

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	COMP 397
Subject Title	Service Learning and Civic Engagement in the Information Age
Credit Value	3
Level	3
Pre-requisite/ Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Nil
Objectives	<p>The objectives of this subject are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To introduce the concept and practice of learning through community service to our students. 2. To nurture a sense of civic responsibility and engagement in our students. 3. To acquaint students with significant issues of social needs, justice and ethics related to the information age, such as the concept of the information divide.
Intended Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon completion of subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Articulate the needs of the underprivileged in society, particularly in relation to information technology. b. Reflect on the relationship between (1) service learning & social engagement and (2) their own education and sense of civic responsibility. c. Develop and evaluate solutions to specific societal needs using information technology.
Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus	<p><i>Seminars and lectures</i></p> <p>The <i>seminars</i> portion of the course will cover main topics as described below, and are designed to educate the students on major issues relevant to the digital divide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social engagement & service learning. What are some of the social issues that can be addressed with service learning? Why should social engagement be an objective of university education? What is Discipline-specific service learning? How is it related to social engagement? What are the benefits to the recipients? To the providers? 2. Proper attitude of the service provider. What are some of the pitfalls and what can be done to prevent them? 3. The digital divide. Who are the ones that have, and

	<p>the ones that do not? How does it come about? The global and the local issues. Impact of the current intellectual property laws. Impact of the digital divide on society: economical, cultural, political.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Possible solutions to the digital divide. Global and local solutions. Significant efforts such as the One LapTop Per Child (OLPC), open source software movement, Creative Commons, etc. Technology to empower and mobilize social justice. 5. Case studies of service learning – local and overseas. 6. Specific historical, cultural, and political background for off-shore sites (e.g., mainland China, Cambodia), or targeted local communities (e.g., refugees, new immigrants from mainland China, ethnic minorities from South Asia). 7. Project planning, health, safety and other issues relevant to service learning. <p><i>Service Learning Projects</i> Students will propose and carry out service learning projects under the guidance of the project teaching team. These projects may be local in Hong Kong, in mainland China, or overseas.</p> <p>The nature of the projects may vary. They can involve the rendering of direct service to recipients, researching on issues of social justice and ethics, learning about the work of non-government organizations, development of practical solutions to problems of social justice, etc. In all cases, the students should interact with the service recipients to understand their needs.</p>
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology</p>	<p><i>Seminars</i> The seminars are designed to introduce the students to the relevant issues. They also provide a forum for the students to discuss these issues. There will be opportunities for small group discussions, assignments, and presentations – to explore these issues in greater depth.</p> <p><i>Service Learning Projects</i> The service learning projects will emphasize <i>hands-on</i> tasks. They will involve team as well as individual work.</p>

Students will be encouraged to research on specific problems. They will also be challenged to design and implement solutions, applying their knowledge in information technology to solving social problems.

Students will be given strong support. Either in the form of a central, university-level office, or through the department. They will be assisted in identifying collaborating NGOs or other organizations, the planning of projects, and their execution.

Some projects (such as some particularly challenging or off-shore projects) may necessitate specific selection requirements on participating students.

Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes

Specific assessment methods/ tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed			
		a	b	c	
Class discussions, assignments, plans/proposals for service.	30%	✓		✓	
Performance in rendering service.	40%		✓	✓	
Reflective journal/report.	30%		✓	✓	
Total	100%				

The class discussions and assignments are designed to help the students to learn and to gauge the students' understanding of the issues discussed. The students will be asked to write proposals for the projects, as preparation for service as well as assessment of their understanding of social needs.

The students' attitude in the rendering of service, their degree of engagement with service recipients, their collaboration with other students, and relationship with collaborating NGOs are obviously indicators of their sense of civic responsibility.

Students' reflective journals on their experience, and

	reflective term reports testify to the students' reflection on their learning experience, and the breadth and depth of their learning.	
sStudent study effort expected	Class Contact:	
	2.5 hours each week for 14 weeks.	35 hours
	Other student study effort:	
	Planning and preparation of project, actual rendering of service, etc.	100 hours
	Total student study effort	135 hours
Reading list and references	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mark Warschauer, Technology and Social Inclusion – Rethinking the Digital Divide, The MIT Press, 2003. 2. Barbara Jacoby and Associates, Civic Engagement in Higher Education, Jossey-Bass, 2009. 3. Cathryn Berger Kaye, The Complete Guide to Service Learning, Free Spirit Publishing, 2004. 4. Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrich, Elizabeth Beaumont, Jason Stephens, Educating Citizens – Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility, Jossey-Bass, 2003. 5. Christine M. Cress, Peter J. Collier, Vicki L. Reitenauer and Associates, Learning Through Serving – A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning Across the Disciplines, Sterling, Virginia, 2005. 6. Dan Butin, Service-Learning in Theory and Practice – The Future of Community Engagement in Higher Education, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 7. Grace Ngai, Stephen Chan & Vincent Ng. Cambodia 2010: A Milestone for 15 Years of Service Learning, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2010. 	