

# Community-Based Learning: Internships and Community Projects

## Spring 2026

### Variable credit options! (8-16 credits)

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Taught in collaboration with Ellen Shortt-Sánchez, Director of the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action (CCBLA): [shorttse@evergreen.edu](mailto:shorttse@evergreen.edu), (360) 867-6859, Sem II E-2123

**Class Standing:** this program is for sophomore–senior students. We encourage students who are new to Evergreen (regardless of class standing) to consider taking a different program prior to enrolling in this program.

**Program Description:** This program provides an academic home-base for students interested in earning credit through internships with community organizations or community-based projects. The 6-credit academic core provides a learning community where students share knowledge and experiences, deepen knowledge of local community organizations, and develop skills for community-based work through readings, discussions, and workshops. In addition, students carry out 2-10 credits of internship or project work for a total of 8-16 credits in the program. This program is also designed to support capstone projects that involve community-based learning, organizing, research, and participation. *This program is ideal for responsible, self-motivated students who value collaborative learning, are enthusiastic about shaping a community of co-learners, and are committed to learning from and with community partners.*

Through their internship or project work, students will develop strong links to organizations, regional social movements, and community mentors and partners who will be students' guides and hosts. Internships can have any focus, including education, adult literacy, gender, racial, and economic justice, immigrant rights, food security, homelessness, cooperative development, community arts, and public health, among others. Community-based projects could involve oral history, working with community members (elders, artists, laborers, community organizers, etc.), designing a community action plan to address a particular challenge or need, or collaborating with students to jump start a project that engages community. Faculty and the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action (CCBLA) will work with students to develop project proposals and/or in-program contracts for internships with community organizations. Students can contact CCBLA Director Ellen Shortt-Sánchez, explore opportunities through Handshake, or contact program faculty to develop proposals. **Students should reach out to faculty before the start of the quarter with a description of the project or internship they want to develop, and be ready to start projects and internships week 1 of spring quarter (see “next steps” below).**

**Key Questions:** Through both readings and reflection as well as community work, we'll engage the practical and theoretical issues of community-based learning: How do you enter a community? What are challenges you might face? How do we value our own distinctive identities while respecting differences we encounter? What skills do communities find useful? What are the ethical dimensions of this work? How do we value the knowledge and resources in the community while understanding our own strengths and access to resources? How does “collaboration” differ from “helping,” and what strategies can lead to community partnership? How can we building skills for working in community settings while sharing experiences with a cohort of fellow students?

**Structure:** The program consists of *two components*: **a)** 6 credits of academic work (the “program core”), which will include classroom learning, seminar, reflection, and workshops; and **b)** a community-based independent project or internship (or a combination of the two) developed with guidance and support from faculty; the project or internship may be anywhere from 2 to 10 credits. Adding together these *two components*, students may enroll for a TOTAL of 8 to 16 credits in the program.

**Details on Credits/Hours:** Credits and hours in the program will be broken down as follows. **Please pay attention to credit and hour equivalencies when developing your internship/project**, and be cognizant of how much time you have to dedicate to your work before choosing how many credits to enroll in. For internships, your credits at the end of the quarter will depend on how much time you spent at the site. For projects, your credits will depend on how much time you spent on the project and whether you fulfilled your proposed work. **You will enroll in the program for the TOTAL number of credits you aim to earn.**

Academic component			TOTAL
6-credit Program Core (required of everyone)→	+	<p align="center"><b>In-Program Internship or Independent Project</b></p> <p>2 – 10 credits → (2 credits = 5 hours of work per week)</p> <p><b>THIS MEANS:</b></p> <p>2-credit internship = 5 hrs/wk on-site (50 hours total/quarter)            4-credit internship = 10 hrs/wk on-site (100 hours total/quarter)            6-credit internship= 15 hrs/wk on-site (150 hours total/quarter)            8-credit internship = 20 hrs/wk on-site (200 hours total/quarter)            10-credit internship= 25 hrs/wk on-site (250 hours total/qtr)</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> You have the option to combine internship and project work, as negotiated with faculty. For example, you might take the program core for 6 credits, plus a 6-credit adult literacy internship, plus a 4-credit project on readings about adult literacy for 16 credits total.</p>	= 8– 16 credits

**Schedule:** The schedule below is for the 6-credit program core, when we will meet together as a group. Students are expected to develop a consistent schedule for both internships and independent projects, and to communicate that schedule to faculty and field supervisors by the end of week 1.

Tuesdays	
10:00 – 12:00 Skill-building workshops	1:00 – 4:00 Seminar/Check-in
* Please note that some workshops, including our final presentations, may take place in downtown Olympia.	* Time to discuss readings and reflect collectively on our experiences in the community

**Assignments:** in-program internship/independent learning contract, weekly progress logs and reflections, 1 personal essay, 1 integrative essay based on readings, final documentation project.

**Readings:** Readings will consist of articles (posted on Canvas) meant to provide vocabulary to frame our experiences in the community, challenge us to think more deeply about our experiences, our work, and the relationships we are building with the community, and invite us into continual reflection on our work. Topics for readings will include: ethics of community work, asset-based thinking, popular education, personal identity, and the impacts of race, class and gender as constituents of our own and community experience.

## **Next Steps: What do I need to do to prepare for this program?**

1. **Contact the faculty:** make sure you have contacted faculty member Catalina Ocampo Londoño to discuss your proposed project or internship.
2. **Develop your internship or project—start immediately!**
  - *For internships:* investigate and contact internship sites, discuss their needs and balance with your interests, identify how many hours per week you will be working at the internship, and find a field supervisor who is willing to mentor you and write an evaluation at the end of the program.
  - *For projects:* investigate and start contacting community partners and connections, think about what additional readings, activities, and milestone assignments you need to incorporate into your project, and make a tentative weekly schedule of your activities.
3. **Determine how many credits you will be taking:** this will be determined by how much time you will be spending per week (on average) on your internship or program. Remember that 2 credits = 5 hours per week (working on your project or on-site at your internship). For this program, you can take 8-16 credits (6 academic credits + 2-10 credits for internship/independent project – i.e. 5-25 hours of internship/independent project work per week).
4. **Start working on your in-program internship/independent study contract\*:** you can begin working on this contract through [my.evergreen.edu](http://my.evergreen.edu). Make sure you classify your contract as an IN-PROGRAM internship under “Community-Based Learning: Internships and Community Projects” – this is important so you can register for the program! Developing your contract will require you to articulate learning objectives, what activities you will carry out to meet those learning objectives, and how your faculty and field supervisor will be able to evaluate your learning.
5. **Record all hours that you spend developing your internship or project:** this may count towards the total number of hours you spend in your internship, so keep careful track of how much time you spend and exactly what you did during that time.
6. **Read your e-mail:** once students are registered in the program, a letter will go out to with guidelines and further information.