## ACC 288 – Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, VITA Practicum – 4 Credits

### PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>This course introduces students to concepts and language of IRS and taxation while preparing federal and state taxes within their community for low-income individuals.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Learning Outcomes** | - Define basic tax vocabulary and recognize tax law  
- Learn how to interact effectively with low-income clients  
- Help to educate low-income taxpayers about tax credits to which they are entitled  
- Master basic tax modules  
- Complete IRS exams for certification as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) participant  
- Operate the computer and become proficient with TaxWise software |
| **Training Sources:** | o IRS Publication 4491 - VITA/TCE Training Guide  
 o IRS Publication 4012 - VITA/TCE Volunteer Resource Guide  
 o IRS Publication 17 - Your Federal Income Tax for Individuals  
 o IRS Publication 6744 - VITA/TCE Volunteer Assistor’s Test/Retest  
 o Link and learn taxes e-learning |
| **Student Eligibility** | - VITA training certification  
- Complete 36 hours of volunteer time at Main South CDC or other Worcester VITA site  
 Students must pass 3 Certifications:  
 o Volunteer standards of conduct  
 o Intake/Interview  
 o Basic or Advanced Certification  
 o Student must download volunteer agreement and provide to the VITA site |
| **Narrative /Readings** | Write a one-page introductory narrative for your portfolio by addressing the following:  
- What did you accomplish?  
- Why did you decide to undergo the training and to volunteer?  
- How is it related to your personal and career goals  
- How does it fit into your discipline?  
- How will credit earned be applied to your major?  

Write a five-page narrative which addresses the following:  
Provide at least three specific references to the reading to explain how the readings helped you to understand:  
- What are tax Credits?  
- What’s the difference between a tax credit and a tax deduction?  
- What is the difference between refundable and non-refundable credits?  
- What are Education Credits?  
- What is the child Tax Credit?  
- What is the Additional Child Tax Credit?  
- What is the EITC is?  
- Why the Federal government instituted the EITC?  
- Who benefits from the EITC initiative?  

Provide at least three references within the learning environment connecting your readings and the tax payers you helped. Please describe this correlation:  
- Other points you think are important between your readings and your experience  
- Provide at least two examples of how your analytical skills were put to the test during your studying and/or applications helping taxpayers.  
- Were you surprised or dismayed with this experience? Please explain. |
**Required core readings:**

- **How to File Your Income Tax Return**
  

- **Maximizing the higher education tax credits**
  
  by Cody Gamboa, CPA, and Travis Wheeler, CPA March 1, 2019
  

- **The Impact of Education Tax Benefits on College Completion**
  
  Author: Elsayed, Mahmoud A.A. Affiliation: Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Georgia State University, 14 Marietta St, Atlanta, GA 30303 Source: In Economics of Education Review August 2016 53:16-30, Publisher: Elsevier Ltd.

- **Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit**
  

- **Child tax credit now higher, more widely available**
  

- **The Role of Refund Expectations in Savings: Evidence from Volunteer Income Tax Preparation Programs in the United States**
  

- **Using the earned income tax credit to stimulate local economies**
  
  Alan Berube, The Brookings Institute

- **From Sociology, A Down to Earth Approach**
  
  James M. Henslin, pages 216-239 EITC Q&A’s from the IRS website

- **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**
  

**Portfolio Development Guidelines**

Your portfolio should be developed in a loose-leaf binder, which contains the following:

- Basic or Advanced Certification
- Volunteer Standards of Conduct Certification
- Intake/Interview Quality Review Certification
- Volunteer agreement
- HOURS VOLUNTEERED verified by program Coordinator where you volunteered
- IRS Recognition Certificate
- Introductory Narrative (1 page)
- Narrative (5 pages)
- Current Resume listing VITA Experience
- Degree Audit of your current major

**Cost to students**

$65 per credit, payable at time of application. For 4 credits, the cost will be $260. This is non-refundable. *Career Services will forward credit authorization to registrar’s office once we receive verification of successful evaluation.*

**Transcript Notation**

P (pass). Credits are not computed in grade point average. If portfolio does not demonstrate sufficient knowledge, student may be asked to revise it.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The “P” grade satisfies credit requirements at QCC, but may not transfer to another school. *If you plan to transfer, make sure you know the transfer policies of the school/s you plan to attend.*

**Complete the Process**

Make appointment with Career Services for in-take, screening, and instruction as to how to develop the portfolio

**Questions?**

Contact Career Services (508) 854-4439, Room 272A or Eduardo Rivas, at erivas@qcc.mass.edu, (508) 854-4319