

## SUGGESTED COMPONENTS OF THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COURSE SYLLABUS

### *EL COURSE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS:*

*Some content adapted from Bradeis University Experiential Learning Practicum Syllabus Template*

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

- Clearly articulation of how the experiential learning component will **enhance** classroom learning and provide opportunities to gain practical experience.

#### **PROVIDE A DEFINITION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (EL) THAT ARTICULATES ITS BENEFITS**

- This definition can help students understand experiential learning and how it will influence their learning process. Feel free to use the example below, or to adapt it for your purposes.

*“e.g. Experiential Learning is a teaching methodology that engages learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values and develop people’s capacity to contribute to their communities. It helps learners make connections between their past and current experiences. A facilitated reflection process encourages students to make relevant connections to their own academic, professional and personal motivations and goals. After making these connections, learners will be able to carry their learning process into future experiences and contexts.”*

- Provide a description of the TYPE of Experiential Learning involved in your course (benefits, objectives, unique attributes)

#### **COURSE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

- Consider:
  - i. Cognitive Objectives: What students should know
  - ii. Affective Objectives: What students should care about, or how they perspectives will be transformed
  - iii. Behavioural Objectives: What students should be able to do?
- Experiential learning courses may have different or additional learning objectives that may include:
  - *Develop **time management** skills*
  - *Improve ability to **prioritize/multitask***
  - *Develop **organizational** skills*
  - *Improve ability to work as a **team***

- Improve **verbal and written professional communications**
- Develop ability to think **critically**
- Develop **data analysis and interpretive skills**
- Increase knowledge of **industry/required skills and technology**
- Work **independently**
- Professional **judgement and responsibility**

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Consider **readings** which **connect** students' experiential activity to course content (e.g. on "real-world applications of course content material)
- Consider readings on the **topics** of reflection and/or experiential learning
- Outline any **requirements** for students to carry out their experiential activity (some organizations may require volunteer applications, police screenings, vulnerable sector checks, immunizations, training, etc.) and a **timeline** for when these requirements must be completed. Provide information on **how** students can go about meeting these requirements (e.g. procedure for completing a police check)
- Explanation of all **forms and documents** to be completed (e.g. insurance, liability, memorandum of understanding) and **due date** (e.g. if must be completed before experiential activity begins)

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- Instructors may wish to provide a weekly breakdown of
  - Class topics to be covered
  - Assigned readings
  - Assignments due
  - Experiential activity involved for that week
- \* Remember to schedule in class time for the **deliberate teaching of soft/transferrable skills** that will help PREPARE students for their experiential learning activities

## INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COMPONENT

- Indicate **time** commitment
- Describe the roles, **responsibilities** and **commitment** required of students for the experiential activity. Include a **code of conduct**. Emphasize that they are **ambassadors** of UofT and should always keep this in mind
- Include relevant community or project **contact** information
- Outline the procedure for if a student **misses** or is **late** for their experiential learning activity
- Ask the community partner to provide a brief statement of their needs, expectations ,

objectives or goals. What do they want from the partnership?

- Provide examples of what procedures to follow when questions or issues arrive. (e.g. who do they communicate with and how)
- List of **additional resources** that may help students be successful throughout their experiential learning activity, such as links to valuable websites, videos, reading material, campus offices and groups, etc. (e.g. Academic Advising and Career Centre, Accessibility, UofT Experiential Learning HUB, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Centre for Community Partnerships, etc.)
- **Statement Of Risk Management**
  - Inform students about any potential risks involved in the designated experiential learning activities for the EL project
  - [Consider UofT's Risk Management Matrix](#)
  - Include **forms or links to accident reporting**, etc.
- **Transportation**
  - For off-campus EL projects, be sure to state the policy on transportation. If there are funds available to offset transportation costs, inform students here. If not, make it clear that financial assistance is not available.
  - If costs are not covered, transportation to EL project sites should be explained as one of the required costs of the course and can be **likened to purchasing textbooks**

## ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Explain to students how assessment in an experiential course differs from assessment in the typical course they are used to. Often students expect that, because they are expending a lot of time and energy on their experiential learning activity, a large portion of their course mark should be based on their performance related to that activity. However, students are to be assessed on how they **demonstrate** their learning from their experiences.

- **One approach:** ask students to think about their experiential activity as the textbook or content material and that it is how they **demonstrate** their **learning** of that material that they are being assessed on
- Note that **external partners are not allowed to give students grades**. They may, however, provide you with feedback to inform your assessment of students
- Note that when considering the **weighting** of the experiential component of their assessment, consider what *proportion* of the **course objectives** are tied to students' experiential learning activities

- Present reflective course assignments that **link** the experiential learning activity and the course content. Provide **assessment rubrics**.
- Specify what learning objectives are related to each assignment
- It is highly recommended that a **research or information gathering assignment** about community partner be completed before service projects begins

### EMPHASIZE THE ROLE OF REFLECTION AND DESCRIBE

- Describe what reflection is, how it is implemented in the course and why it is a crucial component of experiential learning. Feel free to use the example below, or adapt it for your purposes.

*e.g. In reflective activities, students express how they are processing an experience and what learning they are drawing from that experience. Students are prompted through written or oral activities to analyze and think critically about their experience. Reflection helps students connect their past and present experiences and understand their own motivations. They often develop their own narratives about their learning processes, both within the course and beyond. It is this intentional process of reflection that generates the learning from experience and leads to the achievement of particular learning objectives.*

- Include some information **about** reflection:  
*e.g., Reflective writing should answer questions such as:*
  - *What happened?*
  - *What knowledge did you take from the course and use in your service project?*
  - *What was different than you expected or is different from your prior knowledge?*
  - *What might this mean or tell you? Is there anything you need to learn more about?*
  - *How will this impact you personally? How have your views or understanding changed?*
  - *What will you do differently as a result of this learning/experience?*
  - *What might this mean for the field/work/subject area?*
  - *How did I influence what happened?*
  - *Why did I behave in that way?*
  - *Why might have I felt the way I did during the situation, and now, when reflecting on it?*
  - *How has who I am affected my view of what happened, my values, opportunities, life choices, and subsequently my reflections?*
  - *What beliefs or ways of challenging my assumptions will allow me to look at this from others' perspectives?*

(Adapted from Mohawk College Centre for Teaching and Learning Website  
and Ryerson University Experiential Learning Office Website)