

## ES 237\*TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM\*ANGELL 2020

Please share your responses as a Google doc before the end of the day on Tuesday May 19th

Your responses to the essay questions below should be carefully thought out and should provide thorough and clear connections between your experiences and your learning. Your writing should be focused and well supported with specific detailed examples. Do not oversimplify. These are meant to be substantive summative thoughts.

### **Integrative Reflection Essay (20 pts)**

This first “essay” is based on the Intended Learning Outcomes for ACE (Academic Civic Engagement) Courses at St. Olaf. *Feel free to respond to the questions under each heading as separate well-developed paragraphs.* Thoughtful consideration of these questions may help you “digest” this semester’s experience and thus help you communicate your gains to future employers and help you consider your own civic/community roles as we work towards resolving complex environmental problems!

To get some energy into this writing, you might imagine that your audience is a group of faculty or administrators that really know very little about what civic engagement courses do and are contemplating cutting these kinds of courses out of St. Olaf’s curriculum because they think they are kind of useless. Your job here is to educate them about the many gains you have made through your experience 😊 and to justify and illustrate in detail how and why those gains were made. Remember these folks will not understand what students actually do in a civic engagement course. Therefore, you will need to have clear examples and descriptions of any specific readings, activities or experiences that led to your growth as an individual.

#### **1. Civic knowledge**

How has your understanding of the people, politics, history and organizations in and around Northfield changed across the semester as a result of this course and your project? Justify with specifics please!

#### **2. Civic learning**

Describe several ways during the semester you have used or applied the academic knowledge you gained in this course (from the readings), from previous ES courses, and/or from other St. Olaf courses as you developed and completed your ACE Projects. How did the process of applying that knowledge affect your understanding of that academic learning?

#### **3. Civic self-understanding/reflection**

Describe whether your ability to evaluate the effectiveness of environmental civic and community work has changed across the semester. Do you think you are better prepared now to evaluate the civic/community work of others? How about your ability to evaluate your own civic/community work? How has that changed and what changed it? Were there specific readings or specific experiences that helped you understand what kinds of civic engagement are more productive?

#### 4. Civic efficacy/action

Describe whether you are more or less confident in your ability to contribute effectively to civic and community endeavors and whether you are more or less likely to pursue civic/community roles that foster the common good. Justify! What specific experiences have affected your confidence level?

#### Self-assessment/Your role in your ACE Projects (20pts)

While your previous responses were focused on connecting your ACE project to your formal academic and civic knowledge, this part of the final will be about you more personally and your work this crazy semester. I would like you to reflect on your personal role in both your ACE projects and what that role looked like. What did you do well? What could you work on? How would you like to improve in the future? Your work this semester is much more similar to a role you might fit into after you graduate. In other words, most real life work takes place on projects and in groups. Moreover you will often be asked by your employer to reflect on your work and set goals for future work. Even us faculty do this at the end of a semester of teaching! Most of us think... "Dang, I really could have done that better!" This is an opportunity for you to reflect on what went well with you this semester as you worked in both of your groups on the two projects and whether there are some areas of personal growth you can envision.

*I would prefer some structure to this essay. Perhaps an introductory paragraph and then a couple paragraphs, each of which focuses on a specific issue (and then a wrap up paragraph).* Be sure to provide specific examples from the semester and your work on your ACE project! (I am just completing interviews with pre-meds as a prep for med school and they make many generalizations about themselves but it is much more effective to illustrate with specific circumstances and real events.) What do you know, practicing such specificity might help in future job interviews!

Check out the prompts below. You clearly do not need to address all of these but have listed them just to get you thinking.

- Which skills did you bring to the experience that helped your groups complete the projects?
- What did you learn about yourself and how you work in a team? You might remember how you responded to some of the questions at the very start of the semester when I asked what kind of person you are and how group work goes for you in general? Did some of those patterns play out?
- Are there skills you brought to the group? A perspective that was productive?
- Were these projects easy for you or bit difficult? Why?
- How did your strengths and weaknesses contribute to or detract from your group's work?
- Describe several ways you put various skills to work as you explored, discussed and researched. For example how did you use your writing, oral communication, teamwork, critical and creative thinking, information literacy and intercultural competency skills?
- Are there skills that you have developed during this time of change that you think will be useful in the future?
- What in this present moment do you find so difficult?