

## Freshman Seminar 101 – H

# College & Citizenship. Organizing a Holiday Toy Drive

Instructor: Dr. Bruce W. Grant \*  
office Kirk 414, 610-499-4017

class meets Tues 2:30-4:50, Kirk 413

### Course Description:

This course is an elective "Freshman Seminar" course for any freshman who has an interest in academic service learning. One of the goals of Widener University is "the preparation of students for responsible citizenship in a global society." Toward this end, the University offers a variety of opportunities for students to cultivate their citizenship skills by volunteering, working, and studying in the community of Chester. This course is one such opportunity.

In this course, our students self-organize into a short-term non-profit "agency" to raise funds and buy holiday toys for Chester children as part of Chester CitiTeam Ministries annual holiday toy drive. Students form working teams (publicity, fundraising, and treasury) and raise >\$1500, in addition to other FRS activities. In December, with holiday request lists in hand provided by CitiTeam, we travel to toy stores and purchase the requested toys (including assembling the bicycles). Lastly, we deliver our toys to CitiTeam during the last week of class. During the semester, this service provides students with knowledge and understanding that we use as we examine scholarly literature on citizenship and civic engagement. This course is offered every fall semester.

### Course Objectives:

- (1) Students will learn the mechanics of non-profit service-oriented agency function to raise money and purchase toys (including group organization, running meetings, goal setting, task visualization, role playing, labor allocation commitments, and reflective journaling),
- (2) Students will become more motivated to engage in community service because they see the problem and care about their commitment to solving it,
- (3) Students will become more self-confident that their volunteer actions can lead to positive change in the community, thus increasing their sense of personal agency in community problem solving and social justice.



FRS101 students buying toys for children in our community in collaboration with Chester CitiTeam Ministries, Dec 2006

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\* note: this course was co-designed and is co-taught with Dr. Stuart Eimer, who teaches a concurrent section (FRS 101 - V) that meets Tues and Thursday 3:30-4:30 for fall 2009.

## Generic FRS Description:

In addition to the specific description and objectives above, all Freshman Seminars have a fourfold purpose: 1) to help students develop critical thinking, research, discussion, and writing skills; 2) to engender in students positive attitudes toward academic work; 3) to help students learn the personal planning and study skills necessary for success at Widener; and 4) to familiarize students with campus resources and to promote the effective use of these resources. Seminars are organized around topics reflecting the personal intellectual interests of the faculty leading them and, thus, address a wide range of subjects. However, whatever the topic, all seminars provide students with assistance in the difficult task of learning how to be an effective student.

## Course Assessment:

**ATTENDANCE:** The single most important thing you must do for this course is to be responsible for your commitments to the course project -- the toy drive. Since almost all of the activities related to the toy drive will occur in class, you must attend class. If, due to illness or other unforeseen conflict that causes you to miss class, PLEASE email me (bwgrant@widener.edu) and any other students in your group with whom you are working who will need to do your job(s) for that day. Some tasks can be made up outside of class, but many simply cannot. Please do not miss class.

**WEEKLY 5-MINUTE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** Each week you will be submitting a brief writing assignment that will help you to articulate your observations, thoughts, feelings, and things you have learned from the activities of the week. Each assignment will be about 100-200 words, should be submitted through Campus Cruiser, and will be due each Friday by 11:00 pm. For each you will earn +10 points automatically for simply making an effort and making the deadline. I will prompt you with the "question of the week" either in class or by email, and then I would just like 5 to 10 minutes of your time for you to write and send me your response. Some of these assignments will ask for your reflections on your role(s) in the various activities each week, self-evaluations of your performance and learning outcomes, as well as critiques of how well each activity could be improved. I will describe more about these assignments in class.

**TEXTBOOK:** All Freshman Seminars use the text "Freshman Seminar 101: The Widener Experience", which is available ONLINE on Shared Files for this course. This e-book is a nice summary of the major areas of skills development that will really help you to succeed at Widener. We will read and discuss chapters from this text over the semester (see schedule below).

**PLEASE DO NOT PRINT !!!**

Additional readings on service learning and civic engagement will be provided.

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#	date	topic (WExp refers to chapters in the “Widener Experience” e-book for this course)
#1	Tues, Sept 8	Introduction – What is Academic Service Learning? Toy Drive Committee Formation (WExp Chapter 1 and Appendix 2)
#2	Tues, Sept 15	CitiTeam Tour (WExp Chapter 2 and Appendix 3)
#3	Tues, Sept 22	Toy Drive Committee Work CAPS tour (WExp Chapter 3)
#4	Tues, Sept 29	Toy Drive Committee Work Library Tour (WExp Chapter 4)
#5	Tues, Oct 6	Toy Drive Committee Work Tour of Wellness Center (WExp Chapter 5)
#6	Tues, Oct 13	Toy Drive Committee Work Tour of Writing Center (WExp Chapter 6 and Appendix 1)
#7	Tues, Oct 20	Toy Drive Committee Work Discussion: Serpentine Paths Through Majors
#8	Tues, Oct 27	Toy Drive Committee Work Discussion: Pre-Registration (WExp Chapter 7)
#9	Tues, Nov 3	Toy Drive Committee Work Discussion: Academic Integrity (WExp Chapter 8)
#10	Tues, Nov 10	Toy Drive Committee Work Discussion: Getting Involved (WExp Chapter 9)
#11	Tues, Nov 17	Toy Drive Committee Work
#12	Tues, Nov 24	Toy Drive Committee Work Discussion: Widener Counseling Center
#13	Tues, Dec 1	Final Fund Raising Day Purchase Toys Assemble Bicycles
#14	Tues, Dec 8	Deliver Toys To CitiTeam End of Course Reflection

There will be no final exam....