JEP REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

ARLT 100g: Social Justice
Fall 2009

INTRODUCTION

JEP is a service-learning program. As such, JEP provides students with opportunities to learn about a variety of subjects while providing valuable services to the community. For your Arts and Letters course on Social Justice, your work at the Darcy Kirby Center or A Community Place provides a context for understanding how theories of social justice are played out in real world experiences.

In some ways, your work in the community is similar to that of an anthropologist who conducts “participant-observer” research. Throughout the course of the semester, you will observe and participate in the daily activities of the people you meet at your JEP site, and you will write about your “findings” on a weekly basis.

These JEP Reflective Questions are designed to help you focus your observations and critically reflect on your experiences in relation to the readings in your ARLT course. In addition, your responses to these questions might serve as a means to think about the final paper assignment for your course. Please be respectful of the community and the limits of your experience and knowledge. Try to balance your enthusiasm for testing out theories with your responsibilities as a volunteer in the community.

Please read through all of the Reflective Questions prior to beginning your JEP assignment. The questions are related to and build upon one another. We encourage you to refer back to previous responses and to take seriously your PA’s feedback each week. Doing so will help you to develop your ideas and arguments over the course of the semester and to learn more from your experiences.

As you respond to the questions, you should concentrate on addressing the main topic/question (the highlighted one). The other prompts are focusing questions to help you identify critical factors related to the main question. Please feel free to go beyond the prompts and write whatever seems important to you about your experiences — especially when the topic is related to the issues raised in the main question.

Please refer to the JEP Grading Rubric and the PA Agreement you received in training for instructions regarding journal due dates and format requirements.

YOUR WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK ONE – First Impressions of Your JEP Site
Describe your initial experience at your JEP assignment. Include a detailed description of the responsibilities and activities involved in your particular assignment. What are your most vivid impressions? Generally speaking, how does the site at which you are working address issues related to social justice? What are the agency’s primary goals?

WEEK TWO – Issues to Discuss During 1:1 “Chats”
(Note: You may not substitute an “Alternate Question” this week).
This week you will be meeting one-on-one with your Program Assistant to talk about your experiences in JEP. In place of a full-length journal assignment this week, we ask that you take a few minutes to write down any questions, comments, or concerns that you have about your JEP assignment so far. For example, what are your tasks at the site and how are you adjusting to your new role? How are you relating to the people at your site? Are you having any problems with any of the
logistical aspects of your assignment (e.g., schedule, transportation, Blackboard access, etc.)? Please submit your comments (approximately a paragraph) the same way you would submit any other journal through Blackboard. Rather than providing written comments, your PA will discuss the issues with you during your chat.

**WEEK THREE – Beyond Good and Evil**
Historically, many non-profit organizations have been linked with religious institutions (for example, the Salvation Army). Consider the extent to which particular religious philosophies intersect with the mission and/or everyday activities of your community site. (Note that investigating the mission statement and/or history of the organization’s founding should help you determine if there are any “official” religious ties.) Think about Nietzsche’s views regarding the historical connections between Christianity and morality as you consider the extent to which the religious ties (or lack thereof) of the organization is helpful (or hurtful) to the organization’s goals.

**WEEK FOUR – A Vindication of the Rights of Woman**
Wollstonecraft stresses the importance of education as a means towards improving the status of women in society. Drawing from what you know about the clients at your site, what is the connection between education and equality?

**WEEK FIVE – On Liberty**
Mill writes, “Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.” Based on your experiences at your community site, to what extent do you agree with this statement? To what extent does the state, or other outside forces, control the destiny of the clients at your site? What about such issues as gender, race, and class?

**WEEK SIX – The Communist Manifesto**
Consider what would happen if the United States were to reorganize our society according to the ideals set forth by Marx and Engels. How would it change the life experiences of the clients at your site?

**WEEK SEVEN – The Souls of Black Folk**
The “sorrow songs” included throughout The Souls of Black Folk are vital to the ideas Du Bois is trying to get across. What kinds of “sorrow songs” have you heard throughout your experiences working in the community? You could consider literal songs, but you might also think about particular mottos or phrases that the volunteers or clients at your site utilize in difficult times. Note: If you worked at A Community Place at the same time as the CODA students, you might want to consider how that music program intersects with the work at the site.

**WEEK EIGHT – Final Reflections on Social Justice**
(Note: You may not substitute an “Alternate Question” this week. Also, this week’s response should be two-pages long.) Think back over the last eight weeks. What have you learned about the community and/or about yourself that surprised or challenged you? How has JEP helped you learn more about Social Justice? Highlight a noteworthy experience in which you were able to apply what you learned in class at your JEP site.

**ALTERNATE QUESTIONS**
When your JEP experiences do not allow you to adequately answer a Reflective Question, you may substitute one of the questions listed below. You may answer each question only once. You may not use these alternate questions for Week 2 or Week 8.

**Option 1 – Policy**
What are some of the important policies, laws, and political debates related to the primary issues facing the people at your JEP site? Focusing your response on one law, policy, or political issue, describe its potential impact (direct or indirect) on the lives of those with whom you are working? As you answer, consider the way in which at least one of the theorists you have read would feel about this law, policy, or political issue.

**Option 2 – A Meaningful Event**
Describe a meaningful event or series of events (positive or negative) in which you were involved at your site, briefly describing the who, what, where, when, why, and how. Why does this event stand out as particularly important or meaningful to you? How has it altered your relationship to others at the site, your role there, and/or your perspective about your JEP assignment?