General Education Submission Form

Electronic submissions are preferred.

A. GE component for which course is being proposed: Competent and Compassionate Action (Serving Society; Enacting Justice)

B. Submitted by Elena Yee, Director of Intercultural Programs

C. Ideally, submissions should be discussed by the entire department prior to submittal.

[ ] Chair (supervisor) has reviewed and approved the course.

D. Course being proposed (please attach syllabus):
   APP192 Service Experience Seminar: Racial Equality and Justice Seminar

E. This course
   [ ] Has not been modified, but is being submitted to check its suitability
   [ ] Has had its syllabus rewritten to communicate the course’s contribution to GE
   [X] Has had its contents modified to address the relevant GE issues
   [X] Is a new course designed to fulfill the GE requirement

F. This course is being submitted as
   [ ] A Template. Applicable to courses with multiple sections which require only general training in the discipline. The submission should come from the department chair and should clearly identify what course content and what elements of the syllabus the department has agreed will common to all sections. Upon approval by the GE Committee, any course whose syllabus is determined by the department to meet the specifications of the template is approved to satisfy this area requirement. A copy of each syllabus should be forwarded to the G.E. committee for record keeping purposes.

   [X] An Individual Course. Applicable to courses requiring specialized training in the discipline or are typically offered by a particular instructor. The course should be resubmitted and reassessed in the event of a change in staffing or syllabus.

G. Statement of rationale:
   (Please attach a copy of the syllabus which has been annotated (a) to identify the activities fulfilling each of the expectations for courses in this area and (b) to explain how the activity addresses the expectation. Electronic annotations are preferred.)

Racial Equality and Justice (REJ) is in its sixth year and have shaped and influenced nearly ninety students and staff since its founding in 2003 by former student and alum, Kevin Thomas. The mission of REJ is to teach and challenge students about current race relations and racism. As part of their education, they travel to Jackson, Mississippi and Birmingham, Alabama where they learn about the Civil Rights Movement and Christian community development, study the scriptures through a social justice lens, and work on several projects for the John M. Perkins Foundation.
Before students travel to Jackson, Mississippi and Birmingham, Alabama, students spend three hours each week for training and team preparation. They watch and discuss films, visit the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, and attend the Student Congress on Racial Reconciliation (SCORR) at Biola. Students are given articles such as “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” but they are not mandatory reading. This past semester, students attended a lecture by Marian Wright Edelman, the founder of the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF), and learned about the history CDF’s work in Jackson, Mississippi.

While on location in Mississippi and Alabama, students spend about twenty hours in service, watch films, engage in interactive exercises, visit significant Civil Rights sites in Mississippi and Alabama, visit the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, and hear daily lectures about social justice and the bible from John M. Perkins staff, which include former faculty from Spring Arbor University.

Currently students take a short quiz to assess their knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement, fill out a short form prior to their going to Mississippi, and fill out a form after their experience as well as participate in a debriefing session on-site and when they return to Westmont. Students also are given the learning outcomes for REJ so that they may be intentional about their own educational process. The outcomes also give the advisor a tool to assess students’ learning.

To meet the G.E. for Serving Society; Enacting Justice, in addition to what students are doing for training, students will write a short personal assessment paper before and after their experience, write in a journal weekly during training then daily journal entries on-site, and read articles for group discussion and journal reflection. We will also invite key faculty to lecture on topics such as the Civil Rights Movement, genetics and race, race and the bible, ethnic groups and White culture and privilege. The JMPF staff will provide on-site supervision for the group, and will submit a report to the advisor on the group’s activities and performance as well as provide feedback to improve the service project logistically and/or educationally.

Through this course, students will learn about the value of diversity as well as the ongoing need for dismantling racism and classism due to the history and nature of race in the United States. They will learn about the faith and resilience of Christians who sought justice for those who were and continue to be oppressed. They will be challenged in understanding then leveraging their privilege, power and position so there is greater equity and access to resources for all people.

Service Project Hours: 18-20 hours in Jackson, MS
Classroom Discussion Hours: 3 hrs per week for 15 weeks – 45 hours (30 hours classroom, 15 hours team preparation)
SCORR conference attendance: Fri noon – Sat midnight (mid or late February)
Field trips: Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles – Date TBD (on a Sunday)
Maximum # of participants: 25

Note:
1. Students will need to pay for their participation in the service learning project through either fundraising or personal resources. Approximate cost: $1000-$1200 depending on # of students.