Psychology 495  
Field Placement in Psychology  
Fall 2013  
N-107

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Course Description  
From the SDSU course catalog, p. 403:

“Students will be assigned to various community agencies and work under joint supervision of an agency supervisor and course instructor, attend class meetings, and staff conferences. May be repeated with approval of psychology undergraduate coordinator. Maximum credit six units. No more than nine units of Psychology 491, 494, 495 may be counted toward the major and no more than 12 units of courses numbered Psychology 491, 494, 495, 497, 499 may be counted toward the major.”

As part of this course, students volunteer at a community agency for at least 60 hours (approximately 4 hours per week) throughout the semester. The student chooses the agency, but it must be one where she or he will be working with and helping the people that the agency serves. By the end of the semester, students will...

- experience what it is like to be a helper  
- utilize basic listening skills  
- identify issues pertaining to the administration of their agencies  
- gain knowledge about their clients’ challenges  
- articulate their activities within a group of students

Prerequisites: Psychology 350 and three units from Psychology 230, 340, or 351.

All volunteer placements must be approved by the instructor. Do not begin a volunteer placement unless you receive approval from the instructor first.

Psychology 495 is designed to foster your ability to accomplish the following objectives that the Department of Psychology has for our psychology majors:

2.1 Use the concepts, language, and major theories of the field to account for psychological phenomena.  
2.2 Identify appropriate applications of psychology in solving problems such as the pursuit and effect of healthy lifestyles, origin and treatment of abnormal behavior, psychological tests and measurements, psychology-based interventions, and the resolution of interpersonal and intercultural conflicts.  
2.3 Articulate how psychological principles can be used to explain social issues and inform public policy.  
2.4 Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to
everyday life.
5.1 Recognize the necessity of and identify specific ethical behavior in all aspects of the science and practice of psychology.
5.7 Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of confidentiality for therapy clients as well as legal requirements for confidentiality to be breached.
6.1 Articulate (in writing or orally) a respect for human diversity
6.2 Identify ways (actions, behaviors) that emphasize the importance of interacting effectively and sensitively with people of diverse abilities, backgrounds, and cultural perspectives.
10.7 Identify and develop skills and experiences relevant to achieving selected career goals.

Course Requirements

Meetings – Students are required to attend four group meetings with the instructor to discuss and process their volunteer activities. These meetings are mandatory. If your schedule does not allow you to attend all the scheduled meetings you should not enroll in this course. Missing more than 15 minutes of a meeting (because of tardiness or leaving early) or absence from one meeting (or more) will result in a no-credit for the course.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Hour</th>
<th>Room</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>August 28</td>
<td>2PM-4PM</td>
<td>N107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>September 25</td>
<td>2PM-4PM</td>
<td>N107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>2PM-4PM</td>
<td>N107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>2PM-4PM</td>
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Volunteer Job Description - You must turn in to the instructor the following forms by Wednesday, September 25, 2013 by 2PM:

a) A description of your volunteer activities for the semester that is signed by your supervisor.
b) A completed Service Learning Agreement (download the form from Blackboard)
c) A completed Learning Activities Site Questionnaire (download the form from Blackboard)
d) A WWRL signed by you (I will supply this at the first class meeting).

Thought Logs – You will need to complete ten “Thought Logs” about the time you spend at your placement. The form for the Thought Log is on the course Blackboard site. This activity will ask you to think critically about what you are learning in your placement. You are required to fill out a Thought Log ten times throughout the semester, and it is up to you when you do so as long as each log is about one unique shift or time period at the agency (e.g., don’t plan to fill out all 10 logs about one day spent at your placement). Each Thought Log should be submitted to Blackboard within 24 hours of the date and time period about which you are writing. You are required to submit all ten Thought Logs to Blackboard by Wednesday, December 18, 2013.

Final Paper and Record of Hours - The final paper for this course should be 10 full pages long (one-inch margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font) and it should provide a description of the agency at which you volunteer and types of clients served, description of your activities and the particular clients you work with, characteristics of the relationships you have established, what
you have accomplished in your volunteer work, any problems you have had, and what you feel you have learned from this experience. **Do not include pages of information on your agency downloaded from the Internet or anywhere else.** The final paper is due Wednesday, December 18, 2013 at 8:00AM (e-mailed to instructor as a Microsoft Word attachment). You will also need to turn in a record of the hours/dates that you spent at your volunteer placement by Wednesday, December 18, 2013.

**Grading**

The course is offered for credit/no credit and students will receive a credit grade for completion of the aforementioned requirements. If you do not meet the requirements listed above, you will not receive a credit grade.

Please read the following official statement from the university:

"This course requires students to participate in field trips, research, or studies that include course work that will be performed off-campus. Participation in such activities may result in accidents or personal injury. Students participating in these events are aware of these risks, and agree to hold harmless San Diego State University, the State of California, and Trustees of the California State University and Colleges and its officers, employees, and agents against all claims, demands, suits, judgments, expenses and costs of any kind on account of participation in the activities. Student using their own vehicles to transport other students to such activities should have current automobile insurance."

Please let me know if you encounter any difficulties with completion of the course requirements. I’d like to facilitate you having as much of a positive experience as possible. Additionally, students who need accommodation of their disabilities should contact me privately to discuss specific accommodations of which they have received authorization. If you have a disability, but have not contacted Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473, please do so before making an appointment to see me.

**Cheating and Plagiarism**

In order to preserve academic integrity and encourage students to make responsible choices, all students found cheating or plagiarizing will receive an automatic fail for the course and will be sent to the appropriate administrative body for review. Please review the university’s definition of plagiarism in the SDSU General Catalog.
Course Outline

The majority of the time students meet with the instructor will be spent debriefing about their volunteer placements. Students are asked to share their experiences, including their challenges and their triumphs. Students are also asked to be courteous and respectful of other students’ while they talk about their thoughts and feelings. Time will be set aside during each meeting for icebreakers and/or discussion about issues pertaining to helping. The purpose of the icebreakers is for students to get to know each other in order to facilitate an atmosphere of comfort and trust for sharing about volunteer experiences. Additionally, activities related to helping are designed to promote critical thinking about the concept and practice of helping and enhance each student’s knowledge and skills pertaining to helping.

| Meeting 1 | 8/28 | Introduction  
|-----------|------|---  |
|           |      | Syllabus Overview  
|           |      | Icebreaker: Class Bingo  
|           |      | Discussion of Volunteer Placements  
| Meeting 2 | 9/25 | Icebreaker: Clarifying the Helper’s Values  
|           |      | Discussion of Volunteer Placements  
|           |      | Discussion and Group Activity: Confidentiality  
| Meeting 3 | 10/23 | Icebreaker: How’s the Semester Going?  
|           |      | Discussion of Volunteer Placements  
|           |      | Discussion and Group Activity: Nonverbal Communication  
| Meeting 4 | 12/04 | Icebreaker: How’s the Semester Going?  
|           |      | Discussion of Volunteer Placements  
|           |      | Discussion of Final Paper  
|           |      | Discussion and Group Activity: Basic Helping Skills  
| Finals    | 12/18 | **Final Paper Due – Email to Instructor by 8:00AM**  
|           |      | **Timesheet Due – Instructor’s Office**  
|           |      | **All Thought Logs Due – Complete through Blackboard**  

Courtesy Note: Students will be exposed to various cultures, lifestyles, and worldviews during this course, some of which might be very different from their own. Students are asked to be respectful of all ideas and information presented; disrespect or intolerance will not be tolerated. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers to “silent” mode during class. The instructor will keep her cell phone on the “silent” mode in order to be reached in the case of campus emergencies.