

FIELD EXPERIENCE IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES  
SOS 4380  
CRN: 21660 (3 credit hours)  
SPRING 2012

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**Prerequisites:** Sixty hours toward degree, 2.5 GPA, and approval of department chair.

**Recommended Reading:**

Sweitzer, H.F., & King, M.A. (any edition). The successful internship: Transformation and empowerment. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole

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## OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

### Course Description

Work experience in public or private sector positions of relevance to the social sciences disciplines. Conferences with the instructor and other academic assignments are required.

### Educational Objectives

After completing this course, the student should:

1. Understand sociological, psychological, political, historical, ethical, and other issues relevant to the internship;
2. Apply knowledge learned in the classroom to the internship experience;
3. Integrate theoretical and practical information in a way that enhances understanding of the work (internship) environment; and
4. Add to your skills and experiences that will help you in seeking a job or applying to graduate school

### Your Internship

Your internship is an opportunity for you to obtain first-hand, practical knowledge in an area of social services that interests you. It is meant to compliment and enhance your academic learning. It is difficult, and perhaps unwise, to separate the science of human behavior from its application in the real world. Thus, you should choose an internship site that will give you experience in an area of vocational interest to you.

At your internship site, you will have a supervisor. Prior to beginning the internship, you must meet with your supervisor to clarify the site's expectations of you. Your discussion should include the following issues: weekly hours, total hours, procedures for illness or emergencies, supervisory and other meetings, job responsibilities, and any other obligations you may have to the site. Make sure you understand the site's requirements and procedures for protecting clients' confidentiality. It is also important for you to discuss your needs from the site. Be sure to discuss your learning objectives, your interests, and any limitations you may in meeting the site's expectations.

The internship coordinator's role is to support you in your internship. If you are having a problem at a site, please first work with your site supervisor. If you are unable to resolve the problem with the site supervisor, please contact me immediately to discuss the issue and possible solutions. Also, if an emergency occurs and you foresee an inability to complete the internship, you must contact both your site supervisor and the internship coordinator immediately. The site coordinator, not the student, will decide if the situation merits special concession or whether failing to complete the internship as scheduled will result in an "unsatisfactory" for the final grade.

## Course Requirements

1. **120 Clock Hours:** You are required to spend 120 clock hours at your internship. This may include all normal duties you assume at your site as well as training, in-services, and specific outside tasks assigned by your supervisor.
2. **Class Meetings:** You are **required to attend** two class meetings, one at the beginning of the semester and one near the end. Please map these dates into your schedule early in the semester so that you do not miss them. This meeting will serve as an opportunity for students to share their experiences, discuss successes and difficulties related to internships and explore concepts surrounding experiential learning. In addition, in order to guide you and ensure your success in the course, we will discuss practical issues regarding the required assignments. Failure to attend the meetings as assigned may result in an "unsatisfactory" for the internship final grade.

Class Meeting Schedule:

**Meeting 1: Wednesday, January 18 from 11-12 N-1099**

**Meeting 2: Tuesday, April 10 from 12:30-1:30 N-1099**  
**\*\*\*PORTFOLIOS ARE DUE\*\*\***

3. **Portfolio:** The portfolio is a compilation of material and writings that describe the agency and your internship experience. Clearly label each section of the portfolio. All of the portfolio elements must be typed. The portfolio items should be stapled or bound together.

**Portfolios are due on April 10. If you have not finished your hours, then you will turn in everything but your journal and your hours log on April 10. Your journal and hours log will then be due on or before May 1. NO portfolios, hours, or any other assignment will be accepted after May 1.** Failure to turn portfolios in on time or to meet the minimum criteria for the portfolio will result in an "unsatisfactory" for the internship final grade.

The components of the portfolio are as follows:

- a. **Hours Log** signed by your internship site supervisor. The required form is attached to the syllabus. If multiple pages are required, each must be signed.
- b. **Agency Profile:** This is a 3-4 page description of your placement agency. It should include the following sections:
  - i. Background of the agency/institution, including its history, mission, structure, funding, objectives (purpose) and the population (type of client) served.
  - ii. A description of the student's role in the agency, including responsibilities, duties, tasks, supervisory structure, and method of evaluation.
  - iii. Finally, evaluate your personal and professional development, skills, and abilities regarding the work you have been doing.
- c. **Ethics Review:** Access the Ethics Code of the American Psychological Association at <http://www.apa.org/ethics/>. Choose one (1) General Principle and one (1) Standard (a standard always begins with a number and a title, such as "2.01 Boundaries of Competence" or "3.04 Avoiding Harm") and write a 2-3 page paper including the following:

- i. Summarize the ethical principle involved in each. DO NOT attempt to plagiarize the ethics site. Remember that I, too, access this site and others on ethics on a regular basis. Plagiarism is using someone else's work as your own. In this context, it will be defined as using four or more consecutive words directly from the ethical principle you are summarizing.
- ii. Describe how this ethical principle either is or is not used or enforced at your agency. Be specific and give examples of its use. If it is not used, suggest how it could be incorporated into the agency's practices.
- iii. Your paper should have the following organization:
  1. Summary of the General Principle
  2. Example of the General Principle
  3. Summary of the Standard
  4. Example of the Standard

Please note that I am aware that not all of you are psychology majors. I chose the American Psychological Association code of ethics because it is comprehensive and easy to understand. Any of these ethical principles can be made to fit virtually any social science internship position—just take the ethical principle/standard and “make it your own.” In other words, apply it to whatever internship situation you are in.

- d. **Internship Journal:** You are required to keep a **weekly** journal documenting your personal, emotional, and intellectual responses to your internship.
  - i. Your weekly entries should be typed and clearly dated.
  - ii. Your entries should include reflections on your experiences (i.e., your thoughts and feelings about something that occurred that week), thoughts and feelings over new knowledge, or evaluation of your use of your skills and talents in the work setting. Journal entries are not summaries of your weekly activities.
  - iii. You may use the first person (“I think that...”, “I learned that...”).
  - iv. Proofread each entry and avoid slang and incomplete sentences.
- e. **Thank-you Letter:** Write a letter thanking your internship supervisor for his/her time and involvement. If you plan to ask your supervisor for a letter of recommendation, say so in the letter.

### Grading:

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the following:

- Satisfactory completion of no less than 120 clock hours at the internship site
- Class attendance
- Agency profile
- Ethics review
- Portfolio
- Materials are on time (late submission of any class materials may be grounds for failure in the class)

Your final course grade will be as follows:

- S = Satisfactory (passing)
- U = Unsatisfactory (failing)

## Course Policies

1. **Academic Honesty.** Please refer to the University's academic honesty policy in the University Catalog. Plagiarism is the use of the work of others without giving credit. For the purposes of this class, it will be defined as four or more consecutive words taken directly from a source without being placed in quotation marks and without citing the source. Turning in work that is not your own may result in your receiving a "0" for the work, an "U" in the course, and/or you can be suspended from the college. Also note that falsely recording hours that you worked at your internship site violates the academic honesty policy. If you falsely record hours, I will seek the full extent of academic penalties. If you're having a problem in the class, see me before you do something that could follow you the rest of your academic career.

2. **Professionalism and Confidentiality.** The internship is a unique learning opportunity. You serve as a representative of UHD students to the community and your behavior reflects upon the University. Some guidelines for ethical work include: maintaining your appointments, being on time for appointments, dressing appropriately for the environment, treating co-workers and clients (or customers) with respect, seeking the information necessary to effectively perform your assigned tasks and protecting the privacy of your clients (or customers). It is your responsibility to know and follow the organization's policies regarding client information. DO NOT write client names in your journal or papers that will be turned in to me.

3. **Incompletes** in the course will **not** be given without a **very** good excuse. Incompletes are at the complete discretion of the instructor and are **extremely** rare. In **no** instance will a student be allowed to continue any incomplete into the fall semester. You must fill out the incomplete paperwork and get the permission of the instructor to take the incomplete **in advance** (before the last day of class, at least).

4. **Assignments are not accepted by e-mail.** You may hand in assignments in class, at my office, or to the Social Science Department secretary.

5. **Bookstore.** A student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be purchased from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

6. **Students with Disabilities:**

*Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, UHD will attempt to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. Please call 713-226- 5227 for more assistance.*

