

Civic Engagement Course: Engaging Homelessness (LURB 3003) Fall 2007

Final Report and Evaluation

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Executive Summary

“I believe every student studying in NY should take a course such as this one. It is eye opening, humbling, and puts life into perspective in ways that students might not seek out on their own.” (Student volunteer at the Coalition for the Homeless)

It gives me great pleasure to provide you with this final report that provides a thorough description of the course and its objectives along with an evaluation of the course by both my students and the community partners. A complete syllabus that includes all the information you requested is attached as appendix 4.1. The following executive summary provides quick answers to the primary questions you have posed in your memo from Nov. 29, 2007.

“Engaging Urban Homelessness” is a 3000-level, 4-credit undergraduate Civic Engagement course that was conducted during the fall of 2007 by Jurgen von Mahs, assistant professor at Eugene Lang College’s Urban Studies Program. The course was attended by 17 Lang students, all of whom completed the course and very satisfactory fashion.

The service learning component included that students commit themselves to a total of 45 hours of volunteer work over the course of nine weeks at two New York city-based homeless service and advocacy organizations during the months of October and November 2007. For that matter, I have established formal partnerships with the *Coalition for the Homeless* and *Women in Need* prior to the beginning of the semester. At the organizations, students were provided with various volunteer opportunities to enhance their understanding of homelessness as a societal problem and ways to appropriately address it (for a detailed description of service learning activities, see section 1.2.). At each organization and specific task within it, students were assigned to site supervisors who monitored their activities and progress and communicated any problems directly to me. To prepare students for their service learning work, I spent the first five weeks of the semester in class to introduce them to the problem of homelessness, the nature and extent of it, the reasons for why people become homeless, and both governmental and non-governmental responses to this

pressing societal problem. In addition, I also provided a thorough orientation to service learning including site visits and presentations by representatives of the two partner organizations. During the service learning period, class met on campus once every two weeks to discuss their field experiences and to further discuss homelessness through strategically placed thematic sessions. Upon completion of student's field work, we met again in class so that students can give oral presentations about their experiences and to discuss solutions to the problem of homelessness in New York and beyond.

To properly evaluate the course and assess both accomplishments and failures, I conducted a thorough evaluation among both student and site-supervisors. A more thorough assessment is provided in section 2 of this report along with sample questionnaires and the complete analysis of the data that I have included in sections 4.3 and 4.4 of this report. In terms of the most important accomplishments, and there were many, I would highlight the following:

- First, students gained tremendous insights into the problem of homelessness which they could have never gained in a strictly class-room based learning environment – students learned that the interrelations among individual life circumstances and broader structural processes are highly complex rendering common stereotypical notions of homelessness as a strictly individual problem so prevalent in our society redundant;
- Second, students developed a great appreciation for the efforts of homeless service providers and the multiple challenges they face. While the grand solutions to homelessness – more living wage jobs, greater provision of affordable housing, reform of the welfare state – are obvious, students learned that the actual implementation of solutions on the ground is much more tedious and difficult since each homeless person's individual life circumstances and personal problems is different requiring individualized responses;
- Third, through the insights described above, students began to rethink their own stereotypes about homeless people and gained a tremendous amount of respect for both homeless individuals and the organizations designed to help them.
- Fourth, more than half of my students indicated that they plan on continuing their volunteer work beyond the semester and most other students stated that they would like to continue volunteering but will likely not be able to do so because of time constraints. This alone underscores that that this class and the inherent service learning component was highly successful!

Among the least successful elements of the course, and I am somewhat reluctant to call them that, are the following:

- Some students, including all working at WIN, expressed a concern that the current class structure of bi-weekly sessions during the time spent at the organizations did not provide sufficient opportunity to learn about fellow students activities and experiences;
- Some students thought that the current service learning assignments did not provide sufficient opportunity for student-client interactions;
- Two of the five site supervisors responding to the survey felt that they had not been properly informed about the academic objectives of the course;

While I have made some adjustments to the course throughout the semester to alleviate such shortcomings in that I, for instance, created online forums for student interaction and had students post their course diaries as blogs online, I will take such suggestions into consideration for future incarnations of this course.

The former implies that I am definitely planning on teaching this course again in the future. While the exact timeline for future course offerings is not yet finalized and I am

awaiting a decision for the timing of a pre-tenure leave, I am envisioning offering the course again in the Fall 2008. Specifically, I will be teaching the course in the same format at Lang College making some minor adjustments on the basis of the lessons drawn from the evaluations. I am further planning on teaching this course in modified form at the New School for General Studies' Bachelor's Program. The modification entails teaching the academic portion of the course exclusively online (for more information, see section 3).

All things considered, this course has been a very successful and rewarding undertaking. In terms of personal lessons learned that may benefit other instructors, I would highlight two: First, setting up such a course was much more difficult and time-consuming than I had originally imagined in that it constitutes a serious administrative challenge to coordinate the schedules of 17 students with those of seven site supervisors and by doing so trying to accommodate everybody's preferences, needs, and constraints. I also encountered difficulties in developing and fine-tuning legal documents that spell out the rights and responsibilities of all entities involved. Fellow instructors ought to be warned that the initial set up of such a course, especially when trying to individually tailor service learning experiences, is extraordinarily difficult and at times frustrating for both the instructor her/himself and respective coordinators at the partner organizations. Second, and in the end more importantly, is the insight that all problems notwithstanding, such an endeavor is worth the effort and pays tremendous dividends. While I typically don't enjoy grading assignments very much, I had fun reading my students' field reports and their course diary entries as this enabled me to see progress and witness how the students excelled and grew over the course of the semester. In the end, I am happy I taught the course, am looking forward to teaching it again, and like to thank Project Pericles for the generous support provided.

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1. Course Description and Objectives

“Engaging Urban Homelessness” is a 3000-level, 4-credit undergraduate Civic Engagement course that was conducted during the fall of 2007 by Jurgen von Mahs, assistant professor at Eugene Lang College’s Urban Studies Program. The course was attended by 17 undergraduate students of Eugene Lang College, most of whom were Sophomores and Juniors. The course consisted of an academic component, taught on campus, and a civic engagement/service learning component for which students volunteered at two homeless service organizations for approximately 5 hours per week for a total of nine weeks. For that matter, I established formal partnerships with two New York-based homeless service organization, one is the Coalition for the Homeless and the other Women in Need. In the following, I first describe the academic components of the course and then the service learning settings and learning objectives for each.

1.1. Academic Components: Homelessness and Homeless Policy in New York City and Beyond

The main academic premise of the course is to familiarize students with the complex societal problem of homelessness in the United States and therein particularly in urban areas. For that matter, students spent the first five weeks of the semester in the classroom receiving a comprehensive introduction to homelessness and service learning. Specifically, I relied primarily on lectures to introduce students to the nature and extent of homelessness, the structural and individual causes of homelessness, and governmental, non-profit, and broader societal responses to the problem. This theoretical discussion relied on academic insights and research data from New York City and the United States more broadly. Toward the end of this introduction, students received an orientation to service learning and were familiarized with the principal challenges involved with working with homeless people and organizations that serve them paying particular attention to fostering reliability, punctuality, and respectful engagement with the service partners’ clients and staff. At this occasion, a representative from the Coalition for the Homeless gave a thorough orientation for volunteers at the organization and the class as a whole. To learn about Women in Need, students embarked on a fieldtrip and were invited to attend a general orientation and tour the premises of the organization.

Upon commencement of the volunteer activities and service learning work at the organization in the second week of October, we met on a bi-weekly basis. I have chosen this format to account for the fact that students spent considerable time in the field and I therefore wanted to keep workloads reasonable. The bi-weekly sessions provided an opportunity for students to share their experiences and to articulate any concerns. Moreover, I organized these sessions around themes pertaining to students’ experiences at the service organizations and in the field including ethnographic research on homeless people, homeless people’s material and adaptive survival strategies, homeless people’s attempts to overcome homelessness and the multiple barriers they face, and homelessness among families with children.

Once students completed their service learning activities at the beginning of December, class reconvened on a regular basis on campus. During the first two sessions, students organized panel discussions to share their experiences at the organization they worked with and, in so doing, inform the students volunteering at the other organization. For the remainder of the semester, we have been collectively strategizing about developing

solutions to homelessness from federal policy reforms, urban 10-year plans, to grassroots activism.

1.2. Service Learning Opportunities: Coalition for the Homeless and Women in Need

Upon learning that the CEC-grant had been approved, I embarked on the task of identifying suitable homeless service organizations that may be able to provide appropriate service learning opportunities for my students. Upon an extensive internet based search, I identified both the Coalition for the Homeless (CFH) and Women in Need (WIN) as potential community partners since both organizations are large enough to provide students with a variety of opportunities and because both organizations already established an infrastructure for accommodating volunteers and had accumulated experiences.

I subsequently established contacts to the volunteer coordinators at each site – Deborah V. at the CFH and Beverly B. at WIN – with whom I met to talk further about this project. Both expressed interest and went on to identify suitable service learning sites and activities for the students. From the time of establishing first contact in May until ultimately determining service learning opportunities in mid-August Considerable time elapsed. This delay was in large part due to the fact that many potential site-supervisors went on vacation and I embarked on an unrelated research project abroad. To find appropriate opportunities, each organization proceeded differently.

a) Coalition for the Homeless

Upon consultation with program managers at different volunteer branches at the Coalition about their needs for volunteers and in considering the objectives of the course, Deborah V. proposed two principal volunteer sites, both of which are firmly established in the organization and did not require any changes to accommodate students. I am providing you with a short description of each program.

- The **Grand Central Food Program** is the Coalition's mobile soup kitchen that provides 800 hot, nutritious meals at 25 separate sites every night of the year. GCFP and its dedicated corps of volunteers form a lifeline for hundreds of homeless individuals and families as well as the poor and working poor who face hunger on a daily basis. GCFP volunteers not only provide nutritious meals, but also distribute clothing, blankets, and personal hygiene items such as toiletries and underwear. The program provides volunteers with an opportunity for doing important outreach work geared toward linking chronic street homeless to a range of programs the Coalition has to offer. Given that GCFP operates primarily in the evening hours, this volunteer opportunity should be of particular interest for students with busy day schedules. GCFP runs three vans that can accommodate 1 to 2 volunteers each and shifts run M-F and Sunday from 6:45 to 9:30-10:00 (→ *8 Volunteers placed*)
- **First Step** is a 14-week job-training program that provides homeless, formerly homeless and low-income women essential computer skills, basic business training, internships, mentoring and job-placement assistance so that they can re-enter the workforce. Volunteers will assist First Step participants with computer questions during lab time and independent study with the goal of training individuals on the correct and effective use of various computer programs to help those that have little or no computer experience acquire basic computer skills enabling them to enter the world of work, and pursue educational opportunities. Volunteers must be proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook, Internet navigation, public e-mail accounts, etc. Classes are held Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 to 11:30 and 1:30 to 3:30 (→ *No Volunteers placed*)

b) Women In Need

Unlike CHF, WIN's principal volunteer coordinator felt that the best way for students to learn about the organization and its various programs, students ought to work directly with and under the supervision of program managers which would give one or two students an opportunity to shadow the manager's work. I agreed with this proposition believing that this would yield particularly promising opportunities. Beverly subsequently embarked on the task of talking to program directors of WIN's various programs and service facilities to inquire about availabilities and needs and over the course of the summer identified seven different service settings by the beginning of the semester at the beginning of September:

- **Jeannie A. Clark Residence** is a transitions shelter housing up to 73 homeless families located at E. 100th Street. One volunteer would assist program director Beth Gonzales in various duties assigned by her associated with shelter operation and various counseling and referral services for shelter residents. Operating hours are between 9 and 5 or 11 and 7 would have to be coordinated with the program director (→ 2 *Volunteers placed*)
- The **Lex-Bronx Residence** is a transitional shelter with 31 family units located at E183 Street in the Bronx. Volunteers would assist Program Director Dr. Patience Oti with various service tasks including talking to clients, escorting them to appointments, or helping them with housing and job searches including accompanying them to appointments. Services are provided M-F between 9 and 5 and specific schedules would have to be arranged with the program director (→ 1 *Volunteer placed*).
- **Winners Circle** is a program dedicated to provide aftercare for former transitional shelter residents and clients who have succeeded in reestablishing residential stability. Volunteers would work with Aftercare counselor Milagros Brown during normal business hours (M-F, 9-5) as well as during program meetings with alumni every second Friday between 6 and 8pm. Specific schedules would have to be arranged with Ms. Brown (→ 1 *Volunteer placed*).
- At **Research and Evaluation**, volunteers would work with Dawn DeLuca, Director of Research and Evaluation in WIN's main office at 115W 31st St (3rd floor) by conducting client surveys to clients who have moved into permanent housing to ascertain what problems they may be having. Research and Evaluation office is open M-F between 9 and 5, at occasions as late as 6:30 Specific schedules would have to be arranged with Mrs DeLuca (→ 1 *Volunteer placed*).
- **Client Services**, located at WIN's main office (115W 31st St., 7th floor) tackles a variety of service tasks and two volunteers would assist Program Coordinator Angelita Estrada in a) scheduling and interviewing clients, and b) in working on program events and clerical work. The program operates M-F between 9 and 5 and specific schedules would have to be arranged with the program coordinator (→ 2 *Volunteers placed*).
- **Employment and Education Services** provides clients of WIN with immediate job skills, application, and referral services preparing homeless women with job counseling and homeless youth with after-school activities. Times would need to be coordinated the Debra Pilgrim, Program Director (→ 2 *Volunteers placed*).

Upon finalizing these volunteer opportunities, I provided students with a list of the different volunteer opportunities at the beginning of the semester so that they can identify their preferences and indicate their availabilities. I then played this list back to the volunteer coordinators so that they can inquire if students' availabilities match the corresponding site supervisors' expectations and schedules. Considering that both students and site

supervisors had to make changes, this arduous process went back and forth until we finally were able to arrange a final list of service assignments and schedules, a process that was concluded in the first week of October (see attachment 4.2). Except for CFH's First Step program which operated on a schedule not conducive to students' schedules, I was able to place student volunteers in each of the programs. The in students' eyes most attractive and most sought after opportunity for its flexible schedule (volunteers could essentially drop in every night of the week without having to make prior arrangements) was the Grand Central Food Program for which 8 students signed up.

Besides the challenge of matching students' preferences and time constraints with those of site supervisors, a second and rather unexpected problem involved the development and approval of appropriate documents that spell out the nature and extent of the partnership and the rights and responsibilities of all entities involved including the students, the service partners, the university, and the instructor. For this purpose, I drafted a Memorandum of Understanding between Lang College and our partner organizations to be approved and signed by appropriate superiors in both institutions along with a separate Service Learning Agreement between students, site-supervisors, and the instructor to spell out the nature and extent of the service learning activities and the rights and responsibilities of each. I sent a draft of these documents first to the partner institutions which subsequently involved their legal counsel to review the documents and propose changes. It took until mid October to receive feedback. I subsequently sent the revised documents to the university's legal counsel for review but, to my dismay and despite repeated inquiries and pleas to expedite the process, did not receive feedback until after the service learning period ended. Because of these administrative delays, I basically had to operate in a legal vacuum. I was, however, able to ascertain that student volunteers were sufficiently covered in the case of accidents or other problems associated with the volunteer work. Moreover, once the issues involving the development and approval of the MoU and the Service Learning Agreement are resolved, I will have the blueprints for future service learning agreements once I teach the course again.¹

1.3. Course Requirements

To assess student's comprehension of the subject matter and to learn about their experiences working with the two community organizations, I devised a number of, as I believe, appropriate course requirements.

To assess students' comprehension of the subject matter and to keep them focused on the academic portion of the course, I assigned a number of reaction papers to test student's comprehension of readings in preparation for the thematic sessions I have dispersed over the course of the semester. The results indicate that students were eager to learn and performed extraordinarily well on these assignments.

Besides committing to a minimum of 45 hours working at the designated service organization (students would receive up to 5% extra credit for working more than the assigned hours), students were required to write a course diary reflecting on class discussions, readings, experiences in the field, and on other types of information pertinent to the topic. Students were asked to post their diaries in their personal "Student Blog" that I

¹ In this context, it has to be noted that ELC as a Periclean institution had just recently (at the beginning of the semester) instituted a new institute for Participatory Citizenship and Community Activism and hired a new director, Dr. Joseph Heathcott. Dr. Heathcott, similarly frustrated as me with the tardiness of the legal department, has tried his best to expedite the process and has assured me that such delays and problems will not occur in the future once the new institute is fully functional.

had developed using Blackboard course management software.² The purpose of doing so was to give students an opportunity to learn about their fellow students experiences and to exchange in dialogues parallel to this class. To facilitate such parallel discussions, I also activated the Blackboard "Discussion" feature creating forums but this feature was, to my surprise, rarely used.

Students were further asked to write comprehensive field reports about their work with the homeless organizations and to critically reflect on their experiences, noteworthy events, the main lessons they learned during their work, along with recommendations for the homeless service organization as to how to improve their services. This assignment further allowed me to get a first sense about success or failure of the service learning component of the class as I specifically asked students to reflect on ways to improve the class (see evaluation). Although I do typically not enjoy grading papers very much, I actually really enjoyed reading the field reports as they were a true testimony to the fact that students had learned a great deal from their service learning experiences as the following extensive course evaluation will demonstrate.

2. Course Evaluation

2.1. Course Evaluation Process

To properly evaluate the course, I conducted separate formal surveys among both students and site supervisors during the last two weeks of the semester. I have attached the questionnaires as well as the complete analysis of the data in sections 4.3. and 4.4. of this report accordingly. Considering that a number of students did not return the questionnaires, I was also able to draw from insights students provided in their field reports and course diaries. In the evaluations of student experiences, I deliberately did not ask many questions about my performance as an instructor considering that I did not want to put students in the uncomfortable position of having to comment on their professor before grades were posted. To assess my performance per se, I relied on the standard student evaluations that are customarily administered at the end of the semester. The results of these formal evaluations will be released in March or April and I will send you a copy of these evaluations separately as soon as I receive them.

2.2. Student Evaluations

During the last week of class, I distributed a detailed questionnaire to student consisting of two parts. The first part asked questions about the academic portion of the course per se whereas the second part specifically inquired about students' experiences at the homeless service organizations at which they volunteered. Considering that the number of students enrolled in the course (N=17) is reasonably large, I also quantified a number of questions to allow for comparisons of experiences by volunteer site in order to be able to assess which volunteer opportunities provided particularly good settings for student volunteers, and which ones not. Given, however, that four students, despite repeated requests did not submit the formal questionnaire, I was able to assess their opinions by reviewing their field reports and course diaries. In the following, I provide an overview of the main results by first highlighting students' opinions about the course per se and second their perceptions about the volunteer

² I gave students the option to share these blogs or to keep them private – most students chose to share their experiences.

experiences at the service sites where they volunteered. I have attached the complete analysis of student responses in section 4.4. of this report which provides a detailed account of students' experiences differentiated by service site.

a) Part I: Evaluation of the course

The first part of the questionnaire indicated quite clearly that students were overall very satisfied with the course. Eleven of the thirteen survey respondents indicated that they were either very satisfied or quite satisfied with the course whereas only two student were merely satisfied and nobody dissatisfied with the course. Moreover, the course met or exceeded the expectations of 12 of the 13 respondents. The satisfaction with the course was particularly apparent among volunteers of the Coalition for the Homeless Grand Central Food Program in that all GCFP volunteers were very satisfied. One volunteer remarked:

“As an urban studies major, I appreciate classes that integrate NYC into the coursework as much as possible – I think it makes time much more interesting and relevant. “Engaging Urban Homelessness” did exactly that.”

The slightly lesser extent of satisfaction among volunteers who were working at WIN – two respondents were solely satisfied – is in part a reflection that their volunteer experiences varied to a much greater extent than among GCFP participants, a fact that I will discuss in more detail in the next section.

In terms of the overall opinions about the course, the majority of the thirteen survey respondents felt that they were adequately prepared for the service learning portion of the course (N=12), that objectives were clearly explained (N=13), that the instructor was responsive to students' questions and concerns (N=13), and that communication among all entities was good or very good (N=12). A majority (N=8) further felt that the thematic sessions during the field work sufficiently complemented field experiences. Moreover, nine students thought that the course achieved a very good, or good balance between service learning and academics and agreed that the workload for the course was reasonable although some students felt that both the amount of service work and the written assignments in preparation for the bi-weekly thematic session were at times overwhelming, particularly toward the end of the semester. In addition, a slight majority of students (N=7) felt that they would have benefited from more class time proposing that the course meets more frequently on a weekly instead of a bi-weekly basis.

This assessment is in large part a reflection of the fact that many students, among them all volunteers at WIN felt that they did not have sufficient opportunity to meet with and interact with fellow students and thus learn about the experiences of their colleagues. The primary reason for this discrepancy – and in my eyes the perhaps biggest problem associated with the current format – is associated with the fact that the seven GCFP volunteers all worked at one site and during evening hours and thus saw each other quite frequently often sharing space in vans and therefore had opportunity to interact. Volunteers at WIN, on the other hand, primarily worked directly with site supervisors at predetermined times and therefore rarely ever saw each other. Upon learning about this concern through the students' course diaries, I made adjustments by creating online tools to facilitate discussion (i.e. Blackboard discussion forums) and for students to learn about their experiences (i.e. creating individual student blogs in which students posted their course diaries). The use of online technology, however, did not result in increased communication. Only one person felt that the online tools allowed overcoming the lack of interaction while the rest felt that few people actually engaged in the electronic discussions, read each others

work, or simply faced technical problems with internet access and the at times malfunctioning NewSchool website. One student explained:

“Online discussions are less spontaneous – maybe because Lang does not offer online courses students are unfamiliar or uncomfortable.”

This certain extent of “technophobia” is a phenomenon that I generally noticed among Lang students who are less technically savvy and interested than students in other universities I taught at. Acknowledging these problems, I will make adjustments in future incarnations of the class by convening class on a weekly basis with more opportunity to discuss field experiences. Doing so is further warranted that only a minority of students felt that they would have liked more time working volunteering at the service organizations.

Finally, ALL thirteen respondents, regardless of whether they had any reservations or concerns about the course, would recommend this course to fellow students and twelve students expressed interest in taking other service learning classes in the future. This underscores the notion that the class per se was a very successful undertaking.

b) Part II: Evaluation of Volunteer Experiences

The second part of the questionnaire inquired about students’ experiences in the field while working with and volunteering at their designated service sites. The responses with regard to students’ volunteer experiences provided slightly more varied responses depending on organization and, among WIN volunteers, the particular service program site. Specifically, all GCFP volunteers were very satisfied with their field experiences whereas 5 of the 6 WIN volunteers were either quite satisfied or simply satisfied and nobody dissatisfied. Given this discrepancy, I will differentiate this portion of the evaluation by organization.

Grand Central Food Program

The eight students volunteering at the Coalition for the Homeless’ Grand Central Food Program (GCFP) where uniformly very satisfied with their field experiences and their site supervisor. GCFP volunteer’s feedback provided in both their field reports and the panel discussion they organized to inform fellow course participants about their experiences indicated a great sense of excitement and enthusiasm for their work and a sense of camaraderie they had developed with fellow volunteers. If there was one concern that was repeatedly mentioned in the field reports and diaries, it was that the nature of the feeding program did not allow for much interaction with homeless clients in the food lines – once the vans arrived at a site, volunteers had to quickly dispense the food in order to make all the envisioned stops during the routes. However, with time and thus more familiarity with regulars frequenting particular feeding spots, some volunteers were able to talk with clients and develop rapport. The shortcoming of not having enough time for client interaction was further partially alleviated by the fact that our volunteers had ample opportunity to talk with and learn from fellow volunteers, especially those who have been volunteering at GCFP for a while. Another shortcoming mentioned by some GCFP volunteers was that volunteers would have liked to do more outreach, especially at times when the vans were overstaffed. Juan de la Cruz, their site supervisor, echoed this concern and is working on enhancing possibilities for more outreach opportunities for future collaborations. Given the overwhelmingly positive assessment of students, I believe that the current volunteer format – with perhaps some amendment with regard to creating more outreach opportunities - can remain as is and does not warrant any major adjustments.

Women in Need

Students volunteering at WIN, on the other hand, were slightly less satisfied than their colleagues at GCFP in that only one person was very satisfied whereas the others were either quite satisfied (N=2) or just satisfied (N=3). At the same time, all respondents with the exception of one student were either very satisfied or quite satisfied with their site supervisors and their performance. Before elaborating on the potential reasons for the slightly less favorable assessment vis-à-vis the GCFP, I would like to insert three important qualifications that put the comparably worse yet still generally very good experiences into perspective.

- First, only 6 of the 9 student volunteers working at WIN responded to the survey omitting two students who had, using their field reports and course diaries as a basis for assessment, highly favorable experiences. In addition, one student who participated in the evaluation submitted a rather scathing review of her initial volunteer placement which is, however, in large part unwarranted as I will explain below. These factors inevitably skewed the results toward a more negative overall assessment than the overall experiences of students really reflect.
- Second, at least four students had expressed a strong desire to work with homeless children and youth and were initially placed in programs that would allow for such experiences (at Client Services and Education and Employment). Yet, due to an undisclosed event unrelated to this partnership, WIN's leadership had to rescind these opportunities and for the time being stop all volunteer activities involving children. The four students consequently had to work in administrative capacities that did not correspond with their initial expectations and were therefore understandably disappointed.
- Third, unlike at the Coalition where students engaged in an established and well organized program that has accommodated volunteers for two decades, the service learning opportunities at WIN were all newly created for the purpose of this partnership. For that matter, neither the site supervisors nor myself had a reasonable idea whether this format is going to work and if and to what extent it would serve both the needs of the students and the organization. Some of the problems can therefore be considered "growing pains" which need to be clearly understood in order to improve the effectiveness of this partnership in the future.

In the following, I outline the most frequently mentioned problems reported by the students along with suggestions to fix those problems in the future.

- Four of the six WIN respondents felt that the volunteer descriptions provided prior to starting their service work did not offer them with an accurate idea about their tasks and responsibilities at the organization and three of these respondents mentioned that they were not always properly told what precisely their tasks and activities are. Given that I now have a better understanding what the different activities imply, I can devise better initial volunteer descriptions.
- Four WIN volunteers further stated that the volunteer activities did not meet their expectations primarily on the basis that they felt underutilized often missing the opportunity to have real hands-on experiences and client interactions. Others complained that there was more administrative work than they had originally expected. One student working at Jeannie Clark remarked:
"I really think that we could have been used in ways that would benefit the organization more. By the end I felt as if I was doing work that would have been done by someone working there anyways, but that was passed along to me to give me

something to do. I could have handled more responsibilities and would have liked more freedom in the work I did there.”

- To solve this problem, I will meet with prospective site supervisors before the semester to figure out ways to create more opportunities for volunteer-client interactions. In this context, it may be advantageous to create specifically tailored projects such as conducting workshops which three students did last semester (i.e. jewelry and knitting workshops, fashion show) and greatly enjoyed.
- As I mentioned previously, four respondents have signed up for volunteer activities involving children and youth yet such opportunities were cancelled; I am hoping that by the next time this class convenes the organization-internal problems have been solved so that interested students can work with this clientele again.
 - All WIN volunteers felt that they did not have sufficient opportunity to exchange with fellow volunteers at the organization given that each volunteer worked individually with their site supervisors or if more than one person worked with a supervisor, they did so at different times. As I mentioned before, I am planning to overcome this problems by meeting with students on a weekly instead of bi-weekly basis in class on campus and, in so doing, provide more time for students to reflect on their experiences.
 - One student who did not complete the survey was initially placed at the Lex-Bronx shelter in the Bronx. This placement was problematic in so far in that it involved a particularly long and strenuous commute from lower Manhattan to Central Bronx (1.5 hrs each way with three transfers) and was exacerbated by the fact that once the student arrived at the facility often was left with nothing to do. In conjunction with WIN's volunteer coordinator, I solved this problem by reassigning the student to the WIN headquarters where the student successfully organized jewelry-making workshops for clients which was very much appreciated by both the student and the participants of the workshop. In the future, I will abstain from offering volunteer opportunities at sites that are too far away from campus.
 - Finally, one student in particular was highly dissatisfied with her experiences. The student signed up for the Research and Evaluation program which primarily entailed conducting telephone-based follow-up research among former clients to ascertain their current status and their needs. In the student's view, this task turned out to be underwhelming, slow, boring, and tedious and the student consequently disengaged and proceeded to only haphazardly show up at the organization claiming that her supervisor did not communicate with her effectively, take her concerns seriously or that there were problems with email (for assessment of this situation by the corresponding site supervisor, and I am actually tending to take the supervisor's side in this case, see next section). I do accept some responsibility for this situation in that I should have intervened earlier and perhaps made more of an effort to reassign the student to a different service site and activity earlier than I did. We did, however, eventually manage to come to mutually agreeable solution by removing the student from research and evaluation and to place her at a different site where she was able to organize and conduct knitting workshops which both she and the clients participating in the workshop genuinely enjoyed. The reassignment ultimately resulted in the fact that the student still was satisfied with the course per se.

These problems notwithstanding, I would still consider this partnership with WIN highly successful, especially in light of the fact that these volunteer opportunities are quite new and that all these problems can, as I outlined, be solved in relatively easy fashion. Moreover, the idea of giving students a chance to shadow a program manager and thus gain first hand

experience inside the institution remains promising and important. The fact is that students also have to realize that having to deal with bureaucratic issues is a large and not always rewarding or glamorous part of homeless service provision. I am therefore still very excited about the prospect of continuing our partnership with WIN within the original format and upon making some minor adjustments.

To conclude the assessment of students' generally very favorable experiences, I would like to highlight three particularly positive findings that spanned across the volunteer sites.

- First, the evaluations indicated that the students generally felt that the volunteer activities – regardless of service site – allowed them to positively enhance their comprehension of the subject matter with regards to the potential and/or limitations of homeless service organizations (N=13); the ways homeless service organizations operate and the constraints they face (N=10), the nature of homelessness and homeless people's problems (N=9); and the impact of homeless services on homeless people's lives (N=8). The only areas where felt that their understanding was only somewhat or not enhanced were related to the effects of homeless policy on homeless people's lives (N=7), and the problem of homelessness in New York City (N=7), both of which are issues that I will have to address better in the academic portion of the course in the future.
- Second, with the exception of two students (at Winners Circle and Research and Evaluation), all survey respondents stated that they would recommend the particular volunteer assignment to future course participants. This indicates that even students who have had problems were satisfied enough with their experiences to endorse future placements at the site.
- Finally, nine students indicated that they will either definitely (N=5, all at GCFP) or possibly continue volunteering at the organization. Another three said that they would have liked to continue but won't have time to do so. In the end, only one otherwise quite satisfied student states that she will not continue volunteering. This finding is a true testimony to the fact that the service learning activities were, from the students' perspective, successful.

2.3. Site-Supervisor Evaluations

An evaluation of such a Civic Engagement Course would be incomplete without an assessment of the perceptions of our service partners and especially the site supervisors who worked with the students. To learn about the experiences of the site supervisors, I conducted an email survey among the seven site supervisors asking them to provide comments to a total of thirteen questions (see section 4.3). Five supervisors responded providing an assessment on the performance of 16 out of the seventeen students. Only one student, Mara C., who switched service sites during the semester, was not accounted for. As with the student evaluations, I am providing a complete and unedited account of the site supervisors' perceptions and opinions in section 4.4. of this report. In the following, I would like to highlight the following key findings:

With the exception of one site supervisor (see below), all supervisors were genuinely pleased with the performance of the students working under their supervision. The site supervisors basically confirmed the students' self-assessment in that 12 of the 13 students felt that they either met or exceeded their supervisor's expectations. Among the positive experiences were the following:

- With the exception of one site-supervisor at Research and Evaluation (see below), all were very satisfied with the performance of the volunteers providing individualized praise for all of them and their outstanding efforts. All further remarked that the students always dealt with clients and staff in courteous and respectful ways.
- All supervisors were pleased with nature and extent of communication between all entities involved, again with the one exception at Research and Evaluation where the site-supervisor noted poor communication and tardiness on behalf of the student;
- Three of the five respondents felt that they were well informed about the objectives of the course but two were not (see below).
- Except for one supervisor who was not sure, all supervisors felt that the students were adequately prepared for their service work and were sufficiently knowledgeable about the problem of homelessness and continued to learn more because of their experiences.

In terms of problems reported by site supervisors, three stand out. First, two of the five supervisors who responded felt that they were not informed well enough about the academic objectives of the course and that they had, for whatever reason, not received or read the email I had sent to all supervisors at the beginning of the partnership outlining my expectations including a copy of the course syllabus. I believe that this problem can be solved with one or more meetings with prospective site supervisors before the semester in which I can clearly explain the nature of the course, the objectives, and answer any questions supervisors may have.

Second, three supervisors remarked in the context of different questions that more opportunities for client-volunteer interactions and, in the case of GCFP, more outreach opportunities would have been desirable, essentially echoing student's complaints. This finding is important in as much in that site-supervisors too felt that this aspect of the service learning experience ought to be improved.

The third and repeatedly mentioned problem involved the experiences of one site supervisor who was very dissatisfied with her volunteer's performance involved the volunteer placement at Research and Evaluation, an assessment that corresponds with the similarly negative evaluation by the student in question that I described in student evaluation portion of this chapter. The underlying problem was that this student placement per se simply constituted a bad match in that the expectations of both the supervisor and the student were incompatible. This situation was aggravated by the fact that both, particularly the student, did not communicate any problems and grievances effectively. The student consequently disengaged, did not show up at prearranged times, and simply failed to perform her tasks. Ultimately, however, I believe that the main responsibility for this situation lied with the student who, to be quite honest, simply did not live up to the expectations. The site supervisor told me via email that while the student did not conduct one single telephone interview during her time at the organization, another volunteer not associated with Lang College managed to conduct 26 interviews in the same time period and therefore gained, quite in contrast to my student, very valuable insights. Given that this service learning opportunity can, if the student is engaged and active, lead to very valuable insights, I do not see a reason to abandon the idea of placing students at this program.

This one negative experience notwithstanding, the overall result of the survey indicate that the site supervisors remained satisfied and that all of them, including the dissatisfied supervisor at Research and Evaluation, are interested in continuing the partnership and look forward to working with Lang students again in the future.

3. Summary of Main Lessons and Future Plans

3.1. Major Accomplishments and Problems

All things considered, I was very pleased with the course and the overall positive assessment by both students and site supervisors that I have outlined in the aforementioned evaluation of the course. Most importantly, however, is the fact that students' theoretical comprehension of the multi-faceted nature of homelessness was greatly enhanced by the service learning component. In comparison to the strictly seminar-style urban homelessness classes I had successfully taught in the past, students in this CEC course gained particularly valuable insights in the following manner:

- First, students gained a much better understanding of the problems involved in dealing with and addressing the complex societal issue of homelessness. When discussing homelessness strictly in theoretical terms, it is easy to neglect the complexity of homelessness. Although students may not always have had the opportunity to interact with homeless clients the way they would have wanted to, they still got a very good sense how individually different homeless people's problems are, even if addressing specific subpopulations such as homeless women and children who in the academic literature are often addressed as a "coherent" group.
- Second, students gained an appreciation for the efforts of staff of homeless service organizations and the multiple, especially financial constraints under which they operate. Some students commended the passion, patience, and perseverance many site-supervisors and other staff members display while others noticed and ultimately understood that other staff members are frustrated, overworked, and overwhelmed by the immense challenges that this line of work brings and thus not always treat clients in the way they should. Students realized quickly that dealing with homeless clients and the multiplicity of problems they face often is an uphill battle that is aggravated by the fact that neither the organizations nor the welfare system per se possess the necessary resources to adequately address clients' problems at all times. The more they were impressed that service provision often does succeed in providing homeless clients with services that allow them to stabilize their lives.
- Third, students further learned that solutions to solving the homelessness crisis are much harder to develop once considering the realities on the ground and realizing that each individual homeless person's problems are different and require individualized solutions. This finding forces students to realize that solving homelessness involves more than the lip-service of demanding the "big" societal changes necessary to adequately solve the problem at a national scale. The big solutions – more affordable housing, living wage jobs, welfare expansion – are well known but are, in the current political climate of this country, relatively unattainable at the national scale necessitating local solutions.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the service learning work allowed students to challenge stereotypes they may have had about homeless people. Although my students are, compared to student bodies at other universities, overwhelmingly "liberal" and thus understanding and compassionate about social inequalities, many still realized that they may have had deep seated notions about homeless people that confirm societal perceptions as homeless people as deviant, lazy, or even "voluntarily" homeless. Many students were surprised to learn that homeless people do not confirm such notions and that most homeless people are not that different

from “regular” folks except for one thing – they are simply too poor to afford regular housing in increasingly expensive housing markets.

The main consequence of these often eye-opening insights students gained was that students performed particularly well in academic terms because the field experiences enhanced their interest to weigh their personal experiences against academic insights about homelessness. An indication for this is the fact that students in this course performed better on written assignments than their peers who took the strictly seminar style incarnation of my urban homelessness course I had offered in the past. I am generally happy to report that all students except for one (the aforementioned student at Research and Development who simply clocked to few hours to receive a better grade) received As in the class. Moreover, students’ eagerness to learn was reflected in the fact that thirteen of the seventeen students not only met the 45 hour minimum service learning requirement but actually exceeded it and thus received extra credit despite the fact that all students are full-time students with very high course loads. One student at WIN actually spent 55.5 hours at the organization over the course of the semester.

These major accomplishments notwithstanding, there were a number of problems with the course that I will have to address before offering this course again as I have demonstrated in the previous chapter. To alleviate most of these problems, I am planning to convene meetings with prospective site supervisors well in advance of the semester I plan on teaching this CEC course again to talk about ways to enhance the effectiveness of the partnership and the different volunteer opportunities WIN is offering, as well as to enhance site supervisors’ understanding of the learning objectives. Of particular importance hereby is to find ways to provide future WIN volunteers with more opportunities to interact with clients while still being engaged in administrative tasks. I have already started the process by providing the volunteer coordinator at WIN (and for that matter GCFP) with copies of the evaluations and this report.

3.2. Future Plans

Given the overall very successful outcome of this CEC course and the continuing interest by both homeless service organizations and the people I worked with there, I am definitely planning on teaching this course again in the future. Given that I hold a joint appointment in two of the New School’s seven academic divisions – Eugene Lang College (ELC) and the New School for General Studies’ Bachelor’s Program (NSGS-BA) - I am planning on teaching this course regularly ideally alternating the courses in the Fall (ELC) and Spring (NSGS-BA). In so doing, I would like to create sustainable, long-term partnerships with CFH and WIN and supply them with a steady and predictable stream of volunteers throughout the academic year. Whether the anticipated alternation can be accomplished for the 2008/09 academic year, however, is not yet certain as I am awaiting a decision by the Dean’s office about a pending pre-tenure sabbatical application which may go into effect as early as the Spring 2009. Therefore, I have tentatively scheduled both courses for the Fall 2008 semester.

The format of the courses, however, will be different for each of the academic units. For the course I plan on teaching at ELC, I will retain the basic format of the present course that combines student’s service learning throughout the semester with regular yet more frequent (weekly) on-campus class sessions. Meeting in class more frequently will further allow for spreading students’ service learning activities more evenly over the semester and I

am planning on expanding the service learning portion of the course to 12 instead of 9 weeks.

The course at NSGS-BA, on the other hand, will become a so-called “hybrid” course in that students, as those at Lang, engage in volunteer work at the two organizations, yet the academic portion of the course will be taught exclusively online. The reason for doing so is that NSGS’s Bachelor’s Program serves the needs of adult students who decided to return to school to complete their BA degrees. These students, unlike their typically younger Lang counterparts, almost all work full time and therefore take advantage of the growing contingency of online courses the BA-Program offers. The aforementioned reservations of Lang students with regards to their lack of interest in engaging in online learning are therefore not a primary concern for NSGS-BA students. I have already developed the technological infrastructure and received training for implementing the online portion of the course (i.e. the effective use of Blackboard’s discussion, Blog, and WIKI functions) and have received generous support from the Andrew Mellon Foundation to do so. The academic contents and basic requirements for the course will be very similar to those I have been and will continue using for the ELC course.

I am truly looking forward to teaching this course again in these two anticipated formats and would like to thank Project Pericles for the generous support I have received to implement this course during the past semester. Needless to say, I would more than appreciate ongoing funding for making these courses possible in the future.

3.3. Personal Lessons and Concluding Thoughts

In terms of personal lessons learned that may benefit other instructors, I would first highlight two problems I encountered that prospective instructors of similarly structured courses ought to take into consideration:

- First, setting up such a course was much more difficult, stressful, and time-consuming than I had originally imagined in that it constitutes an administrative nightmare to coordinate the schedules of 17 students with those of seven site supervisors and by doing so trying to accommodate everybody’s preferences, needs, and constraints. Although I had taught a service learning course before when working at Temple University, I was not aware that there would be so much bureaucratic work involved in implementing and conducting the course. At Temple, I had a very good and efficient teaching assistant and I now know and appreciate much more what my TA really did for me. In that light, I actually believe that I earned every penny of the provided funds that I had allocated for compensating for my time and efforts.
- A second and related administrative problem I encountered involved difficulties in developing and fine-tuning legal documents that spell out the rights and responsibilities of all entities involved. I did not expect that the development and approval of such important legal documents would take so much time and effort especially given that I did not have blueprints or sufficient institutional support to assist me in this matter.

Given these problems, fellow instructors ought to be warned that the initial set up of such a course, especially when trying to individually tailor service learning experiences, is extraordinarily difficult and at times frustrating for both the instructor her/himself and respective coordinators at the partner organizations. It is therefore imperative to start the process of planning for such a course as early as possible, particularly given that such planning needs to account for varying response times by the service partners. In this case, it

turned out to be problematic that the actual planning of the course and identification of service sites occurred over the summer when many staff members and for that matter myself embark on vacations or projects.

In the end more importantly, however, is the insight that all problems notwithstanding, such an endeavor is worth the effort and pays tremendous dividends in that it gives students the opportunity to learn about a complex issue such as homelessness in a much more nuanced fashion and gained tremendous personal insights that they would not have gained in a traditional seminar-style class structure. Through the various course assignments, I was able to witness how the students excelled and grew over the course of the semester. In the end, I am happy I taught the course, am looking forward to teaching it again, and like to thank Project Pericles for the generous support provided.

4.1. Course Syllabus

**The New School for Liberal Arts
Eugene Lang College**

**Urban Studies
Fall 2007**

**“Engaging Urban Homelessness:”
LURB 3003A**

Jürgen von Mahs

Class Time: Monday and Wednesday, 12:00-1:40 pm
Location: 65 W11th St, Room 464
Instructor Contact Info:
Office: 66W 12th Street, Room 904
Tel. (212) 229-5119
Email: freiherr@newschool.edu
Office Hours: Monday, 2-3:45 (and by appointment)

Course Description

“Engaging Urban Homelessness,” a Civic Engagement Course, introduces students to the multifaceted problem of urban homelessness through service learning offering students the opportunity to place field experiences of working with homeless service and advocacy organizations in New York City within a rigorous academic framework and to think about ways to address homelessness in creative, innovative, and unconventional ways.

The first part of the course consists of a series of lectures that will introduce students to the nature and extent of homelessness, New York’s homeless service infrastructure, and to ethical considerations in conducting community-based work with homeless people. The main objective is to prepare students for their community work and provide them with a principal understanding of the nature and extent of urban homelessness, the root causes of homelessness, and the principal societal and political responses to the problem. Students also learn about ways to deal with particularly vulnerable populations such as the homeless and the organizations serving them in respectful and sensitive ways.

In the second part of the course, student will spend approximately 5 hours per week for ten weeks working in groups with select homeless service organizations on specific, predetermined tasks which involve yet are not limited to outreach, client-service interactions, policy formulation and advocacy, and service management. Biweekly class sessions provide an opportunity to share personal impressions of working for and with the homeless and to further their expertise about homelessness in the areas of

- Lived experiences of homelessness and ethnographic accounts of homelessness;
- The impact of public policy and social control on homeless people’s coping and survival strategies
- Homeless people’s exit strategies and the barriers they face in overcoming homelessness;
- Problems affecting homeless women, children, and families;

In gaining such expertise and, at the same time, doing relevant work for homeless service organizations students are actively and deliberately engaged in social change being empowered to make a difference for the organizations they work in and the people these organizations serve.

The third part of the course is dedicated toward collaboratively developing creative solutions to urban homelessness beyond mainstream approaches to homelessness in the context of both the class discussion and the practical experiences students have gained in the field.

Service Learning Opportunities

For this course, I have established partnerships with two innovative homeless service organizations in New York City that offer a broad range of services to people affected by homelessness including the New York **Coalition for the Homeless (CFTH)** and **Women in Need (WIN)**. At the **CFTH**, you will have an opportunity to either work as a job and computer training counselor in their First Step Job Training Program or as an outreach worker in their Grand Central Food Program. At **WIN**, volunteers will work as principal assistants of the housing specialist, employment services, after-care, family services, and the program director. Additional functions may include assisting in the preparation of special events. To learn more about the CFTH and WIN, please visit their websites (see Internet Resources on p. 4).

A final list of volunteer opportunities including specific job descriptions, along with anticipated times for service commitments and locations will be announced by September 17. Students will have an opportunity to indicate their preferences and I will do my best to accommodate your interests and schedules.

Course Requirements

In this course, students are asked to complete 50 hours of service work, keep a course diary, write a field report, complete a series of reaction papers, and to regularly attend classes and participate in discussions.

1. The main requirement for the course is that students commit themselves to **approximately 5 hours per week in service work for a minimum of 50 hours** during a nine-week period from October 1 to Dec. 05 (weeks 5 through 14). Students must coordinate with both fellow group members and the respective site-supervisor to ensure that student's individual schedules and the organization's expectations are matched to be mutually agreeable and beneficial. Students are required to keep a log of the days and times in which they worked for the respective organization and must have their site supervisor sign and date the log on a weekly basis. The completion of service work constitutes **40 percent** of the overall course grade. Every hour less than the required minimum of 50 contact hours results in a two-point deduction. Conversely, service work in excess of the required participation will result in extra-credit of one point per hour up to a maximum of 5 points.
2. You are expected to keep a **course diary** in which you reflect critically on lectures and discussions in class, document the work you have provided for the organization, reflect on any positive or negative occurrences, engage critically with the assigned readings, and discuss anything else that may relate to your experiences in the course. I expect edited and typed weekly entries of at least two pages each which you are expected to send me via email on Oct. 1, Oct. 29, and Dec. 05. I provide feedback via email and award a tentative grade for all new entries on the basis of clarity, quality, and depth of findings in relation to your fellow student's efforts. An edited and streamlined version of the course diary is **due December 17**

- will be worth **15 percent** of the course grade. Specific instructions will be posted will be posted on blackboard on a weekly basis.
3. Based on the entries from your course diary, you are expected to write a **7-page field report** that describes your work and your experiences working with the service provider and embeds such experiences in the academic literature. This report is **due Nov. 26** and has to be sent to your instructor and your fellow classmates via email using Blackboard's communication device. A hardcopy of the report is due Nov. 28 in class. In class on Nov. 28 and Dec. 03, you are also expected to give a **ten-minute presentation** about your experiences and should coordinate with classmates who have worked in the same setting. Both field report and presentation are worth **15 percent** of the overall course grade.
 4. You will be asked to complete four **reaction papers** in preparation for the bi-weekly class sessions in which you critically reflect on the course readings incorporating any field experience that may be relevant. Each reaction paper has to be typed, app. 2-3 pages in lengths, and must be submitted both electronically and in form of a hardcopy at the assigned due date (Oct. 08 and 22, Nov. 05 and 19). Specific instructions for the reaction papers will be provided on the Wednesday prior to the due date. Each reaction paper will be worth 5 percent for a total of **20 percent** of the course grade..
 5. Regular **attendance** and **participation** in discussions are part of the course requirements and constitute **10 percent** of the grade. Participation will be measured by the extent, regularity, and quality of your participation in course discussion on a ten-point/percent scale (i.e. excellent participation will result in 10 points/percent (A), good, regular participation in 8 or 9 points/percent (B), good yet only occasional participation in 7 points/percent (C), etc.). Given that the course meets rather infrequently, it is particularly important to regularly attend any scheduled on-campus class sessions. Any unexplained absence or lateness (more than 10 minutes late) will result in a 2 point/percent deduction from 10 percent/points available for attendance and participation. More than three unexplained absences will, in line with Eugene Lang College's guidelines, result in an F-grade for the course. Therefore, make sure to be on time, to regularly participate in class, and to inform your instructor in advance if you have a legitimate reason for missing class and be prepared to provide appropriate evidence. The instructor will ultimately determine what constitutes a "legitimate" absence.

Please note that **ANY late submission** is subject to penalty (one grade point for each day it is late, e.g. A- to B+, etc.) unless you have a reasonable explanation that is documented by appropriate evidence. If you foresee a potential lateness, it is your responsibility to check with your instructor who will ultimately decide if a delay is "reasonable." I will, by default, not accept any excuses on the day or the day before an assignment is due which includes computer or printer problems (avoid last minute efforts to prevent this from happening!)

Incompletes

A grade of "incomplete" may be assigned by an instructor at his/her discretion upon request by a student. If an instructor is inclined to offer an incomplete, then the student has until the sixth week of the following semester to complete and submit to the instructor the outstanding work and/or the work agreed upon by the instructor and student. An incomplete becomes an "Unofficial Withdrawal and Failure" (WF) if the work is not submitted in a timely fashion.

Course Texts

The following book is available at **Shakespeare & Co** Bookseller's Broadway store (716 Broadway & Washington Place, 212- 529 1330):

- **Hopper**, Kim, 2003. *Reckoning with Homelessness*. Cornell University Press: Cornell. \$19.95

Most other readings are compiled in a **Coursepack** which is available at **Advanced Copy Center** (552 La Guardia Place, just south of Washington Square, Tel. 212-288 1001) for app. \$18.

- o von Mahs, Jürgen, 2005: *Coursepack – Engaging Urban Homelessness*

All other readings, particularly large texts (to save costs) are available in electronic form and are posted on **Blackboard**, section “Readings.”

Please note that all **readings are required** and you are expected to reflect on contents and main lessons learned in your Course Diary.

Internet Resources

There are a number of helpful websites that provide useful, up-to-date information on homelessness in the U.S. and abroad. Some of the required readings can be found on these websites. Add the following links to your favorites in your browser by accessing the following web links in the electronic version of this syllabus (→ *right-click the link and hold Ctrl-key simultaneously*) or by copying the link into the address window of your browser.

- o **New York Coalition for the Homeless:** <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/home/home/index.html>
- o **Women in Need:** <http://www.women-in-need.org>
- o **National Coalition for the Homeless:** <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>
- o **National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty:** <http://www.nlchp.org/>
- o **National Alliance to End Homelessness:** <http://www.endhomelessness.org/>
- o **New York Department of Homeless Services:** <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/html/home/home.shtml>
- o **FEANTSA (European Observatory on Homelessness):**

Mid-Semester Review

Students who are at risk of failing the course, missed classes, and/or perform below the class average will receive a written mid-semester review that will inform you about your performance in the course to date, your grades for the course diary, the course diary, and whether or not your participation and attendance meet the expectations of your instructor. I will send a copy of your mid semester review to Academic Advising if you are at risk of failing the course. The mid-semester review will give you a clear sense about your strengths and weaknesses and thus ways to improve your performance.

Special Needs:

In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student requesting accommodations must first meet with Student Disability Services. Staff from that office will meet with students requesting accommodations and related services, and if appropriate, provide an Academic Adjustment Notice for the student to provide to his or her instructors. The instructor is required to review the letter with the student and discuss the accommodations, provided the student brings the letter to the attention of the instructor. This letter is necessary in order for classroom accommodations to be provided.

Student Disability Services is located at 79 Fifth Avenue - 5th Floor. The phone number is (212) 229-5626. Students and faculty are expected to review the Student Disability Services webpage. The webpage can be found at <http://www.newschool.edu/studentaffairs/disability/> and the office is available to answer any questions or concerns.

Policies regarding Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Be advised that there are very strict University guidelines on **plagiarism**. Cheating, copying published material without proper referencing, using internet papermills, using papers from previous courses, or copying fellow students' work constitutes fraud and carries significant

penalties, such as a definite F-Grade for the course and in the worst case expulsion from the University. If you are not sure about what constitutes plagiarism (i.e. how to reference and to paraphrase) contact your instructor. For more information about the consequences of plagiarism, please read the Policy on Academic Honesty in the Eugene Lang College catalog. I will not allow any form of plagiarism and I make NO exceptions. I will not permit any retrospective excuses or claims of unawareness. Therefore, **do not even think about it!!!!**

Guidelines Pertaining to Working with Homeless People and Homeless Service Organizations

Working with homeless people can be a rewarding yet challenging task. The following set of guidelines are intended to protect and preserve the rights, needs, and expectations of all entities involved including homeless clients, the organization you are serving, your fellow classmates, and yourself. Courteous and respectful conduct, reciprocity, punctuality, and reliability are paramount. The following list contains the expectations of each entity and should be upheld at all times. Any problems must be immediately communicated to me via telephone or email and I will take appropriate action. Please read the following list of mutual expectations, safety precautions, and additional requirements carefully:

Mutual Expectations

Homeless Clients can expect you

- To be courteous and respectful;
- To provide service within the predetermined task and objectives;
- To be patient and accommodating;
- To respect their privacy and to not disclose personal information to third parties including the media, administrative entities, and the police;

Homeless Service Organization you are working for can expect you

- To be on time and to adhere to predetermined schedules (any deviations and changes must be communicated to both your site supervisor and your instructor ahead of time);
- To fulfill you predetermined task dutifully and flexibly;
- To adhere to any institutional guidelines and policies;

Your *fellow class mates*, especially when working in teams, can expect you

- To do your share and to work collaboratively in a team environment;
- To be responsive to concerns and to ensure that workloads are balanced between all people involved;

You can expect that

- Your community work is interesting, challenging, and to be within the objectives of the class;
- your time is being used in appropriate, non-demeaning, and productive ways;
- That your time is valued, your privacy respected, and your personal safety ensured (see next point).

Important safety precautions.

Many homeless people are characterized by multiple vulnerabilities and often have complex and interrelated social problems including mental health and substance abuse problems, histories of abuse and violence, social isolation and neglect. Some people are suspicious and mistrustful, others may have difficulties in communicating their problems effectively. All this makes it difficult to effectively work with homeless people and a certain extent of unpredictability is unavoidable. Therefore it is important that you keep the following precautions in mind:

- For the sake of self-preservation, try to keep a professional distance between yourself and your clients;
- Do not take rude, reserved, or even hostile attitudes by clients personal – many homeless people have had negative past experiences with service, shelter, or welfare providers or have experienced blatant forms of personal or

institutional racism and it takes time to overcome mistrust and past negative experiences and to build rapport and a basis for communication;

- Use common sense and be aware of your surroundings at all times;
- Always stay on the premises of the service organization and never follow an "invitation" by a client to go elsewhere; When fulfilling any tasks outside the premises, make sure you are accompanied by someone you trust;
- Politely decline any sexual or otherwise inappropriate advances and report any inappropriate behaviors immediately;
- Make sure to leave an ICE entry in your cellphone address book (ICE stands for In Case of Emergency and provides police or other authorities with a chance to establish an emergency contact)

Important Paperwork (to be filled out before beginning field work):

- Liability waiver
- Child abuse clearance (if working with homeless children)
- Confidentiality Declarations

Communication:

The nature of this course and the fact that considerable time will be spent outside the classroom makes proper communication between the instructor, the community organization, fellow classmates, and yourself imperative. **Any problems** in relation with your field work, academic problems, and the relationship with organization staff, site supervisors, homeless clients, or fellow classmates **MUST be communicated** immediately in order to find mutually agreeable solutions.

In order to get in touch with me, please contact me before/after class, come to my office hours, or send me an email (for immediate issues, put URGENT in the subject heading and I respond within the day, for routine issues please allow 2-3 days for me to get back to you). For true emergencies, you may call me on my cellphone (267-235-7319) but please use this option only in true emergencies and do not pass on this number to others (I value my privacy...).

Moreover, you are expected to have and regularly check your Newschool email account since I will send communication via Blackboard which uses the Newschool email system exclusively. If you are primarily using a different email account, please activate the auto-forward function of your Newschool account so that messages and attachments are automatically forwarded. Always identify the class number (**LURB 3003**) and your last name in the subject heading so that I know the message is from a student. To avert the risk of viruses, I will not open messages from people that I can not readily identify!

In addition, I will use *Blackboard* in this class. Blackboard is an easy to use communication and course assistance tool using the Internet to increase communication between teachers and students. It allows me to post announcement, provide class information, upload assignments and instructions for reaction papers and diary entries, and send emails to selected users or the entire group. It allows students to access links to the Internet the instructor provides. In addition, Blackboard's discussion forum allows students to share relevant field experiences, concerns, and important findings with classmates and the instructor. Information on how to access and use Blackboard will be provided separately at the beginning of September.

Finally, I am aware that students have personal lives, problems, and other commitments that oftentimes interfere with student obligations. Nonetheless, it is YOUR responsibility to notify me immediately if you are having problems meeting deadlines, if you can't attend classes,

etc. so that we can work collaboratively on solutions. For that matter, come to my office hours, contact me before/after class, or send me an email.

Good luck and enjoy the course!

COURSE SYLLABUS

(subject to revision)

- Dates in **black** indicate regular class sessions to be held in our regular classroom
- Dates in **blue** indicate time-slots dedicated for service work in which we will **not** meet in class. You are expected to commit to approximately five hours per week to work for your respective community organization and will arrange times with the organization accordingly.

PART I:	
Understanding Urban Homelessness in the U.S.: Characteristics, Causes, and Policy Responses	
WEEK 1	
Sept. 5	Introduction
WEEK 2	
Sept. 10	Overview: The Nature and Extent of Homelessness
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CP1³: Wright, J., B. Rubin, and J. Devine, 1998. Chapter 3: <i>Why homelessness can not be counted.</i> ▪ CP2: Burt, M., Aron, L., Lee, E. and Valente J., 2001. <i>Homeless families, singles, and others.</i> ▪ BB⁴ NAHE, 2007. Homeless Counts ▪ BB HUD, 2007. Annual Assessment Report to Congress
Sept. 12	<i>Class Cancelled (Rosh Hashanah)</i>
WEEK 3	
Sept. 17	Overview: The Causes of Homelessness: From Global to Local
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CP3: Wolch, J. and M. Dear, 1993. <i>Understanding homelessness. From global to local.</i> ▪ CP4: Wright, J., B. Rubin, and J. Devine, 1998. <i>Chapter 1. The homeless: What are the issues? What are the controversies?</i>
Sept. 19	Overview: Homelessness and Homeless Policy in the United States
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CP5.: Foscarinis, M., 1996, <i>The federal response: the Stuart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act.</i> ▪ CP6: Burt, M., Aron, L., Lee, E. and Valente J., 2001. <i>Homeless assistance programs in 1996 with comparison to the late 1980s.</i> ▪ BB: NAEH, 2007. Policy Guide
PART II:	
Civic Engagement: Working with Homeless Service Organizations	
WEEK 4	
Sept. 24	Homelessness in New York City
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KH Ch. 2: <i>Unearned keep: From Almshouse to shelter in New York City</i> ▪ BB: Markee, P. 2002. <i>Housing a growing city.: New York's bust in boom times.</i> ▪ CP7 Markee, P., 2003. <i>A History of Modern Homelessness in New York</i>

³ CP refers to the Course Pack

⁴ BB refers to readings made available on Blackboard, Subsection "Readings"

	City.pdf
Sept. 26	Working with the Homeless I: Ethical Considerations
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CP8 Green, A. 2003. Difficult Stories. Service Learning, Race, Class, and Whiteness
Announcements	Reaction Paper 1 Announced (Due Oct. 03)
WEEK 5	
Oct. 01	Working with Homeless II: Practical Considerations and Orientation
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Reading Assignments for class on Oct. 08
Announcements	Course Diary Due (via email)
Oct. 03	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Reading Assignments for class on Oct. 08
WEEK 6	
Oct. 08	Thematic Session I: Ethnographic Accounts of Homelessness
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KH Ch. 3: <i>Streets, shelters and flops: An ethnographic study of homeless men, 1979-1982.</i> KH Ch. 4: <i>The Airport as a home.</i> KH Ch. 6: <i>Homelessness and African American Men</i>
Announcements	Reaction Paper 1 Due Reaction Paper 2 Announced (Due Oct. 22)
Oct. 10	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Reading Assignments for class on Oct. 22
WEEK 7	
Oct. 15	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Reading Assignments for class on Oct. 22
Oct. 17	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Reading Assignments for class on Oct. 22
WEEK 8	
Oct. 22	Thematic Session II: Survival Strategies and their Criminalization
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CP9: Snow, D., L. Anderson, T. Quist, and D. Cress, 1996. <i>Material survival strategies of homeless people: Homeless people as bricoleurs.</i> CP10: Wolch, J. and M. Dear, 1993. <i>Life without a home.</i> CP11: Mitchell, 2003: <i>The annihilation of space by law.</i>
Announcements	Reaction Paper 2 Due
Oct. 24	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Reading Assignments for class on Nov 05
Announcements	Reaction Paper 3 Announced (Due Oct. 31)
WEEK 9	
Oct. 29	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Reading Assignments for class on Nov. 05
Announcements	Course Diary Due (via email)
Oct. 31	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Reading Assignments for class on Nov. 05

WEEK 10	
Nov. 05	Thematic Session III: Labor Market Access and Economic Exclusion
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BB: Flaming et al., 2004. Ch. 6 Escaping Homelessness Through Work ▪ CP12: Hardin, Bristow, 1996. <i>Why the road off the road is not paved with jobs.</i> ▪ CP13: Von Mahs, 2005. Ch. 5 From Welfare to Work
Announcements	Reaction Paper 3 Due
Nov. 07	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow Reading Assignments for class on Nov. 19
Announcements	Reaction Paper 4 Announced (Due Nov. 19)
WEEK 11	
Nov. 12	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow Reading Assignments for class on Nov. 19
Nov. 14	Service Work
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow Reading Assignments for class on 19
WEEK 12	
Nov. 19	Thematic Session IV: Homelessness in International Comparison
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CP14: Edgar, B., W. Doherty, and A. Mina-Coul, A., 1999. <i>Welfare, housing and social exclusion: A comparative framework</i> ▪ CP15: Helvie C. and Kunstmann, W., 1999. <i>Comparison of definition, prevalence, demographics, trends, health concerns in seven countries.</i> ▪ CP16: Helvie C. and Kunstmann, W., 1999. <i>Comparison of public and private resources in seven countries.</i> ▪ CP17 von Mahs, 2005. The socio-spatial exclusion of homeless people in Berlin and Los Angeles
Announcements	Reaction Paper 4 Due
Nov. 21	Thanksgiving -- Class and Service Work Cancelled (unless you made specific arrangements with your Community Organization)
WEEK 13	
Nov. 26	Service Work
Announcements	Guidelines for Field Reports Announced (Due, Nov. 26)
Nov. 28	Service Work
WEEK 14	
Dec. 03	Service Work
Announcements	FIELD REPORTS DUE (via email)
PART IV: Coming Home: Solutions to Homelessness	
Dec. 05	Working with the Homeless: Revisited (Student Presentations)
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TBA: Student's Field Reports
Announcements	Field reports due (hardcopy) Course Diary Due (via email)
WEEK 15	
Dec. 10	Working with the Homeless: Revisited (Student Presentations)
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TBA: Student's Field Reports

Dec. 12	Public Interventions: New York's 10-Year Plan
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NYC Mayors Office, 2005. Uniting for Solutions beyond Shelter - Action Plan ▪ CP18: Glasser, I. and R. Bridgeman, 1999. Chapter 5: <i>Pathways out of homelessness.</i>
WEEK 16	
Dec. 17	Advocacy and Self-Help: Strengthen the Grass Roots
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KH: Ch. 7 <i>Negotiating Settlement: Advocacy for the homeless poor in the United States, 1980-1995.</i> ▪ CP19. Wright, J., B. Rubin, and J. Devine, 1998. <i>Homelessness in the twentieth century.</i> ▪ CP20 Dear, Michael and Jurgen von Mahs, 1997. <i>Housing for the Homeless, by the Homeless and of the Homeless.</i>
Announcements	COURSE DIARY DUE
Dec. 19	Academia and Activism: What WE can do.
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KH: Ch. 8 <i>Limits to witnessing: From ethnography to engagement.</i>
Dec. 12	Local Solutions: New York's 10-Year Plan
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NYC Mayors Office, 2005. Uniting for Solutions beyond Shelter - Action Plan ▪ CP18: Glasser, I. and R. Bridgeman, 1999. Chapter 5: <i>Pathways out of homelessness.</i>
WEEK 16	
Dec. 17	Solutions for the U.S.: The Global Picture
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CP14: Edgar, B., W. Doherty, and A. Mina-Coul, A., 1999. <i>Welfare, housing and social exclusion: A comparative framework</i> ▪ CP15: Helvie C. and Kunstmann, W., 1999. <i>Comparison of definition, prevalence, demographics, trends, health concerns in seven countries.</i> ▪ CP16: Helvie C. and Kunstmann, W., 1999. <i>Comparison of public and private resources in seven countries.</i> ▪ CP17 von Mahs, 2005. The socio-spatial exclusion of homeless people in Berlin and Los Angeles
Announcements	COURSE DIARY DUE
Dec. 19	Advocacy and Self-Help: Strengthening the Grass Roots
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KH: Ch. 8 <i>Limits to witnessing: From ethnography to engagement.</i> ▪ KH: Ch. 7 <i>Negotiating Settlement: Advocacy for the homeless poor in the United States, 1980-1995.</i> ▪ CP19. Wright, J., B. Rubin, and J. Devine, 1998. <i>Homelessness in the twentieth century.</i> ▪ CP20 Dear, Michael and Jurgen von Mahs, 1997. <i>Housing for the Homeless, by the Homeless and of the Homeless.</i>

Appendix 4.2 Service Learning Opportunities and Student Placement

Note: To ensure confidentiality, I have deleted the addresses and personal contact information of site supervisors and deleted their last names

Engaging Homelessness
 Fall 2007
 v. Mahs

SERVICE LEARNING/ VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT AND SCHEDULE Final List

Any deviations should be communicated and negotiated directly with your site supervisor!

COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

		M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU
	Point person							
CFH								
Grand Central Food	Juan D.							
Address Contact Info		The Grand Central Food Program is the Coalition's mobile soup kitchen that provides 800 hot, nutritious meals at 25 separate sites every night of the year. GCFP and its dedicated corps of volunteers form a lifeline for hundreds of homeless individuals and families as well as the poor and working poor who face hunger on a daily basis. GCFP volunteers not only provide nutritious meals, but also distribute clothing, blankets, and personal hygiene items such as toiletries and underwear. The program provides volunteers with an opportunity for doing important outreach work geared toward linking chronic street homeless to a range of programs the Coalition has to offer. Given that GCFP operates primarily in the evening hours, this volunteer opportunity should be of particular interest for students with busy day schedules. GCFP runs three vans that can accommodate 1 to 2 volunteers each and shifts run M-F and Sunday from 6:45 to 9:30-10:00						
Elyse		X		X				
William		X		X				
Benjamin		X			X			
Peter			X		X			
Allison				X	X			
Tessia				X	X			
Chelsea			X		X			
Wingkong					X	X		X
	Distribution	3	3	5	4	1	0	1

WOMEN IN NEED

	Point person	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU
WIN								
At Jennie A. Clarke Residence	Beth G., Program Director							
Address Contact Info		Jeannie A. Clark Residence is a transitions shelter housing up to 73 homeless families located at E. 100 th Street. One volunteer would assist program director Beth Gonzales in various duties assigned by her associated with shelter operation and various counseling and referral services for shelter residents. Operating hours are between 9 and 5 or 11 and 7 would have to be coordinated with the program director.						
Theresa						9-3		
Sarah		9-5						
WIN								
Lex-Bronx Residence	Patience O., Program Director							
Address Contact Info		The Lex-Bronx Residence is a transitional shelter with 31 family units located at E183 Street in the Bronx. Volunteers would assist Program Director Dr. Patience Oti with various service tasks including talking to clients, escorting them to appointments, or helping them with housing and job searches including accompanying them to appointments. Services are provided M-F between 9 and 5 and specific schedules would have to be arranged with the program director.						
Mara					9:5			
WIN								
Winners Circle at Jennie A. Clarke	Milli B., Aftercare Coordinator							
Address Contact Info		Winners Circle is a program dedicated to provide aftercare for former transitional shelter residents and clients who have succeeded in reestablishing residential stability. Volunteers would work with Aftercare counselor Milagros Brown during normal business hours (M-F, 9-5) as well as during program meetings with alumni every second Friday between 6 and 8pm. Specific schedules would have to be arranged with Ms. Brown.						
Luciana			9-5					
WIN								
Research & Evaluation	Dawn D., Director							
Address Contact Info		Volunteers would work with Dawn DeLuca, Director of Research and Evaluation in WIN's main office at 115W 31 st St (3 rd floor) by conducting client surveys to clients who have moved into permanent housing to ascertain what problems they may be having. Research and Evaluation office is open M-F between 9 and 5, at occasions as late as 6:30 Specific schedules would have to be arranged with Mrs DeLuca						
Leah					9-1:30			
WIN								
Client Services	Angelita E.							
Address Contact Info		This program, located at WIN's main office (115W 31 st St., 7 th floor) tackles a variety of service tasks and two volunteers would assist Program Coordinator Angelita Estrada in a) scheduling and interviewing clients, and b) in working on program events and clerical work. The program operates M-F between 9 and 5 and specific schedules would have to be arranged with the program coordinator.						

Nikki								
Stephanie				2:30-7				
WIN								
Employment & Education Services	Debra P., Director							
Address Contact Info		Employment and education services provides clients of WIN with immediate job skills, application, and referral services preparing homeless women with job counseling and homeless youth with after-school activities. Times would need to be coordinated the Debra Pilgrim, Program Director						
Latoya			2:30-5		2:30-5			
Claire		2:30-5		2:30-5				

4.3 Evaluations Forms

a. Student Evaluation

Service Learning Evaluation

Name: _____

Service Site: _____

Overall Hours Completed: _____ hours

Do you wish to remain anonymous? Yes No

Part I: Evaluation of Course:

1. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the course?

Very satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Satisfied Not Satisfied

Comment:

2. Did the course meet your expectations?

Exceeded Expectations Met Expectations Did not meet Expectations

If no, please explain:

3. Were you adequately prepared for your volunteer experiences? Yes No

If no, please explain:

4. Were course objectives and assignments explained in satisfactory fashion?

Yes No

If no, please explain:

5. How would you rate the balance between service learning and academics?

Very well balanced Well balanced Balanced Not Balanced

6. Was the workload (i.e. volunteer expectations 5 hours per week, nature and extent of writing assignments, extent of class time) reasonable? Yes No

If no, why not?:

7. Would you have liked to spend more time volunteering at the organization?

Yes No

If yes, what would constitute a reasonable weekly hourly assignment? _____ hours

8. Would you have liked to spend more time in class during the volunteer work?

Yes No

If yes, Once weekly Twice weekly Online

9. Did you have enough opportunities to meet/interact with fellow students during the volunteer period?

Sufficient opportunities Reasonable opportunities Not enough

If other than sufficient,

a) Did the provision of Blackboard online tools (student blogs, discussion forum) help alleviate the lack of interaction?

Yes Somewhat No

If no, why?

b) Would you like to see a greater use of online tools to overcome the lack of interaction? Yes No

c) Few of you have used the blackboard discussion forum – why not?
Comment

10. Did the thematic sessions during the field work sufficiently complement your field experiences?

Yes Somewhat No

Are there any other themes that should have been addressed?

Please indicate:

11. Was the instructor responsive to your questions/concerns/needs/constraints?

Responsive Somewhat responsive Not responsive

If other than responsive, why?

12. How would you rate the nature of communication between you, your site-supervisor and the instructor? Very good Good Not good

If other than very good, why?:

13. Would you recommend this course to fellow students?

Yes No

If no, why not?:

14. Are you interested in taking other service learning classes at Lang?

Yes No

If yes, in which areas?_

15. Is there anything else you like to convey to your instructor?

Comment:

Part II. Evaluation of Volunteer Experience:

Please fill out this questionnaire truthfully and as detailed as you can commenting on both strength and weaknesses of your experience. This portion of the survey is particularly important as it may assist the organization and the site supervisors to improve the quality of the volunteer experience.

Service Site: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____

1. Overall, how satisfied were you with your volunteer experience?

Very satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Satisfied Not Satisfied

Comment:

2. Overall, how satisfied were you with your site supervisor?

Very satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Satisfied Not Satisfied

Comment:

3. Did the site supervisor explain the nature and extent of your tasks/activities sufficiently enough?

Yes Not always Not well enough

If other than yes, explain?

4. Did the site supervisor make an effort to accommodate your needs, expectations, and schedules?

Yes Not always Not well enough

If other than yes, explain?

5. Did you encounter any problems with your volunteer assignment? Yes No

If yes, why and how?:

6. Did the volunteer description prior to starting your work provide you with an accurate idea about your tasks and responsibilities? Yes No

If no, why?:

7. Were you satisfied with the volunteer orientation the organization has provided you with?

Yes No

If no, why not?:

8. Did the volunteer activities meet your expectations?

Exceeded Expectations Met Expectations Did not meet Expectations

What could be done to enhance the service learning experience at this site?

Comment:

9. Did the volunteer activities enhance your comprehension of the subject matter with regards to:

9.1. The nature of homelessness/homeless people's problems?

Yes Somewhat No N/A

9.2 The effects of homeless policy on homeless people's lives?

Yes Somewhat No N/A

9.3. The impact of homeless service provision on homeless people's lives?

Yes Somewhat No N/A

9.4. The potential and/or limitations of homeless service/advocacy organizations?

Yes Somewhat No N/A

9.5. The ways homeless service organizations operate and their constraints?

Yes Somewhat No N/A

9.6. The problem of homelessness in New York City?

Yes Somewhat No N/A

Are there any other things you may have learned or comments you have on the above? Comment:

10. Did the volunteer activities provide you with an opportunity to learn about homelessness and

homeless service provision?

Yes Somewhat No N/A

Comment:

11. Do you believe **you** met the expectations of your site supervisor?

Exceeded Expectations Met Expectations Did not meet Expectations

Comment:

12. Would you recommend this volunteer assignment to future course participants?

Yes No

If no, why?:

13. Do you have any recommendations/ideas as to how the program can enhance the effectiveness of their services to the clients or improve operations?

Comment:

12. Is there anything else you like to convey to your site supervisor or the organization?

Comment:

13. Are you considering to continue volunteering at the organization?

Definitely yes Possibly (time permitting) Definitely not

I would like to but I won't have time

b. Site Supervisor Evaluations

(conducted from 12/10-12/17/07 via email)

SITE SUPERVISOR SURVEY:

Please answer the following questions by inserting your answers right below the questions. I would appreciate if you could send me your feedback as soon as possible but no later than December 17 if you can. If you have supervised more than one volunteer, please differentiate your answers wherever needed.

If you indicate so, I will treat your responses in utmost confidential fashion. I will not reveal your names in the final report and, when quoting any of your responses, solely refer to you as "site supervisor at WIN/CFH."

Your responses are immensely important to gain a well rounded assessment of this partnership and for devising ways to improve it. Thank you for your participation!

NAME OF SUPERVISOR:

NAME OF VOLUNTEER(S): (please list)

1. DO YOU WISH TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS?
2. WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES DID YOU ASSIGN FOR YOUR STUDENT(S)?
3. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE STUDENT(S) PERFORMANCE WITH REGARDS TO EFFORT, DEDICATION, PUNCTUALITY, FLEXIBILITY, AND QUALITY OF THEIR WORK? IF YOU ENCOUNTERED ANY PROBLEMS, PLEASE EXPLAIN!
4. IN HINDSIGHT, WOULD YOU ASSIGN DIFFERENT TASKS? ARE THERE ANY AREAS FOR WHICH THE STUDENTS ARE NOT SUITABLE OR DID NOT PERFORM TO MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?
5. HOW WOULD YOU JUDGE THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOU, THE STUDENT(S), THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR, AND THE INSTRUCTOR?
6. THE VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS WERE RELATIVELY GENERIC AND STUDENTS THEREFORE WERE NOT ALWAYS CLEAR AS TO WHAT TO EXPECT. THEREFORE, WERE THE STUDENT(S) AND YOUR PARTICULAR PROGRAM A GOOD "MATCH"? IF NOT, WHAT SHOULD BE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO PROVIDE A BETTER MATCH?
7. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COLLABORATION, I HAD SENT YOU AN EMAIL ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE SERVICE WORK AND THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE ALONG WITH A COURSE SYLLABUS. DID THIS HELP YOU COMPREHEND THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE AND THE COLLABORATION IN SUFFICIENT DETAIL?
8. HOW MUCH TIME AND EFFORT DID YOU HAVE TO INVEST IN PROPERLY TRAINING AND PREPARING THE STUDENTS FOR THEIR DUTIES AND TASKS? WAS THE

- ENVISIONED 10 WEEK VOLUNTEER PERIOD LONG ENOUGH TO PAY DIVIDENDS FOR YOUR EFFORTS?
9. WERE STUDENT(S) ADEQUATELY PREPARED AND REASONABLY KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS AND ON HOW TO APPROPRIATELY ENGAGE HOMELESS PEOPLE BEFORE BEGINNING THEIR WORK?
 10. HAS THE STUDENT/ HAVE THE STUDENTS DEALT WITH YOU, STAFF, AND HOMELESS CLIENTS IN COURTEOUS AND RESPECTFUL WAYS?
 11. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY WITH REGARDS TO THIS COLLABORATION? WHAT STEPS ARE NEEDED TO ENHANCE THIS PARTNERSHIP?
 12. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH NEW SCHOOL STUDENTS AGAIN? WHY OR WHY NOT?
 13. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ISSUES OR CONCERNS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

4.4. Analysis of the Evaluations

I. Student Evaluations

Overview of Survey Participants

	TOTAL	Coalition						
		Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research & Evaluation	Client Services	Employment & Education	Lex-Bronx Residence
# of Students	17	8	2	1	1	2	2	1
# of Evaluations received	13	7	2	1	1	1	1*	0

* This student eventually transferred to Jennie Clark and here assessment is included there

Part I: Evaluation of Course:

1. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the course?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Very satisfied	8	7		1		
Quite satisfied	3		1		1	1
Satisfied	2		2			
Not satisfied	0					
COMMENTS		<p>- I believe every student studying in NY should take a course such as this one. It is eye opening, humbling, and puts life into perspective in ways that students might not seek out on their own.</p> <p>- The service learning was beneficial for applying concepts in class- the course material was appropriate given service learning, material and discussions interesting and engaging</p> <p>- as an urban studies major, I appreciate classes that integrate NYC into the coursework as much as possible – I think it makes time much more interesting and relevant. “Engaging Urban Homelessness” did exactly that.</p>	<p>This course was very rewarding in the field work part of things. i found the parts where i was working first hand with the issues to be not only informative but a way to apply what i learned in class. On that note, the class work was very informative and not only that but it was sometimes mind blowing! Though i would not have expected it, the facts and figures intrigued, upset, and fascinated me. The graphs were very helpful and the readings were always appropriate, though sometimes way too long</p>		<p>I am satisfied with the class because I learned about things I never knew and I think they made me a more aware and even more compassionate person. However, I am prtty much totally dissatisfied with my field work.</p>	

2. Did the course meet your expectations?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Exceeded expectations	8	5	2			1
Met expectations	4	2		1	1	
Not met expectations	1		1			
COMMENTS			I expected to learn more from the service learning portion, I think this situation was specific to my placement though, because students in other placements were satisfied		It did and it didn't. I wish we had more classes which is what I expected when I signed up. I am satisfied with what I learned but I wish we would have taken more time to talk about solving these problems in a theoretical sense. I also would have wished for we would have had more class involved discussions. Also, It would have been nice to do a variety of things as opposed to just one location.	

3. Were you adequately prepared for your volunteer experiences?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	12	7	3	1		1
No	1				1	
COMMENTS		I didn't know what to expect but I figured it out quickly			I don't think I really understood that I should have really complained about my situation being dissatisfactory. I didn't feel comfortable talking to my instructor and at WIN in what I was doing because I don't think my site supervisor spent enough time with me.	

4. Were course objectives and assignments explained in satisfactory fashion?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	13	7	3	1	1	1
No						
COMMENTS			always very thorough explanation of what was being asked of us. always very easy to follow the directions even though the amount of different projects sometimes got confusing. black board was very helpful tool in this way for this class		I liked the reaction papers yet I wish we would have been asked question on moral issues.	

5. How would you rate the balance between service learning and academics?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Very well balanced	4	2	1	1		
Well balanced	5	3	1			
Balanced	3	2	1			
Not Balanced	1				1	

6. Was the workload (i.e. volunteer expectations 5 hours per week, nature and extent of writing assignments, extent of class time) reasonable?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	9	5	2	1		1
No	4	2	1		1	
COMMENTS		- I understand there is much important data/writing on the topic and issues of homelessness that are vital in conjunction with service learning in the area. However, at times I felt it impossible to complete the mass readings along with completing service learning hours. - More classes - It was a lot of time. If service hours could start earlier in the semester, students	- the amount of hours was a little crazy and difficult to cope with at the end of the semester when things were getting a little more hectic - The writing assignments were a little much on top of the reading. I would have preferred more writing in the course diary than the reaction papers. I also did not like the prompts, they felt like too much of a summary of the		- I thought the requirements were asking for too much and students should not be penalized for not getting enough hours	

		could go once a week but the overall amount of required hours should stay the same	readings.			
--	--	--	-----------	--	--	--

7. Would you have liked to spend more time volunteering at the organization?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	5	2 (6hrs/week)	3 (6-8hrs/week)			
No	8	5		1	1	1
COMMENTS		- work was sometimes stressful, more would have been too much - increase total hours but spread them more evenly throughout the semester	Yes. Maybe 8 hours per week but only if the service work were more student directed. I felt like I wasn't needed that much		2-3 hours. I say this because this is achievable by everyone.	

8. Would you have liked to spend more time in class during the volunteer work?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations		7	2	1	1	1
No	6	2	2	1		1
Yes	7	5	1		1	
If yes, once weekly		5	1		1	

9. Did you have enough opportunities to meet/interact with fellow students during the volunteer period?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Sufficient	6	6				
Reasonable	1	1				
Not enough	6		3	1	1	1
COMMENTS						

If other than sufficient,

a) Did the provision of Blackboard online tools (student blogs, discussion forum) help alleviate the lack of interaction?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	1			1		
Somewhat	4	1	2		1	
No	4	2	1			1
No answer	4	4				
COMMENTS		- most students don't read the blogs - No. Student blogs were heavy readings as well. If the discussion forums was required instead of the required student blogs, I feel more would have put time into it seeing as how it would have more of a conversative effect.	- No. I don't like communicating electronically. Plus no one really does it or takes it that seriously. I would have liked to work in groups with classmates on self-directed projects		- not enough people participate	- online discussions are not effective

b) Would you like to see a greater use of online tools to overcome the lack of interaction?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	2		2			
No	8	4	1	1	1	1
No answer	3	3				
COMMENTS		- online discussions are less spontaneous – maybe because Lang does not offer online courses students are unfamiliar or uncomfortable				

c) Few of you have used the blackboard discussion forum – why not?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
No answer						
COMMENTS		Technical problems - I did not have time to make use of the forum because I was more concerned with	-Internet access - i think it is a little impersonal and to blog is sometimes more difficult to do than to just have a regular		It is kind of empty and these issues need to be talked about	Found it impersonal

		<p>completing the required blogs entries.</p> <p>- online discussions are less spontaneous than in-person maybe c/c Lang offers no online courses, students are unfamiliar and uncomfortable</p>	<p>conversation with someone. also i didnt have internet in my home so it wasnt something that i could do at all times.</p> <p>- Most of my teachers do not use blackboard so I don't check it that much. I also feel that face to face communication is better. In other classes where we've been required to participate in online discussions no one really takes it seriously and posts comments just to get points for it</p>			
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10. Did the thematic sessions during the field work sufficiently complement your field experiences?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	8	4	2	1		1
Somewhat	4	3	1			
No	1				1	
Other Themes?		<p>- International dimensions</p> <p>- fieldwork was not discussed enough while we were in the field</p>	<p>- I would like to have learned more about how non-profits are run, fundraising, etc. I hoped to learn this at my service learning site but it didn't really happen.</p> <p>- Possible solutions</p>		International dimension	
COMMENTS						

11. Was the instructor responsive to your questions/concerns/needs/constraints?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Responsive	13	7	3	1	1	1
Somewhat respons.	0					
Not responsive	0					
COMMENTS					Not like Jurgen wasn't responsive. It was just late but now everything is OK and solved. You did email al lot. I just would have wanted face to face correspondence.	

12. How would you rate the nature of communication between you, your site-supervisor and the instructor?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Very good	8	4	2	1		1
Good	4	3	1			
Not good	1				1	
COMMENTS		- didn't see Juan often but he was very helpful	- more communication with the site supervisor outside of the assigned tasks would have been nice since this could teach one a lot		She did not talk to me	

13. Would you recommend this course to fellow students?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	13	7	3	1	1	1
No	0					

14. Are you interested in taking other service learning classes at Lang?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	12	7	3	1		1
No					1	
Subject areas		any and all! psychology	Education Education Arts			Education Queer issues

15. Is there anything else you like to convey to your instructor?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
COMMENTS		- This class was very dynamic and practical. I felt that the effort I made toward class assignments and volunteer work was well spent	i found the class very rewarding, though somewhat tiring and also straining toward the end due to the number of hours dedicated to one class when all of my other classes were demanding a lot of work too. but i felt that the experience as a whole was something i would have never expected to get out of a class in college so i appreciate all of your hard work in setting things up for us and for making the experiences streamlined and productive. i liked the course diaries and the field report project they were both very important to the process and i feel like they forced us to reconcile the readings with our experiences. all in all a great class i would recommend it to future students with all sincerity - I really gained a lot for the issue and the course is fitting, no matter what major/concentration		Good teacher, nice man.	

Part II. Evaluation of Volunteer Experiences:

1. Overall, how satisfied were you with your volunteer experience?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Very satisfied	8	7	1			
Quite satisfied	2		1			1
Satisfied	3		1	1	1	
Not Satisfied	0					
COMMENTS		It was very hands on and everyone was quite friendly and hard working. There was a great sense of comradery	- though interesting, rewarding and unique an experience, I felt that it was not fully realized and that I did not live up to my potential because I was not given the outlet to do so - I had pretty high expectations for the volunteer experience that were not fulfilled. I think the problem was that there wasn't really much for me to do. I wish that there had been more		I am satisfied with my new work I am doing but was not doing enough action with my other work.	

			possibilities to be creative with the volunteer experience, as I think that we could have worked in groups on specific projects - I got to experience the reality of both thousand young women who are homeless and the people try to help them reach certain goals			
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2. Overall, how satisfied were you with your site supervisor?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Very satisfied	8	5	2	1		
Quite satisfied	3	2				1
Satisfied	1		1			
Not Satisfied	1				1	
COMMENTS		Hands-off role but this was OK	Beth was great. Again, the problem was that there just didn't seem to be enough work to spread around - Nira Robinson was not a 'beat around the bush' person and showed me how to deal with the girls, Ms. Lee was much more passive, but Beth Gonzales leadership made up for my lack of correspondence with Ms. Lee		She was late sometimes and did not talk with me at all. That made me very uncomfortable, I wish she would have interacted with me more.	

3. Did the site supervisor explain the nature and extent of your tasks/activities sufficiently enough?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	9	6	1	1		1
Not always	3	1	2			
Not well enough	1				1	
COMMENTS		He did not really have to	was often left to do work that was not necessary and that was incredibly boring like making invitations to a staff party...!		The first day she gave me some readings but that was so distant	

4. Did the site supervisor make an effort to accommodate your needs, expectations, and schedules?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	11	7	2	1		
Not always	1					1
Not well enough	2		1		1	
COMMENTS			I was often told, "well there isn't much to do today" and I wanted to respond, then what am I wasting my time for? They thought I just wanted the hours, but I wanted a memorable experience and some actual work		We had email problems like she said shed didn't get my emails. When I explained her my frustrations with the work I was doing, she just gave me a crooked smile and shrugged her shoulders and said like sorry, oh well... I would have wanted her to talk it out more with me and be more encouraging.	She was not interested about my concerns with at the Recreation Program

5. Did you encounter any problems with your volunteer assignment?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	1				1	
No	12	7	3	1		1
COMMENTS					I thought the process was slow and not conducted in the most efficient way I used an excel spread sheet to access record info. It just seemed slow.	

6. Did the volunteer description prior to starting your work provide you with an accurate idea about your tasks and responsibilities?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	9	7	1	1		
No	4		2		1	1
COMMENTS		Somehwat although you never know until you are there	- but maybe a little glorified on behalf of WIN, making themselves look a little better than they actually were - No. I thought I would be a lot busier and have more exposure to homeless families. - No, primarily I thought I would be assiting children (education) in an after care program		I don't remember but I thought there would be more person-person interview opportunities or organizing the already captured information	More desk work than I had originally expected

7. Were you satisfied with the volunteer orientation the organization has provided you with?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	12	7	2	1	1	1
No	1		1			
COMMENTS		Could be more information given ahead of time about outreach, shelters, etc.	Although I learned from the experience, I think I could have learned a lot more. - Yes, it did the job but the orientation did very little to bring the truth out. But as we learned, 'selling' is everything.		Angelita was very nice. I like that I man now doing a class.	

8. Did the volunteer activities meet your expectations?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Exceeded expectations	5	4	1			
Met expectations	4	3	1			
Not met expectations	4		1	1	1	1
COMMENTS			I really think that we could have been used in ways that would benefit the organization more. By the end I felt as if I was doing work that would have been done by someone working there anyways, but that was passed along to me to give me something to do. I could have handle more responsibilities and would have liked more freedom in the work I did there.	- Have more client/student interaction	More social interaction	I would have wanted more hands-on experiences

9. Did the volunteer activities enhance your comprehension of the subject matter with regards to:

9.1. The nature of homelessness/homeless people's problems?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	9	6	3			
Somewhat	4	1		1	1	1
No	0					

9.2 The effects of homeless policy on homeless people's lives?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	6	3	2			1
Somewhat	6	3	1	1	1	
No	1	1				

9.3. The impact of homeless service provision on homeless people's lives?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	8	5	1	1		1
Somewhat	5	2	2		1	
No	0					

9.4. The potential and/or limitations of homeless service/advocacy organizations?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	13	7	3	1	1	1
Somewhat	0					
No	0					

9.5. The ways homeless service organizations operate and their constraints?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	10	5	2	1	1	1
Somewhat	3	2	1			
No	0					

9.6. The problem of homelessness in New York City?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	6	3*	1	1		1
Somewhat	6	4	2			
No	1				1	

* What I got is that largely due to funding many of the organizations addressing homelessness in the city are as disconnected as homeless people themselves – so my leaning experience was similarly haphazard. I think that's the nature of the beast though for the time being, until there is a major policy change geared toward addressing the root issues of homelessness that sufficiently funds and connects organizations.

10. Did the volunteer activities provide you with an opportunity to learn about homelessness and homeless service provision?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	7	5		1		1
Somewhat	5	2	3			
No	1				1	
COMMENTS			- Service provisions are so different from program to program, maybe getting involved with another program would help			

11. Do you believe **you** met the expectations of your site supervisor?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Exceeded expectations	9	6	2	1		
Met expectations	3	1	1		1	
Not met expectations	1			1		1
COMMENTS			I made sure to leave behind things they could use in the future		I could have tried more and harder but it's not that I did nothing. I tried and I spent hours dialing and dialing	I

12. Would you recommend this volunteer assignment to future course participants?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Yes	10	7	2			1
No	2			1	1	
Unsure	1		1			
COMMENTS			I'm not sure, I do sort of wish that I had worked at the food runs. They sound more exciting... I must admit			I would have wanted more hands-on experiences

13. Do you have any recommendations/ideas as to how the program can enhance the effectiveness of their services to the clients or improve operations?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
COMMENTS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More organization with regard to volunteer schedules and food amounts - There needs to be more information about the ways in which clients can get information - I think there needs to be more information by way of where clients can receive services if such services exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. I think that I don't know nearly enough about running a nonprofit to give recommendations and I think that Beth seems to be doing an excellent job. - Require more from the women as it relates to working for building their education and knowledge of the work place. 			Set up relationships with recreation and aftercare programs so students can help younger residents of the shelter

12. Is there anything else you like to convey to your site supervisor or the organization?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
COMMENTS		Thank you so much for allowing us (as a class) to enter and be involved in your organization!!				I would have wanted more hands-on experiences

13. Are you considering to continue volunteering at the organization?

	TOTAL	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
# of Evaluations	13	7	3	1	1	1
Definitely yes	5	5				
Possibly (time permitting)	4	2	1		1	
Definitely not	1					1
Would like to but won't have time	3		2	1		
COMMENTS			- Possibly working in the daycare if I am hired as a temp. I don't have time to apply for a while because I have another job that is taking up a lot of time right now.			

II. Site Supervisor Evaluations

(conducted from 12/13-12/17/07 via email)

Important note:

Five of the initially assigned seven site supervisors completed the evaluations which allowed for assessing the performance of 16 of the 17 students. One site supervisor from Lex Bronx did not return an evaluation because the student, Mara C., eventually left the site and worked on an independent project. Two students who were initially assigned to Employment and Education (Claire T. and Latoya S.) spent most of their time at Jeannie Clark and were therefore evaluated by the site supervisor there.

	Coalition	Women in Need			
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
Supervisor	Juan DeLaCruz	Beth Gonzales	M.	D.	A.
# of Students supervised	8 Tessia, William, Benjamin, Peter, Elyse, Allie, Winh, Chelsea	4 Sara, Theresa, Latoya**, Claire** ** initially placed at Employment and Education	1 Luciana	1 Leah	2 Stephanie Nikki
1. Do you wish to remain anonymous?	N	N	Y	Y	Y
2. What types of activities did you assign for your student(s)?	We are a mobile soup kitchen that serves 1000 meals in Manhattan and the Bronx every evening. We relied on the students to distribute food, to treat the people we serve with respect and dignity, and to raise awareness of homelessness and poverty in our community	Work with clients on presentation packets and personal essays, assist with donation and development ideas, event research and planning, develop protocol manuals for the childcare department, administrative duties	Will be involved in all day social service with clients needs.	Leah was supposed to make telephone calls to tell clients who were recently discharged about a follow up survey, get their current contact information, and go through the survey to collect their answers when necessary. She was also supposed to keep track of her efforts in an Excel database.	Family Friends Program--Assist with recruiting and selecting new participants (interviews, reference checks, mailings.) Assist with correspondence between sponsors and participants. Assist with coordination of special events. Assist with distribution of monthly newsletters for participants. Assist with recording keeping and updating databases. Volunteer Services--

					Assist with recording keeping and updating databases. Attend volunteer task force meetings, if possible
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
3. How would you rate the student(s) performance with regards to effort, dedication, punctuality, flexibility, and quality of their work?	<p>All students displayed a great concern for our clients. They were all on time and very flexible in helping when they were needed most. William Kelly would always arrive early and begin feeding at our first stop. Peter Romano and William Kelly step up and volunteered to drive our vans when we were short drivers. Tessia Hendry, Benjamin Pkunkert, Elyse Staverly, Allison Harvey, And Wingkong Hua all arrived on time and willing to carry out our mission of meeting the immediate food needs of low-income or street homeless New Yorkers in Manhattan and the Bronx. They all showed a genuine concern for the well being of our client.</p> <p>I think the only problem was from my end. We at times had more volunteers scheduled than were needed. We were able to resolve this problem mixing and</p>	<p>Attendance was good for Sara, Latoya and Claire. Theresa was late several times and did not show one day/did not call. Sara's work was excellent and she was dedicated to the project assigned to her. She is smart, takes initiative and thoughtful. I believe she will be a great employee one day;</p> <p>Latoya did an excellent job working with her client to develop a presentation packet. Latoya works well independently and is very insightful;</p> <p>Claire was very pleasant and willing to work on anything. She was very interested in learning about the homeless population, housing subsidies and the rules and regulations surrounding homeless policies. She was a pleasure to work with. She was flexible and patient.</p> <p>Theresa initially had a lot of biases and stereotypes but in the</p>	I would rate all the above excellent.	Unfortunately this did not seem to be a good placement for Leah. She quickly became frustrated with the difficulty in contacting this population and had problems coming in after she discovered the nature of the work. She was not able to complete any surveys.	Both students were very responsible with the time commitments and flexible to meet the needs of the programs at any given time. Stephanie proved to be someone who was very thorough and provided high quality of work no matter how big or small the project. Her desire to continue volunteering even after class requirement has been fulfilled is much appreciated and welcomed as she has been a joy to work with. Nikki was assertive in seeking knowledge and understanding of the organization and the areas of social service that interested her. She is a very passionate young lady who expressed a deep passion to serve youth. Unfortunately, she was not able to serve in this capacity at this time within our agency. She had a difficult time accepting the reasons for this.

	matching on other days. Also some volunteers were provided with information so that they were able to provide critical information to our clients.	end appeared to learn that we are all people and despite circumstances have similar needs and desires and aren't that different. She often had difficulty focusing but when she did focus she produced excellent work and was very creative.			
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
4. In hindsight, would you assign different tasks? Are there any areas for which the students are not suitable or did not perform to meet your expectations?	I would assign the students more outreach responsibilities. At the present time, our program only has one outreach person but three vans. With the added reliable and responsible students we can increase our efforts here.	No	The student has met my expectation all the time.	There really is not any other task I could have assigned a volunteer in research. Most of what we do is database training, data entry and analysis, so none of this would be very engaging for a student interested in contact with homeless people. It would be best if the student who was assigned to our program was specifically interested in the evaluation aspect of homelessness.	I would have liked for the students to have sat in on more interviews for new candidates of the Family Friends Program and Volunteer Services Program as well as attend more Task Force Meetings.
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
5. How would you judge the nature and extent of communication between you, the student(s), the volunteer coordinator, and the instructor?	Communication was great. The students were always prompt in informing us of any changes in their schedules.	Overall, good.	I feel grateful to have her here.	The major problem in communication was identifying when Leah was going to come in. She notified us at the last minute if she was not going to come, or not at all. Otherwise she was open to discuss the issues when she was here,	I had good, consistent communication with students and as well with the instructor (as the volunteer coordinator.)

				and there was good communication between the instructor and volunteer coordinator.	
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
6. The volunteer assignment descriptions were relatively generic and students therefore were not always clear as to what to expect. Therefore, were the student(s) and your particular program a good “match”?	I feel that the description being generic was a help to our program. Our program has specific deliverables such as meeting the immediate food need for our clients but also lots of intangibles. Our volunteers make personal connections that provide the courage for some of these clients who have been out on the streets and are very distrustful of organizations and program the valor to seek their entitlements and other services.	The assignments I gave the students were planned and thought out prior to their arrival. Assignments that involved clients were not as successful for some of the students (Claire) because the client didn't show up for the assignment so that is the only thing I would say made it not a good match. I explained the assignments and reviewed the tasks with each student.	The student was always clear.	It may not have been clear that there was a lot of tracking necessary to find the clients who needed a survey filled in. It is not just a matter of having the primary phone number and easily calling to get the survey done- most times it requires calling extended contacts and tracking them down. Therefore it would probably be helpful to make sure the student was outgoing and aware that they would need to make these kinds of cold calls. As mentioned, it would also help if the student was interested in research and program evaluation.	For Stephanie I would say it was a great match. I question if it was the best match for Nikki as I believe she would have enjoyed more hands on work, less administrative. I would request that there be a concise yet detailed description provided from each program for each student to review before committing to a particular internship position.
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
7. At the beginning of the collaboration, I had sent you an email about the nature of the service work and the objectives of the course along with a course syllabus. Did this help you comprehend the objectives of the course and	Your information was very helpful. I was more surprised by the level of competency and compassions of the students.	Yes	Yes, she was extremely useful.	I don't recall receiving this at the beginning of the collaboration. I think it would have been helpful so I could have related the issues we were experiencing to what the student was learning in class.	I do not remember receiving the course syllabus. I think all program supervisors would have benefited a lot from better understanding the course objectives and the expectations and

the collaboration in sufficient detail?					responsibilities that they were agreeing to as intern supervisors.
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
8. How much time and effort did you have to invest in properly training and preparing the students for their duties and tasks? Was the envisioned 10 week volunteer period long enough to pay dividends for your efforts?	Our investment paid off handsomely. We tried to provide information and provide experienced volunteers to go out with the students.	I would estimate an hour or so in the initial visit. Then I checked in with them and reviewed the assignments with them as they went along. Yes the time spent helped complete some short term projects and the others helped begin the foundation of other projects that will require more time to complete	The student shadowed me at all times, and was very involved here with client needs.	I spent about 2 - 3 hours training Leah. It would have been worth it if the placement had worked out better.	I do not feel that I was able to give a sufficient amount of time to training and preparation due to my own work demands. However, I think the 10 week period was long enough
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
9. Were student(s) adequately prepared and reasonably knowledgeable about the problem of homelessness and on how to appropriately engage homeless people before beginning their work?	I felt all students were properly prepared and had an incredible amount of knowledge on the issues of homelessness.	I think they had book knowledge and their worldviews which they brought to the experience but learned more specifics when they got here; especially surrounding rules, regulations, policies and the administrative aspect of managing homeless populations in NYC. Additionally, they got to see the face of the homeless population which is primarily children and women which defies the stereotype people usually have about this population.	In my opinion, she gained knowledge, and realized the many needs of the homeless population.	Leah seemed knowledgeable, although it is hard for me to say since we didn't discuss her prior knowledge much.	Not sure--unable to determine the answer to this question.

	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
10. Has the student/ have the students dealt with you, staff, and homeless clients in courteous and respectful ways?	As I mentioned many times, the students always responded to me, my staff, and volunteers and most importantly to our clients with the utmost respect. They were courteous, compassionate and caring when dealing with all aspects of our program.	Yes. Interestingly, some were surprised that the staff enjoyed their job and were dedicated to eradicating homelessness and caring to serve the underprivileged.	The student was professional at all times, and respectful to all those she came into contact with.	Leah was generally courteous. She was respectful with the people she was able to reach on the telephone.	Yes!
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
11. Is there anything you would do differently with regards to this collaboration? What steps are needed to enhance this partnership?	I would begin by having an orientation session at the beginning. I feel that this will allow for all program information to be given all at once. Once they get to our feeding site, we are busy with clients and other volunteers.	More supervision in order to process with the student what they are experiencing and feeling. I would also recommend the students work in pairs on projects.	Nothing at this time.	We are working on a new system to better inform clients about the follow-up survey, and obtain their current contact information. This will make it easier for future volunteers to call them. I would also supervise the student a little more closely, such as sign off on their time sheet at the end of each day	See #6 and #7.
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
12. Are you interested in working with new school students again? Why or why not?	I am very interested in continuing our partnership. The students were very insightful and a great help in carrying out our mission.	Yes, they were helpful and a pleasure to work with.	Yes, They are a good assess to our facility, and our program.	Yes I am still interested. Even though this particular volunteer was not ideal, I know this happens once in a while. As a New School student myself, I am familiar with Lang students and know that they are usually very	Yes. Having consistent volunteer support is vital to our organization and particularly to my department.

				bright and conscientious.	
	Grand Central Food Program	Jennie Clark Residence	Winners Circle	Research and Evaluation	Client Services
13. Are there any other issues or concerns you would like to share?	<p>I would like to share that this collaboration seems like a perfect combination of learning and putting the knowledge learned in the classroom to work out on the streets.</p> <p>Again Thank You Jurgen Von Mahs for getting this project started and for allowing Grand Central Food Program the opportunity to participate.</p>	Thank you for the experience!	I do not have any issues or concerns to share at this time.	None.	I am grateful for this partnership as it provided many opportunities for learning and growing on all fronts.