

Disability in Literature LAB Service Learning Project Packet

Please note, the full packet for the Final Project includes three different options. This packet is focused on ONLY the Service Learning Project option. Make sure you review the other packet for all the info on the possibilities for the final project.

One way to complete a final project for this course is to do a small Service Learning project at the Lowell Association for the Blind, doing reading aloud for the LAB's radio program for the blind. You can work out your own time to do this; you can work with a partner or on your own. If you want to do this, you should probably start planning now! 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:

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 the Volunteer Form (included in this packet). I will see that this gets to the LAB so that you are registered with them; you can also take your form directly to their office, but please copy me on the form so that I also know that it is completed! You can e-mail your completed form to Shelagh at: sdoherty@lowellassociationfortheblind.org Or call her at 978-454-5704
2. Sometime before you go to LAB for your work there, complete the Pre-Activity Survey (included in this packet).
3. 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. You can set up your reading appointment on any Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9 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. 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. Do your LAB reading time. Write some notes to yourself. I've included in this packet a page with questions for you to consider. I recommend that you do this as soon as possible after you've finished. You do not have to turn these in; they are meant to help you get a start on your final reflection paper.
5. Complete your Reflection Paper. There are more details on what you should include later in this packet. This should be submitted during the final exam period.
6. Prepare a presentation to share about your experience during the final presentations (on the last day of classes). Please review the other packet (about all final projects) for details on expectations for the presentations.

LAB Service Learning Pre-Activity Survey & Reflection

Please complete this survey (both front and back) BEFORE you go to the LAB for your first reading day.

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?

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?

Why are you choosing this particular service learning project instead of the other options?

Service Learning Post-Activity Notes

You DO NOT have to turn this in; this is meant only as a way to help you generate material for your final reflection paper. I strongly encourage you to jot down some notes as soon as you can after your LAB experience.

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. 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

For your final paper for the course, you will be writing a Reflection Paper about your experience with the Reading for Radio program at the LAB. You can write it and turn it in as soon as you like, but the absolute deadline is the same as the final paper. 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:

- 3 to 5 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
- Include at least one reference to a reading from the course (*any* reading or viewing assignment we've had this semester), properly cited.
- 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. Details are important and interesting!

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.

Draw at least one connection (or contrast, or comparison) with something from at least one of our texts (films or written texts) in the course. This should include a quote from the text and a discussion of how your experience related to that text in some way.

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?

Remember, you are writing a paper, so you should come up with an organizational scheme that makes sense. You might think about creating an outline to help you figure out the various sections you want to include. I am happy to look at a draft if you have questions!

[This page is mostly blank for spacing needs – use it to take notes.]

Important notes about this packet:

There is a (single-sided) Volunteer Form at the end of this packet – you should complete it and submit it **BEFORE** you do your time at LAB.

The next-to-last page (front and back) is the Pre-Activity Survey/Reflection: you should submit this to Dr. Marshall **BEFORE** you do your reading for radio time.

Also, be sure to review the “regular” Final Paper/Project packet for info on due dates, turning in the final paper, and the presentations.