



Thank you for your interest in the Community Service Miniterm 2012! This year's trip will return to Louisiana to assist in the recovery from the 2005 & 2008 hurricanes and the ongoing recovery from the 2010 Gulf Oil Disaster.

Instructions:

- All applicants must complete this form and application essay and return to the International Programs Office, 3rd Floor, Old Chapel.
- The names of two additional references are required. See details below concerning the kinds of referees you should choose.
- All applicants must also complete the standard application form for Union's Terms Abroad, available on the International Programs website, but DO NOT need to complete the generic essay in that application packet.
- Be sure to include the scholarship form for this Miniterm, if you want to be considered for such.
- ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE BY 5 pm, Friday, April 13th, 2012
- Please read the included information sheet carefully. This mini-term's requirements are similar to other Union miniterms, but differ in some significant ways. Be sure you fit all the requirements before applying.
- **Information session:** Thursday, March 29th during the common hour in Lippman 201.
- Applicants will be contacted to set up interviews shortly after the application deadline.
- For more information, contact the Faculty Advisor: Janet Grigsby, Department of Sociology, 205 Lippman. grigsbyj@union.edu, Phone ext: 8023.



Course Description

An integrative learning experience, combining an intensive off-campus community service experience in December with academic inquiry and critical reflection about the social, political, cultural and economic issues in which such service is embedded. Admission by permission only. Applications for the December 2012 trip will be taken in April 2012. Participants must commit to several seminar sessions during the fall term and will present their work at a mini-symposium during winter term 2013. Service site will be the Gulf Coast in 2012; future sites may vary.

Who is eligible?

- All Union undergraduates
- Must be on campus for both fall and winter terms and available for pre- and post-trip meetings
- Applicants must fill out an application, must provide references, & may be interviewed prior to selection
- Up to 18 students will be accepted
- No course prerequisites

Where will we go & what will we do?

- Current plan is to return to New Orleans and the Louisiana wetlands area by air
- Recovery work, most likely home building and repair, plus at least one day working on a wetlands restoration project
- Additional learning activities are being scheduled – meetings with environmental experts, local service & recovery workers, etc.
- There also will be some time for fun!
- Applicants are encouraged to watch the YouTube video “The Big (Ain’t So) Easy: A Volunteer’s Story” at this link: <http://youtu.be/B7Oy4etNibk>. This film by Shabana Hoosein, UC '11, will give you an excellent feeling for what this course involves and offers you. The blog site <http://ublog.union.edu/soc387> also has information on past trips.

What are the course requirements?

- Participation in 4-5 seminars during 2nd half of fall term, including discussion of readings and ‘reaction papers’; seminars will include a volunteer work day with a housing agency here in Schenectady, as well as some training in relevant construction tasks; we will do reading/reflection on the nature and motivations for such service work and will study up on New Orleans, the social, economic and environmental issues related to the disaster and recovery
- Attendance at pre- and post-trip workshops on campus during December
- Active participation in the service activities of the 2-week trip in December
- Participation in reflection/discussion sessions during the trip
- Logging/blogging during the trip
- Research for and preparation of 10-15 page project on a specific aspect/issue relating to the service trip
- Oral presentation of the project at mini-symposium during winter term

Can I get credit for my major if I’m not a SOC major? Does it count for Core Curriculum [Gen Ed]?

- The course satisfies one course credit in the LCC category of our Core Curriculum requirements.
- To check about getting major credit for this course from other departments & programs, you should consult your advisor in your department.

How will the course be graded? [tentative breakdown]

- 20% Quality of participation in pre- and post-trip sessions, evening meetings during trip – NOT quality of your work on the volunteer projects!
- 30% Final term paper
- 10% Oral mini-symposium presentation
- 20% Journaling
- 20% Small writing assignments

What will it cost?

- The charge to students for this mini-term is significantly reduced and will only be large enough to cover the costs of running the program. Our current estimate is that tuition in 2012 will be about \$2000 – we may have to raise this if transportation costs continue to rise over the summer.
- Unlike other mini-terms, tuition covers RT air transportation from Albany, room and board on-site, plus ground transportation on-site – i.e., essentially everything.
- A \$200 deposit will be due in June to secure your place after acceptance into the course. The remaining fee must be paid by the end of fall term.
- As with other mini-terms, students who qualify may seek additional loans through the Financial Aid Office.
- We also have some additional need-based financial aid available. Please fill out the scholarship application form for this course on the IP website, if you wish to be considered.

What is the timetable for all this?

- Information meeting: First week of Spring term – watch for flyers/email
- Deadline for application submission: Friday, April 13th, 5 pm
- May – acceptances announced
- June – tuition deposits due
- Week 6-10, fall term – seminar meetings
- 3 weeks in December – on-campus workshops, trip & debriefing. For 2012, the tentative schedule is as follows:
 - Wednesday, 11/28 – return to campus for last preparations [Thanksgiving is 11/22 this year]
 - Sunday, 12/1 – fly to New Orleans
 - 12/2-12/15 – service work in New Orleans and Dulac
 - Sunday, 12/16 – fly back to Schenectady
 - Monday, 12/17 – debriefing sessions
 - Tuesday, 12/18 – students return to their homes
- Term project drafts due 2nd week of Winter term
- Winter term, 3rd or 4th week – mini-symposium
- Final term projects due 5th week of Winter term

Who can I contact if I want more information?

- Professor Grigsby, Sociology, is the main contact person for the course: grigsbyj@union.edu



SOC387T: Community Service Miniterm '12 Supplemental Information Form

Your Name _____

Current Residence on Campus: _____

Minerva House: _____ Greek affiliation, if any: _____

Activities on Campus (give positions, if applicable. If you are a first-year student, indicate your major activities in high school, as well):

Previous experience doing community service, either at Union or in high school:

How did you hear about this course?

Do you have a close friend, roommate, or significant other applying for this trip? Yes No

If yes, please list names: _____



SOC387T: Community Service Miniterm '12 Reference Information

Your Name _____

Please list 2 people who know you well and who we may contact, if necessary, to provide a reference on your behalf. These should not be friends or relatives, but do not need to be college professors. If you are a first year student, feel free to have someone from high school write on your behalf. They should be someone who can speak to your personal qualities that will be important for success in this experience, not just your academic competence.

Here is what we might say to such a person. In choosing your referees, think about who can speak to these qualities in you:

[Your name] has applied for admission to the Community Service Miniterm for 2012. This course combines academic work with a 2-week service trip in December during which students will engage in direct service to communities in need. This year the course is planned to return to New Orleans to do hurricane relief and recovery work. This will be an academically rigorous course, but will require a substantial additional commitment from students. To succeed in this course, the student must be able to work in teams, to work with people from a variety of backgrounds, to work for long hours and to accommodate to extremely basic living conditions. Students also must be able to adapt to challenging and changing conditions. Finally, they must also bring enthusiasm and a kind of passion to the challenges this experience will provide.

Reference 1:

Name (last, first) _____

Title/Position _____

Telephone: _____

Email address _____

Capacity in which person has known you _____

Reference 2:

Name (last, first) _____

Title/Position _____

Telephone: _____

Email address _____

Capacity in which person has known you _____



SOC387T: Community Service Miniterm '12 Essay Instructions

Please answer the following questions in a well-composed essay of no more than a total of two type-written pages. Type, print and include your essay with the application form.

1. Why do you want to participate in the 2012 Community Service Miniterm? What do you hope to gain from the experience?
2. Please describe any special skills or experiences you could bring to this year's service trip. What do you see as your greatest weaknesses as you think about taking this class? What will be the hardest part of the experience for you?
3. An important part of this course will be making personal connections between your life experience and work we are doing. How do you think you would respond if someone you encounter in Louisiana should say the following to you?

I am honestly tired of recounting my feelings about Katrina. I want to get back to a sense of normalcy. But what is normal or routine when too much time has passed since the storm hit, and every day people I know and love still fight with insurance companies and filter through what is fact or rumor about what they'll get, about the damage that has occurred? I am tired of talking about how race does matter with people who already know or with those whose minds I will never change. I am tired of hearing folks say the evacuees are better off than they were before the storm – I am left wondering how being homeless, jobless, often not surrounded by the familiarity of family, friends, your community is better off; or how an entire people can be accused for the increase in crime and murder in their transplanted homes. I am tired of feeling hopeless and useless in the face of the daunting task of rebuilding a community... I am tired of hearing even the stories of rebuilding when no one talks about the question of rebuilding for whom? I am tired of hearing the stories of rebuilding when the faces of those we saw penned in the Superdome or cordoned off on bridges, of those somehow "better off," are not included in any of the conversations; the voices that simply asked for water and food are still being ignored. [Tiffany Brown, 51-52]