



SYLLABUS: HEALTH & COMMUNITY, SERVICE-LEARNING CAPSTONE MEDS 5050 & MEDS 5051 (two-semester capstone)

Course Directors

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There is one required in-class orientation for this class on the first Monday of the semester, 4-5 pm, E-255.

There are no other regularly scheduled in-class meetings, unless requested.

Course description

MEDS 5050/5051 is a two-semester community service capstone for students pursuing health-related careers. The syllabus follows a service-learning approach, in which volunteer work at a community agency is paired with an independent project that is entwined with faculty-directed programmatic activities. These activities include weekly online reflections, workshops on database searching, writing literature reviews, and outcome presentations. Students should contact the course directors prior to the start of the semester in order to identify a community partner. This can be an agency of your own choosing, or one that we help you to find based upon your interests. To begin the placement process, please complete the following form: [Community Service Placement Form Link](#).

Your work at the agency will be two-fold: (1) Routine weekly volunteer service responsibilities that benefit the community partner and (2) an independent community service project that you develop in consultation with your supervisor (details are provided at the end of the syllabus). At the end of fall semester, the student will submit an NIH-style written progress report outlining work accomplished in areas (1) and (2). At the end of spring semester, the student will perform a critical evaluation of all project outcomes, write a formal written report, and present their findings at the Spring Research and Community Service Poster Fair. This experience will develop organizational and critical thinking skills, prepare students to interact with racially and culturally diverse societies, increase awareness of health problems that are influenced by social, economic or cultural factors, improve team working skills, and cultivate a life-long commitment to civic and ethical responsibility.

Covid precautions: All students enrolled in community service coursework will develop a [remote service contingency plan](#) in cooperation with their agency supervisor. If there is another shutdown, the student would implement their remote contingency plan in order to continue to provide service to the agency.

Course objectives

- List the social, economic or cultural factors that impact public health
- Describe the need of a community agency from a national and local perspective
- Develop a proposal to address an unmet need

- Write a literature review that critically evaluates the issues confronting a volunteer agency.
- Effectively communicate project outcomes in oral and/or poster presentation format.
- Describe how a project has enhanced personal knowledge of civic and ethical responsibility, as well as sensitivity to cultural diversity and social justice in the community.
- Describe how a project has fostered a critical self-reflection of personal identity and sense of vocation.

Prerequisites: You must be placed with an agency in order to obtain permission to register.

Office hours: To maximize your time at the agency there are no regularly scheduled class times, other than the first orientation. If you wish to get advice about your project, send me an email and we will set up a time to chat. As a general rule, my office hours for this course are every Monday at 4 pm, either in my office (MSB1256A) or via Zoom.

Time commitment: The expectation is 4 hours per week for each credit hour enrolled. This includes travel time, time spent at home or the library working on your project. Students should follow the operating calendar of the agency that they serve. If a community partner is performing normal operations on a day that conflicts with a student's personal schedule (or UC's schedule), the student is expected to serve on that day (or to negotiate with the agency to make up the time in a mutually agreeable way).

Academic integrity: University rules about code of conduct will be enforced.

Special accommodations: If a student requires a special accommodation to work on site at an agency, they should register with U.C. Accessibility Services prior to the start of the semester.

Pass/fail option, audit policy, and withdrawal policy: There are no pass/fail or audit options for this class. Withdrawal procedures follow U.C. guidelines.

Grading

Weekly assignments*	20%
Written progress report (Fall) Written final report and poster presentation (Spring)**	20%
Community partner evaluation of student performance	60%

* Late submissions are allowed, but an automatic penalty of 25%/day is applied. Since you have a full week to complete these, there are no extensions.

**Since the final report/presentation is based on work performed at the agency, the grade for these two items may be reduced if we receive negative feedback from the community partner that impacts what is presented in these assignments.

A	94-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59
A-	90-93	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66		
		B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63		

General information about what to expect during this capstone

MEDS 5050: focuses on an agency needs assessment, project development and implementation. Students will work with their agency supervisor to develop a plan of volunteer service. This will be paired with weekly course assignments (online) to challenge you to think about your agency in depth.

The exact nature of your volunteer work will be determined in consultation with your agency supervisor, keeping in mind that a backup plan for remote activities must also developed in the event of a shutdown. Your agency work will involve two components:

- **Routine weekly service.** This includes any activity that you do on a routine basis: tutoring students, making phone calls, delivering food, mailing brochures, trash cleanup, etc.
- **Individual project.** This is developed in consultation with your supervisor, forming the basis for your final written report and poster presentation. Projects vary tremendously depending on the type of agency. For example, they may be promotional (generating brochures, social media, educational videos), educational (writing detailed literature reviews to assist the agency staff, generating a syllabus for training/education, or brochures), informational (writing questionnaires to determine awareness or knowledge of a subject), or quantitative (analyzing data to understand why something occurs), or financial (fund raising with defined goals). The common feature is that all projects share the goal of generating something that didn't exist before.

MEDS 5051: Emphasizes outcomes analysis and data communication.

Since this is the final leg of the capstone, the focus of this semester critically evaluating your project outcome and communicating the data in a final written report and poster presentation. To help you avoid doing this at the last minute we will take a scaffolding approach that involves deadlines to submit the various segments of your final report, in a form that is close to being finalized. This will enable you to receive early feedback so that all you have to do at the end of the semester is to assemble the sections and make minor edits.

SCHEDULE FOR MEDS 5050 and MEDS 5051

Yellow: required in-class attendance, MSB E-255

Week	MEDS 5050 (Fall)	MEDS 5051 (Spring)
1	In-class orientation – welcome Assignment 1	Assign 1: background/significance Supervisor meeting
2	Assignment 2	
3	Assignment 3	Assign 2: weekly duties
4	Assignment 4	
5	Assignment 5	Assign 3: aims & approach
6	Assignment 6	
7	Assignment 7 Midpoint supervisor meeting	Assign 4: Marketing flyer Midpoint supervisor meeting
8	Assignment 8	
9	Assignment 9	Assign 5: results/outcome analysis
10	Assignment 10	
11	Assignment 11	Assign 6: limitations, future directions, skills developed
12	Assignment 12	
13	Assignment 13	Assign 7: written report, poster
14	Assignment 14 Progress report due	Final submissions due
15	Assignment 15	Poster presentation

Guidelines for the preparation of written and oral/poster presentations.

At the end of fall semester, you will submit a midway progress report (details about what to include in the report will be provided in an assignment). Your final written report at the end of spring semester should contain the following 3 sections.

Part I: Routine community service responsibilities

1. Name of your agency:
2. Mission of your agency:
3. Routine community service:
 - List the routine duties that you performed at the agency that were not part of your individual project. This can be a bulleted list, as long as there is sufficient explanation of what the activities entailed.

Part II. Individual project

A suggested template for the written project is below. This applies to both the progress report (Fall) report and final report (spring). However, the progress report can be shorter (2-3 pages). Page numbers are for double-spaced and can be adjusted depending on what it takes to tell your story.

1. **Title page.** provide a title that summarizes your project. Examples:
 - a. MYCincinnati's Shift to Online Instruction: A Brief on Attaining Equity in Educational Technology
 - b. Development of a Website for the University of Cincinnati Student-Run Free Clinic
 - c. Educating Volunteer-Interns on Social Determinants of Health and Health Disparities that Affect Patients at Crossroad Health Center
2. **Abstract** (250 words or less): A condensed summary of a project that allows a reader to get the idea of a project's goal and outcome without having to read the entire document.
3. **Background/significance** (3-5 pages): Review the background literature that is relevant to the mission of your agency and your specific project. For example, in the case of addiction services:
 - What defines addiction? What types of substance abuse does your agency deal with?
 - What is the problem of addiction from a 'big picture' perspective (ie nationally, or worldwide)?
 - What is the scope of the problem locally?
 - Why does this problem exist (i.e. what are the economic or societal factors that contribute to this situation? Are there health disparities that impact this problem?)
 - What solutions are needed? – this last section should lead the reader directly into the project aims. i.e. your aims should address a small part of what you have stated to be the need.
4. **Project aims** (1/2 page): List 1-3 aims that you pursued during the semester. List each aim as a short title, using strong verbs that can be linked to clear outcomes. For example: "create, design, assemble, select, determine, apply, demonstrate, calculate, explain, write etc". Avoid vague language like "know, appreciate, hope, understand, appreciate, etc". For example:
 - Aim 1: Develop a learning strategy to increase the ability of illiterate adults to read X
 - Aim 2: Implement a learning strategy to increase the ability of illiterate adults to read Y.Under each Aim title, write a short paragraph to clarify what the aim is about.
5. **Approach** (1-2 pages): What methods did you use to accomplish each aim? Did the project involve statistical analysis?
6. **Results** (2-3 pages)

Describe the final outcome. Indicate what objective criteria you used to conclude that the project was a success or not. If the project was not a success, explain why you think it did not work. If the project had to be changed along the way that is ok, just explain how and why it changed. Example: All 50 clients were tested by the National Center for Adult Literacy to determine their level at the start of the semester. At the conclusion of the training, each client was tested again and 40/50 clients succeeded in improving by one level.
7. **Obstacles encountered:** Describe any obstacles and how you addressed them.
8. **Limitations and future directions:** Describe project limitations and what needs to be done moving forward?
9. **Skills developed.** Describe hard or soft skills that you developed as part of this experience.
10. **References.** Aim for at least 25 references

Note regarding individual projects that involve literature reviews for the agency: Some of you may be tasked by your agency to write a literature review as part of your individual project. The goal of this is to take advantage of the extensive UC library resources that are not available to the agency in order to provide a comprehensive literature review that will be of use to agency staff. This is distinct from the final written report.

Part III. Marketing brochure for future recruitment to your agency (end of spring semester only).

We often hear from students and their supervisors that the agency would benefit from having a continual flow of volunteers to promote continuity of a project or a service after a student departs. To assist with this, you will be asked to upload a separate "poster flyer" (no more than one page) that can be used to highlight recruit other students who might be interested in your agency. This flyer should include the following:

- The title of your agency.
- A brief overview of the agency mission.
- A "job description" that describes what volunteers do at the agency. This would include any routine weekly duties, as well as any current or future individual projects that your supervisor would like to see accomplished. For example, it could be a continuation of something that you set up.
- A photo that captures some aspect of the agency. Note: the identity of minors must be kept anonymous (ie, use photos from the back of the classroom).
- A marketing statement that would attract the interest of the type of student you would like to see recruited to your agency. For e.g. "If you like working with children..."

Guidelines for the final poster presentation (if applicable)

Use the same sections described above for the final written report, condensing them into the format of a poster. The challenge is to be very clear and concise in order to convey the goals and outcome of the project to an audience of peers and faculty.