instructor.
- Absences: If a student must miss a volunteer session, they must contact both the partner organization and the instructor to notify them or request permission. Missed hours must be made up.

Confidentiality and Private Information

All information regarding clients of the organization is strictly confidential. Students may not discuss clients with anyone outside the course or the volunteer work. Students also may not discuss private client information with each other.

Contract Signature

I understand the terms of this contract and agree to adhere to the rules outlined herein.

Release

I agree to allow my image and my work in this course to be used for promotional purposes (online or in pamphlets) for the community partners, this course, or other Institution-related publications. I do not expect any remuneration.