

Experiential Learning for Social Justice Overview

The Experiential Learning for Social Justice (ELSJ) component of Santa Clara's Core curriculum cultivates social justice, civic life, perspective, and civic engagement. ELSJ provides Santa Clara students with opportunities for experiencing the gritty reality of the world, thinking critically about the world, responding to its suffering, and engaging it constructively.

Three key elements are necessary for ELSJ credit:

1. Contact: ELSJ involves substantial contact with communities
 - Community-based learning experiences involve typically 16 contact hours over one quarter
 - Immersion trips involve at least 24 contact hours, normally over a five day period (or longer)
 - Other forms of community engagement typically involve 16 contact hours over 2-10 weeks (or longer)
2. Reflection and Integration: Direct community contact will be integrated through reflections and other assignments.
 - ELSJ courses include in-class engaged dialogue sessions
 - ELSJ courses include written critical reflections
 - The written and oral reflections must integrate the community-based learning experiences with the rest of the course content
3. Learning Objectives and Assignment Mapping: Assignments in ELSJ courses will be aligned with the following learning objectives. Students will be able to
 - recognize the benefits of life-long responsible citizenship and civic engagement in personal and professional activities (Civic Life);
 - interact appropriately, sensitively and self-critically with people in the communities in which they work and appreciate the formal and informal knowledge, wisdom, and skills that individuals in these communities possess (Perspective);
 - recognize, analyze, and understand social reality and injustices in contemporary society, including recognizing the relative privilege or marginalization of their own and other groups (Social Justice);
 - be able to make vocational choices in light of both their greatest gifts and the world's greatest needs (Civic Engagement).

See the Core Guide for courses approved for ELSJ. The web version of the Core Guide is updated quarterly. The ELSJ requirement can be fulfilled several ways:

1. One class, incorporating the key elements, in which all students receive ELSJ credit (units variable).
2. One class, in which ELSJ community contact is one of several options. Those students receiving ELSJ credit register for an ELSJ option. The ELSJ option typically involves no additional units. The ELSJ option incorporates the key elements. The syllabus, however, includes the four ELSJ learning objectives for all students and all students complete assignments aligned with the learning objectives.
3. One non-departmental milestone (no units) in which students contract with the ELSJ Curriculum Manager and register for the ELSJ milestone to fulfill the ELSJ requirement without units, as credit for work produced in association with an immersion trip or other experience involving contact with communities. The ELSJ Curriculum Manager will confirm whether the experience qualifies for ELSJ. Students will submit work products to the ELSJ Curriculum Manager demonstrating the achievement of the learning objectives, following posted guidelines.

When he inaugurated Santa Clara's sesquicentennial year, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, noted that "Tomorrow's 'whole person' cannot be whole without an educated awareness of society and culture with which to contribute socially, generously, in the real world." Calling for a new Jesuit educational standard, "to educate the whole person of solidarity in the real world," he explained: "Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering, and engage in it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose, and act for

the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed.”¹

NOTE: Syllabus submissions must be made to: UgradStudies@scu.edu. The ELSJ Faculty Core Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving syllabi.

¹ Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American, Jesuit Higher Education,” address at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California, October 6, 2000.