

## Disability in Literature Service Learning Project Packet

This course includes a Service-Learning Module. We'll have a guest lecture from Elizabeth Cannon, Director of the Lowell Association for the Blind (LAB), and we'll visit the LAB in downtown Lowell together during one class period. At some point before the end of the semester, each student will spend a minimum of one hour at the LAB doing reading aloud for the LAB's radio program for the blind. You will work out your own time to do this; you can work with a partner or on your own. You'll need to complete the one hour of service by Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. This packet provides you with the information about the project. If you have questions, please let me know! Below are the relevant calendar details from the syllabus:

Tuesday 1 October	Reading Assignment TBA (handouts) Complete Service-Learning Pre-Activity Reflection In class: Visit from Elizabeth Cannon from Lowell Association for the Blind
<b>Thursday 3 October</b>	<b>OFF-CAMPUS: VISIT TO LOWELL ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND</b> We will meet downtown at 169 Merrimack Street.
<b>Note:</b> between now and December 12 <sup>th</sup> , you will need to <b>complete your Service-Learning assignment</b> , which includes one hour spent at the Lowell Association for the Blind (LAB) doing reading aloud for their program. Please plan ahead to fit this activity into your schedule. You may turn in your written reflection paper at any time prior to December 12 <sup>th</sup> .	
Thursday 12 December	Deadline for the Final Reflection Paper on Service Learning Project, which can be turned in at any point in the semester.

### Learning Objectives for this project:

- ⇒ To develop writing skills through multiple steps and drafts for a writing project.
- ⇒ To consciously and thoughtfully report back based on real-world field work with the community.
- ⇒ To make connections between literary portrayals and real-life situations.
- ⇒ To gain understanding of the varied experiences of the disabled community.
- ⇒ To connect with our local community to understand needs of and services for the disabled.
- ⇒ To connect our local experiences of disability with ideas about disability in the larger world.

### The basic overview of what you need to do:

1. Complete (and return to me) the Volunteer Form (included in this packet). I will see that this gets to the LAB so that you are registered with them.
2. Sometime before class on Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, complete the Pre-Activity Survey (included in this packet). Turn it in at the start of class on October 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. Attend the full-class visit to the LAB on Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> during our regular class time. Please start planning ahead now for transportation. I recommend car-pooling, walking, or using public transportation as much as possible. If necessary, I can assist you with the cost of parking – just see me. I realize some people have class immediately before and/or immediately after our class time. I am happy to write to your other professors to let them know about our class activity, however, I cannot excuse you from another class. If you are late or have to leave early for another class commitment, please let me know, and please do your best to get to the LAB for as long as possible.
4. Schedule your time to read. Hint: I recommend doing this as soon as you can fit it into your schedule, since things only get busier as the semester rolls along.
5. Complete your Reflection Paper and submit as soon as you're done (but no later than Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>). Hint: you'll be much, much happier if you write this up soon after your hours and turn it in early!

**Are you ready to read? Here's what to do:**

1. Make sure you have filled out and returned (to me) your Volunteer Form. I will have sent these to LAB, so your name should already be in their records.
2. You can set up your reading appointment on any Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8 am and 3pm. (The office closes at 4pm, so you'd want to be sure to get there by 3pm to complete your hour.) You'll set up your appointment yourself, directly with the LAB.
3. Please call ahead to make sure that your selected time is available. Call: (978) 454-5704 and tell them you're a UMass Lowell student scheduling reading time. Ask if your selected time is available. If you're going with a partner, make sure you let them know that, too.
4. Need directions? Go to the website: <http://www.lowellassociationfortheblind.org/>
5. Plan ahead for your transportation or parking. Downtown is walkable from either campus, and there are also buses that will get you there. If you take the bus to the Inn & Conference Center (ICC), the LAB is not far away. If you need assistance to cover parking or transportation fees, please see me. Keep your receipt for parking or bus fare, and I will reimburse you if needed. This project is not meant to put a financial burden on any student.
6. Please be sure to arrive on time and behave in a professional manner. It's important that we are good representatives of the University of Massachusetts, Lowell while working with this Community Partner.

**Just finished your reading? Here's what to do:**

1. E-mail me (or talk to me in class) to tell me that you've completed your reading assignment. This is mostly just a matter of record-keeping for me, so that I can make sure people are getting the project done! If you encountered any problems during your reading, please let me know. If there's a problem, I'd like to be aware of it, and I will try to help you resolve any issues.
2. Write some notes to yourself. I've included in this packet a page with questions for your notes. I recommend that you do this as soon as possible after you've finished. You do not have turn these in; they are meant to help you get a start on your final reflection paper.

**Deliverable Items & Due Dates:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Info/source</b>	<b>Due Date (turn in to me)</b>
Volunteer Form	Form is included in this packet	Thursday 26 September
Pre-Activity Reflection	Form is included in this packet	Tuesday 1 October
E-mail to confirm you've completed your hour	e-mail Bridget_Marshall@uml.edu	Please e-mail me within 48 hours after completing your reading time at the LAB.
Final Reflection Paper	Info included in packet; write it & submit hard copy	By December 12 <sup>th</sup> at the latest; preferably sooner

### **Service Learning Pre-Activity Reflection**

Please complete this survey (both front and back) and have it *ready to submit on Tuesday, 1 October*.

Name:

[circle one]: Sophomore / Junior / Senior

Major:

Reason you're taking this course:

Have you done Service Learning in other courses? [ Yes / No ]

If yes, what was that experience like (positive/negative/anything notable)?

What are your thoughts about "Service Learning" generally? What does "Service Learning" mean to you?  
Was this something that made the course more appealing or less appealing to you?

Knowing the basics about this particular Service Learning Project, what are your expectations, concerns, or questions at this point:

What positive and negative things are you anticipating about this project?

What can YOU do and what can your Professor do to help make this a good experience?

### **Service Learning Post-Activity Notes**

You DO NOT have to turn this in; this is meant as a place for you to record some observations while they're fresh in your mind. These notes should help you develop your final reflection paper.

- Record your basic observations of the experience: what did you read, how long did it take, what was the technology like, what was hard, what was easy?
- Did anything surprise you? Was it what you expected?
- Review your Pre-Activity Survey (I've returned a copy to you). Have any of your thoughts on Service Learning generally, or on this project in particular changed since then? What and why?
- What did you like or dislike about the process?
- What new insights do you have about disabilities generally, or about blindness in particular?
- Would you want to do this activity again? Why or why not?
- What was the best and worst aspect of this activity?
- How would you describe this activity to your parents? to your best friend? to a potential employer?
- Do you have an interest in doing more work with the Lowell Association for the Blind? If so, what would you consider? What next steps will you take?
- How does your experience in this activity connect with any of the reading, viewing, or writing assignments we've done in class? Do any of the texts (films, books, articles, stories, etc.) take on a different meaning now that you've done this activity?
- Now that you've done this activity, has it changed your perspective on this course? On your academic work? On your plans for the future?

You don't need to answer all of these questions; they are meant to prompt you to deeper thinking about the experience. You might include answers to some of these questions in your reflection paper, but again, you don't need to answer all of these. The goal is to get you to reflect upon this experience, so these questions are leading you towards some deeper reflection.

## **Final Reflection Paper on Service Learning Project**

By December 12<sup>th</sup>, you need to write and turn in your 2 to 3-page Reflection Paper. You can write it and turn it in as soon as you like, but the absolute deadline is December 12<sup>th</sup>. I welcome early papers (and you'll likely be better able to write it while the experience is fresh in your mind).

Here are the basic requirements:

- 2 to 3 pages, double spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins all around
- Include specific details of your experience
- Include reflection upon and critical thinking about your experience
- Explain what you've learned from the experience
- Use standard, polished and edited college-level English

And here are some more details on what to include:

You're writing a paper in the first person – you'll be saying things like “I did this...” and so on. Using “I” is totally fine, and really, pretty much necessary.

Write with clear, detailed, and specific prose. Tell me what happened. Tell me how it felt and what you were thinking then, and also what you're thinking now about the experience.

Write about how the service learning (S/L) project is connected to the course. If there was a reading or activity or writing assignment or discussion that resonated with your S/L experience, write about that.

What did you learn from doing this project?

What recommendations do you have for me or for future students in taking on a project like this? How would you revise it? What do you wish you had done differently?

How did this project connect (or not connect) to your own life, to this course, or to your education generally?