

**Here is a sample syllabus for a community leadership class, which combines leadership development with service-learning. Want more details? Email me: [mariam@youthleadership.com](mailto:mariam@youthleadership.com)**

## **Community Leadership**

The purpose of this class is to investigate social issues and problems facing our communities. As members of this class you will have the opportunity to discuss, research, and ponder significant issues that directly affect both our local and global communities. In particular, this class will:

- Provide a general understanding of personal leadership power and your role in the community;
- Assist you in applying these leadership skills within school and community settings, including taking on roles of social change within the community;
- Give you hands-on experience working with various community issues such as hunger, homelessness, violence prevention, environmental issues, education, health, youth issues, social justice, etc.;
- Provide opportunities for you to work together toward creative solutions for community problems.

Throughout the class, we will work together to discuss various community issues (not limited to the list above). You will select an issue and be responsible for designing an informed presentation for class. You may work with at least one other person from the class. Each week of class will consist of one (1) class period when you will present and we will discuss, in depth, the community issue; and one (1) class period where we will go into the community to do service related to the issue. Your research should come from CURRENT sources including newspapers, radio/news source, televised news, books, research journals, first person interviews, Internet, etc.

In addition to regular attendance, attitude, and participation, the following projects will comprise the grading of this class. You will earn up to 15 participation points per class (criteria to be set forth by instructor).

### **Class Presentations/Social Change Project:**

You will be responsible, with at least one other person, for researching, presenting, and leading a class discussion on one significant social issue. Together, the class will determine the issues we will focus upon at the beginning of the quarter, and you will select your date for presenting as well as your group early in the quarter. You will receive a suggested outline on how to complete this project. You will be able to select your partner/team, unless such matching is determined to potentially be unproductive; at that time, I will assist with team assignments. This project is worth 150 points.

### **Participation in Service Projects:**

You will be evaluated on your contributions to each service project undertaken by the class. You will also have a one- to two-page written reflection due following each immersion experience. These are each worth 25 points.

### **Final Exam:**

The final exam will offer you the chance to reflect on issues of social change, your personal leadership power, and the various immersion experiences we focused on through the quarter. The final is worth 100 points.

### **Community Leadership Social Change Project Outline**

Each student is responsible for researching and presenting on a selected topic. This topic will be of your choosing. You may work with one or more other students on your project. As a class, we will select 5 to 6 places to do service, based on the issue being investigated and discussed by our class. Due to time limits, we will not be able to do service at places related to all of our social change subjects.

Following is an outline and ideas on how to research and present your topic:

1. Identify your topic. If it is a broad topic (such as Drugs & Alcohol) consider narrowing down the area upon which you will focus.
2. Identify organization or individuals in the community who either serve people who need help in the area or present on the topic.
  1. Contact that agency/person

2. Identify what issues are involved and how you want the class to approach your topic
3. Meet with or interview the person or representative of the agency.
3. Gather and summarize pamphlets, newspaper articles, books, videos, etc. on your topic.
4. Check the facts versus opinions. When we discuss the topic, there will be a lot of opinions. It is your responsibility to provide facts to the class.
5. Organize a presentation, develop an activity, or outline a discussion for the entire class. You may choose to invite a speaker on the topic, or show a video. If you use a video, it cannot be your entire presentation. If you have a speaker come, make sure that they give the class time for questions and answers, as well as discussion. For example, if your topic is Drugs & Alcohol, you may want a recovering addict or Addictions counselor to come to class. Please let me know prior to your presentation so that we can make any special arrangements.
6. Prepare and write up (to be handed out) your ideas for solutions to the problem. These may be policy changes, programs, service options, etc.
7. If your issue is one for which we will be doing a service project, share responsibility with me to set up the volunteering and reflection time/questions.

You will get a limited amount of time in class to prepare your presentation, therefore PLAN AHEAD! I am around after school to help and am MORE THAN WILLING to work with you! Other teachers/staff are also interested in the same issues you are and may be willing to work with you. Ask them early!

Even with the difficult issues we are addressing, enjoy your investigations. This is your chance to prove that each person can make a difference!

## **Community Leadership Social Change Example Project**

Topic: Child Abuse

Research: History of Child Abuse (When were laws enacted; who are perpetrators; who are the victims; examples of)

Family Patterns (The effect of generations-why does it keep happening?)

Physical and Mental Impacts of Child Abuse

Reporting Child Abuse

What Happens after Reporting

Policies/Laws on Child Abuse

Role of Social Services

Presentation: Summarize all of the above and write a "Fact Sheet" for class to use

Have someone from Victims Advocacy or Social Services present

Discuss policies, laws, and recommended social changes/solutions

Service: Meet with Congressman/Senator who supports child advocacy laws

OR

Spend time at Day Care Center or Elementary School