SERVICE LEARNING:
COMMUNITY SERVICE IN FLORENCE
Section I (in English)

Fall 2010

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

The aim of the course is to improve students’ knowledge of Italian language and culture, as well as to give them the opportunity to enhance their self-understanding and self-confidence, through their volunteer experience and this seminar class.

Students are required to have a 5 hour a week activity (50 hours in the semester) in Italian schools and kindergartens or in non profit associations and they must attend a seminar once a week to discuss their learning experience, their feelings and reactions. In September students are required to volunteer in the “Refresh your English” project for Italian students, in October the volunteer activity will continue at the schools. More info about the project will be given in class. The volunteer activity must be regularly done until the time requirement of 50 hours is complete. Scheduled hours of volunteer activity that cannot be done due to the site’s responsibility (school teacher’s/ site staff’s absence, class school trip, etc.) can be counted toward the 50 hour time requirement and must appear on the timesheet. It is very important that you arrive on time for each of your volunteer appointments because the people at the volunteer site will have planned activities for you. If you are going to be absent for your volunteer time you must contact the site supervisor or teacher you work with to tell them of this absence. If you do not, this absence will count negatively for your final grade. You must have a 95% attendance rate at your volunteer site, if it is lower than 95% then your final grade will be lowered (i.e. A becomes A-). The number of hours devoted to the on campus organization of special events (eg. Corri La Vita) can be no more than 10 hours total, unless otherwise individually agreed upon with the instructor.

Students will be asked to submit a learning contract stating their learning goals for the internship in specific terms. The overall goal is for you to learn. The learning contract should answer the question: “Why am I doing this internship?”. It is due after you have completed the first two weeks of your service activity. Students will keep a journal recording daily events, thoughts and feelings about the experience. They will write two papers which will discuss their personal experience at the site and their reflections about the Italian culture. There will be some class meetings with Italian high school students to discuss some cultural differences between Italy and other countries.

The final grade has the following components:
- 20% Volunteer experience (Learning Contract and Site Supervisor’s Evaluations also included)
- 20% Class participation (discussion leaders, participation in class activities, oral presentation)
- 20% 1st Paper
- 20% 2nd Paper
- 20% Journal

Students are expected to attend all classes: more than one absence will affect your grade. Please note that this day is not just a free day; it is to be used for illness, emergencies or other unavoidable obligations that keep you from making it to class. If you intend to observe a religious holiday, you must notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester. During the semester there will be some
meetings with groups of students of prestigious educational institutions in Florence (Nov. 15): an absence to such a meeting will count as two absences.

SEMINAR CLASS STRUCTURE

This is a seminar class, i.e. students are the center of the class energy: they exchange their ideas, share information, discuss mutual problems.

During the semester, each student will be asked at least once to lead a class discussion. Discussion leaders must carefully read and review the written materials assigned for that class period. From these materials, the discussion leader will then explain to their peers the key points of the reading and why they think the author considered these points important or relative for the reader. The discussion leaders will also write three thoughtful questions that focus on the key points of the readings and will help to initiate our class discussion. Please remember that these three questions cannot have simple yes or no answers. The questions must be sent to the professor (laura.tarabusi@nyu.edu) at least one day before class (note: class meets on Mondays).

In order to start the class discussions, the designated discussion leader can call on any student in the class to respond to their questions. Therefore it is important that all class participants carefully read the weekly assigned readings and do the required exercises (they must be written in the journal) in order to be able to effectively respond to the discussion leader's questions and to actively contribute to the class activities.

Oral presentation. The assignment is to prepare a cross-cultural observation that explores some aspects of Italian culture that you learned through your volunteer experience and your stay in Italy. The presentation focuses your observations of Florence and of Italian culture, gained through your volunteer experience. The presentation therefore must include:

- some factual information (i.e. a description of the city area where the school/association is located, a brief history of the school/association, a description of the activity of the school/association, etc.)
- a description of at least two aspects of Italian culture that you want to explore further (i.e. the student/teacher relationship, the value of time, work ethics, body language, etc.)
- a personal reflection from a cross-cultural perspective on those aspects. You may want to use Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures to analyze Italian culture and to compare it with other cultures you are familiar with.

You have 8-12 minutes time for your presentation. Shorter or longer presentations will be penalized. You are welcome to use a PowerPoint Presentation and/ or other material.

Required Books:
Hofstede G., Hofstede G. J., Minkov M. (2010), Cultures and Organizations. Software of the mind, McGraw Hill (Hofs.)
Severgnini Beppe (2001) An Italian in America, Rizzoli (Sever.)

(Bookstore: Libreria Feltrinelli International, Via Cavour 12rosso, Firenze)

Recommended Books:
1. **LEZIONE (class period) Sept. 6**
   Introduction to the course. Methodology and requirements. Presentation of Schools and Associations.
   4:30-5:45pm: 1**ST** Language Teaching Training Session “Introduction to the Italian School System”

2. **LEZIONE Sept. 13**
   Seminar class
   4:15-5:45pm: 2**nd** Language Teaching Training Session: Language Teaching Strategies – I (Christine Wentzell, Canadian Island).
   For today: S.Int., Chapter 1 “Surveying the Landscape”, ex. # 2 p. 18 , Chapter 2 “Essentials for the Journey”, Seminar Springboard # 3 p. 46 (reserved reading in the library)
   Sever.: Introduction, April (pag. 7 – 30)

3. **LEZIONE Fri. Sept. 17**
   Seminar class
   4:15-5:45pm: 3**rd** Language Teaching Training Session: Language Teaching Strategies – II (Christine Wentzell, Canadian Island)
   For today: Hofs. Chapt. 1 “The Rules of the Social Game” (p. 3-26); S.Int., Chapter 4 “Understanding Yourself”, ex. # 1, 2 and 3 p. 84
   Sever.: July (pag. 69 -89), August (pag. 91 – 107)

Sat. Sept. 25 “Un bacione a Firenze” (optional, it counts towards the time requirement)
Sun. Sept. 26 “Corri la vita”(optional, it counts towards the time requirement)

4. **LEZIONE Sept. 20**
   site visit to Via Gioberti, Firenze
   For today: Hofs. “Chapt. 2 “Studying Cultural Differences” (p. 27-49), S.Int. Chapt. 3 “Framing the Experience: The Developmental Stages of an Internship” (reserved reading in the library)
   Sever.: February (pag. 205 -223), March (pag. 225 -244); Postscript (p. 245-274)

5. **LEZIONE Sept. 27**
   Seminar class and Interviews for volunteer placements
   S.Int. Chapt. 5 “Experiencing the What Ifs”: The Anticipation Stage”, ex # 1 p. 107, Seminar Springboards # 1 p. 107 (reserved reading in the library)

6. **LEZIONE Oct. 4**
   Seminar class
   1**st** National Culture Dimension: Power Distance
   For today: Hofs. “More Equals than Others” (p. 53-88)

Wed. Oct. 6 and Thur. Oct. 7, all day, La Pietra Policy Dialogues – Conference (Villa Sasetti) (optional, it counts towards the time requirement)

7. **LEZIONE Oct. 11**
   Seminar class
   2**nd** National Culture Dimension: Individualism versus Collectivism
For today: Hofs. “I, We and They” (p. 89-134)
- **Journal due**

**Mo. Oct. 11 or Tue. Oct. 12, 6pm, La Pietra Policy Dialogues – Conference** (venue, time and date tbc) (optional, it counts towards the time requirement)

8. **LEZIONE Oct. 18**
   Seminar class
   For today: Bella Figura: Day one: from Malpensa to Milan (p. 1-19), Day Two: in Milan (p. 21-43), Day Three: still in Milan (p. 45-63)
   - 1st paper due
   - Learning Contract due

   **Thu. Oct 21:** Timesheet and Site Supervisor’s Mid Term Evaluation due

Oct 25 – Nov. 1: Fall Break

9. **LEZIONE Nov. 8**
   Seminar class
   3rd National Culture Dimension: Masculinity versus Femininity
   For today: Hofs. “He, She and (S)he” (p. 135-185); Bella Figura: Day Four: Toward Tuscany (p. 65-83), Day Five: in Tuscany (p.85-107)

10. **LEZIONE Nov. 15**
    Meeting with students of Liceo Classico Dante: discussion about cross-cultural differences between Italian and American Culture
    4th National Culture Dimension: Uncertainty Avoidance
    For today: Hofs. “What is Different is Dangerous” (p. 187-234);
    Bella Figura: Day Six: in Rome (p. 109-131), Day Seven: in Naples (p. 133-151)
    - **Journal due**

11. **WEEK Nov. 22**
    Seminar class
    5th National Culture Dimension: Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation
    For today: Hofs. “Yesterday, Now or Later?” (p. 235-276);

12. **LEZIONE Nov. 29**
    Seminar class and **Oral Presentations**
    6th National Culture Dimension: Indulgence versus Restraint
    For today: Hofs. “Light or dark?” (p. 277-300); Bella Figura: Day Ten (from Crema to Malpensa by way of San Siro (p.191-209)

13. **LEZIONE Dec. 6**
    Seminar class and **Oral Presentations**
    For today: Hofs. “International Encounters” (p. 381-394 and 419-429); Bella Figura: A letter from America (p. 211-217)

**Mo. Dec. 13**
- 2nd paper, journal, timesheet and Site Supervisor’s Final Evaluation due