

# ENGL 121F: Composition Social Issues (Human Rights)

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## Overview

The purpose of this course is for students to explore the relationships between writing and community engagement and develop literacy skills that students can use to perform writing as social action. The course will center around the universal human rights framework, which students will connect to a specific issue that they are interested in their service learning organizations and examine how the issue (for example, workers'™ rights, refugees'™ resettlement) correspond with or complicate the human rights framework. We will read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as an anchor text to analyze and revisit as students write their papers. Within this thematic framework, students will explore what writing means as social action that can have real effects on community engagement.

By the end of the course, students should be able to articulate a social problem that they learn from their service organization, explain how that problem maps onto the human rights framework, and come away with knowledge for different uses of writing to make progress on alleviating the problem.

## Role of Service-Learning in the Course

Readings in the course will help students think carefully about what "service" and "learning" mean in service learning contexts, ethics and power dynamics in doing community engagement, and how writing has been used as a tool for social change. In doing service within the organization, students will examine their dual roles as observer and participant, and learn about the organization and communication skills necessary for service from the organization's™ staff members. They will develop research skills through interactions with people from the organizations and learn about group interviewing, on-site observation, and how to analyze texts and artifacts that the organization uses such as grant proposals, pamphlets and blog posts.

There will also be an opportunity for students to do academic research on a social problem that they identify as important to the service organization and translate their academic research and argument into an artifact that the organization can likely use. Ideally, 3-5 students would work for an organization, and 5-6 organizations would be available for students to choose from. The community partners can feel free to use any of the artifacts that students will write and adapt them to be used for the organization. Through the service learning partnership, students will learn rhetorical strategies for audience awareness and how to make arguments both within academic and community contexts.

## Assignments Related to Service-Learning

Students will write six papers in total—four short assignments (2-3 pages each) and two major paper (5-7 pages each). Assignments tentatively include a professional introduction and query letter to the organization, a news article for the Daily, the UW student newspaper, by describing a social issue that the organization addresses, a multimodal problem-analysis text, an academic research paper, a translation of the research paper into an artifact for the organization, and a reflection paper. Students will have options for co-authoring with classmates or doing a group collaborative project at some point of the course. Students will abide by the UW's™ policies on public writing and will have to attain written permission from the organization to be able to publish their writings from this course online or in print.

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