



SERVICE LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

## **ZEENAT MITHA | UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON DOWNTOWN**

### **CREATING AN AWARENESS OF SOCIAL ISSUES, ENCOURAGING INCLUSIVENESS, AND ENHANCING CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING**

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

Service Learning courses heavily contribute to the students learning of inclusion, awareness of social issues, and enhancing critical thinking skills. By applying certain key requirements in the classroom, that learning takes place, and students also develop an understanding of the role they need to take in society. The end-of-the-semester analysis of team work, working with a non-profit, signature assignments, reflective papers, and community presentations demonstrate the students' growth in learning, critical thinking, social and cultural awareness, and community engagement.

#### **THEMATIC FOCUS: LEARNING THE CHORDS | RESONANCE | SURPRISING COLLABORATIONS**

#### **BIO(S):**

##### **ZEENAT MITHA**

Dr. Zeenat Mitha is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD). She begins her fifteenth year at UHD, and she has incorporated Service Learning and Community Engagement in her courses, since her first semester. She understood that academic, critical thinking skills, civic engagement, and cultural awareness would be enriched for students. She has worked with five non-profits over the years.

Dr. Mitha creates and teaches progressive courses in the areas of Strategic Public Relations, Mass Media and Communications. Dr. Mitha is a speaker at Community Engagement and High Impact conferences. She used to have a monthly column on Culture and Diversity for almost four years for Fort Bend Focus Magazine.

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