

2012 IS THE YEAR OF THE GIRL AT UPSTATE

*The work of today is the history of tomorrow,
and we are its makers." -- Juliette Gordon Low*

2012 is the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts, a national organization founded by Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia on March 12, 1912 in order “to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, and to make the world a better place.” The Center for Women’s and Gender Studies at USC Upstate is joining forces with the local Girl Scouts to celebrate this special anniversary by developing a new course in the academic field of Girls Studies with a service learning component that permits students to become trained as Girl Scouts troop leaders and thereby to fill a significant need in the lives of girls in Spartanburg.

WHAT IS GIRLS STUDIES?

Girls Studies is a subfield of Women’s and Gender Studies focused on the lives, culture, and history of adolescent and pre-adolescent girls. Girls Studies resists the social construction of girlhood as a state of inferiority in school, family, and media culture. Girls Studies replaces simplistic calls for ‘girl power’ with sustained attention to the structural power relations that disadvantage girls, while also looking for opportunities to change the patterns of girlhood in the lives of the girls around us.

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.¹ Volunteer efforts are enhanced through traditional in-class course delivery to educate students on a subject related to the outreach initiative. In a service-learning course, some classroom time is used for volunteer training. In addition, volunteer hours are counted as part of the work for the course instead of being added on top of your usual course load.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Fall 2012 will see the launch of the first ever course in Girls Studies at USC Upstate, listed as SWST 398: Topics (Girls Studies). In this course, students will have the choice between two service learning projects: (A) becoming trained as Girl Scouts troop leaders and leading a troop, (B) becoming trained as Girls on the Run assistant coaches or running buddies and working with a GOTR group at a local elementary school. Before signing up for this course, you must contact Dr. Johnson to schedule an interview and be approved for enrollment: mjohnson@uscupstate.edu or 503-5724.

¹ From the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse: <http://www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning>.