

Liberal Studies Liberal Studies Program

Learning Outcomes and Writing Expectations

Experiential Learning

Approved by Liberal Studies Council (2009), revisions approved by Liberal Studies Council and Faculty Council (2015)

Learning Outcomes:

Students in Experiential Learning courses will:

- 1) apply particular concepts from readings, lectures, etc. to an analysis of lived experiences in the settings provided by the course;
- 2) use the experiences provided by the course to construct and articulate the impact of their experience on their understanding of course content;
- 3) demonstrate an understanding of the ethics appropriate to his or her experiential placement; and
- 4) synthesize and articulate how the ideas and experiences provided by the course might inform their personal, academic, and/or professional pursuits.

The experiential learning component is recommended for the junior year because much of the learning necessitates foundational knowledge and the ability to work independently. However, some students may complete this requirement in the sophomore or senior year.

Writing Expectations:

Experiential learning courses should include written reflections, which could be in the form of a journal, short reflective essays, and/or longer papers. These reflections should not merely recount a student's experience but should be rooted in and draw from material in readings and lectures, relating the experience to the course's academic content. Furthermore, writing assignments should address the EL learning outcomes by:

1. applying particular concepts from readings, lectures, or other course material to an analysis of a lived experience in the settings provided by the course
2. using the experience provided by the course to construct and articulate the impact of their experience on their understanding of course content
3. using their new understanding to make decisions and solve problems related to the course. For example, in a course where students develop software for a community-based organization (CBO), their written reflections should connect what they've seen and learned from the CBO for whom they're developing software with larger societal issues like the digital divide or Chicago's segregated neighborhoods. Similarly, students in an internship or study abroad would be expected to reflect on how their respective experiences in the workplace or abroad connect with relevant course readings and discussions.

Recognizing the broad range of courses approved for EL credit, the quantity of writing required in each EL course must be appropriate for the course. For example, a studio-based or product-oriented course may require 5-7 pages of substantive, reflective writing since learning outcomes are also being met through the deliverable course products or artwork. A humanities based course, on the other hand, may require 8-10 pages of substantive, reflective writing to adequately address the EL learning outcomes.