

Western Washington University
Western Washington University

Department of Sociology



DIRECTED INTERNSHIPS

Soc 471

Intern Coordinator: Dr. Karen Bradley
Undergraduate Advisor: Linda Clark

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Western Washington University
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology 471, Directed Internship

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1. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Students apply sociological concepts and methods to better understand social issues and problems while engaged in on-site work experiences in various settings. Internship experiences provide valuable knowledge about the complexities of professional work, the process by which individuals find jobs, and the interconnection of agencies, organizations, and public policy, among other issues. In addition, internship experiences provide students with valuable information about their own occupational preferences.

2. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites: Successful completion of the Sociology Core (Soc. 207, 210, 310 and 302); earned a B or better in a 300-level sociology course relevant to the substantive area of the internship, and been accepted by an agency. Students may petition for exemption from the 310 prerequisite if they have written a research paper in another sociology course in which they earned a grade of B or higher.

NOTE: This is a five-credit course, repeatable to a maximum of 10 credits. The course provides elective credits only, i.e., Soc. 471 credits may not be applied toward the sociology major. Both the on-site supervisor and the internship coordinator are responsible for the evaluation of interns at the end of the quarter.

Students who would like to continue in the same internship setting for two quarters must demonstrate that they will be learning in ways that do not simply duplicate their first quarter experiences. This would entail, for example, additional responsibilities and/or learning opportunities above and beyond those of the first quarter, or in another area. For instance, a student may have assisted in client intake during the first quarter and switch to fundraising activities for the second quarter. Or, a student may assist in an activity program for kids one quarter but be fully responsible in the second quarter.

All interns are expected to work at least 10 hours per week at the work site, in the type of work specified in the contract. Interns must submit an evaluation from the on-site supervisor no later than Wednesday of finals week (by 5 p.m.). This may be in the form of a letter, but the supervisor must also complete the form provided in this contract. The supervisor's evaluation must either be mailed or delivered in a signed, sealed envelope.

In addition, there is an essential academic component to the internship experience consistent with its designation as an advanced undergraduate course. All interns will write two short papers during the quarter, and one longer research paper (approximately 12 pages, excluding bibliography) that is due at the end of the quarter. See the section of this booklet that describes the paper requirements in detail. In addition, students will maintain and submit a reflection journal throughout the quarter. Interns are also required to meet with the intern coordinator biweekly during the quarter.

At the end of the quarter, students will submit a portfolio containing the journal, the course papers, and any additional materials that pertain to the internship. For instance, if an intern attended a training session, material about that session should be included. This helps document the learning and professional training experiences of the student during the internship.

3. HOW TO OBTAIN AN INTERNSHIP

All students must first meet with Linda Clark, Academic Advisor, to determine whether they have fulfilled all of the course prerequisites. Information about the internship program and agencies/organizations where Western sociology students have interned in the past is also available by way of the Sociology Department's home page <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~socad/>. Follow the link to "Career Options", then to "Consider Doing an Internship." Students must initiate the process for obtaining the internship one quarter before the student intends to participate in the program.

Students are welcome to meet with the internship coordinator for suggestions of possible internship placements, however students are responsible for finding their own internship placement. The internship setting should offer the student professional-level training and work assignments related to one of the sub-areas of sociology (for example, criminal justice, social inequality, sociology of family, youth, aging, urban studies, education, etc.). The work should be varied, involve instruction

and learning opportunities, and be relevant to the mission of the agency or organization.

Students who are interested in obtaining an internship should call or write to the agency/organization expressing their interest in an internship opportunity, briefly outlining any particular skills or experiences that might be relevant. If you choose to write a letter, it is advisable for you to call first to find out to whom you should direct your request. You should also indicate the number of hours per week that you are interested in committing to the internship. It is advisable for the intern to bring a copy of this information packet to the interview.

The Career Center has numerous resources available for you to consult concerning writing effective cover letters, as well as suggestions regarding preparation for interviews. Writing cover letters and participating in interviews will be excellent preparation for your job search as you prepare to graduate from Western.

The next section contains the various documents that are necessary for you and your internship supervisor to complete *prior* to the start of your internship. The description of the academic assignments follows these forms in the packet.

NOTE: You must have the contract completed and signed by all parties (first the on-site supervisor and student, then the faculty coordinator) **PRIOR** to obtaining permission to register for Soc. 471.

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT INFORMATION

Student Name: _____ Student #: _____

Student's Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Name of Agency: _____

Agency Address: _____

Agency Phone Number: _____

Intern Supervisor: _____

Preferred contact information for supervisor (phone or email) :

Students must provide a one-page description of the internship site that will include the following:

A brief description of the mission of the organization;
an official statement of non-discrimination in terms of service delivery;
years of operation.

THE INTERNSHIP CONTRACT

A. JOB DESCRIPTION: Describe, in as much detail as possible, your role and responsibilities while in your internship. List duties, projects to be completed, deadlines, etc., if relevant. NOTE: students who are involved in counseling or direct client contact are advised to purchase medical malpractice insurance from the University (approximately \$10). Contact the internship supervisor for information.

B. SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION: Describe, in as much detail as possible, the supervision that will be provided and who will provide this supervision, specifically (refer to instruction, assistance, consultation, etc., you will receive). How will your work performance be evaluated and by whom?

C. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES: What do you intend to learn through this experience? Be specific and use concrete measurable terms. Describe how your internship activities (on-site and off-site) will enable you to meet your learning objectives.

INTERNSHIP WORK SCHEDULE

Instructions: To be completed by the student in accordance with the on-site internship supervisor. A copy should be provided for the student, the supervisor, and the Internship Coordinator in the Department of Sociology.

NAME: _____ Date: _____

Current Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Internship Dates –

Starting Date: _____

Ending Date: _____

Working Hours –

Monday: _____ Friday: _____

Tuesday: _____ Saturday: _____

Wednesday: _____ Sunday: _____

Thursday: _____ Hours Per Week: _____

Type of Work Activities –

Intern Supervisor (Name & Title): _____

Department: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

This contract may be terminated or amended by student, faculty coordinator or internship supervisor at any time upon written notice, which is received

and agreed to by the other two parties. Signature of the On-Site Internship Supervisor indicates that s/he has read and approved of the information outlined in this contract concerning the organization and the internship responsibilities.

Intern
Signature: _____ Date: _____

On-Site Internship
Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Faculty
Coordinator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Copies of this contract will be distributed to all parties. The Student and Intern Supervisor must sign prior to the Faculty Coordinator.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

Dear Intern Supervisor:

At the end of the internship we require your evaluation of the student's performance for the student to be awarded academic credit. This evaluation is due no later than Monday of finals week (by 5 p.m.). You may complete this form, use your own agency evaluation form or write a letter. Please mail the evaluation to:

**Dr. Karen Bradley
Sociology Department
WWU
516 High Street
Bellingham, WA 98225-9081**

The University and the Department of Sociology appreciate your cooperation in providing the internship experience for our students. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions: Karen.Bradley@wwu.edu; 650-3001.

Sincerely,

Prof. Karen Bradley
Intern Coordinator

INTERN EVALUATION

Intern's Name: _____ Date: _____

Agency Name: _____

Intern's Supervisor (*please list name and title*):

	Superior	High	Average	Low	Failure
Completion of work on time.					
Quality of completed work.					
Initiative and independent thinking.					
Willingness to learn new tasks.					
Ability to communicate effectively with clients (if applicable).					
Ability to communicate effectively with employees.					
Ability to communicate effectively with supervisor.					

Additional Comments: _____

(Please feel free to continue comments on backside.)

Signature: _____
 Intern's Supervisor

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

All student-interns will submit three papers to the internship coordinator. Following is a description of the papers as well as the schedule for their submission. Students are also required to complete a journal of the internship experience, and submit an internship portfolio. Your journal may be effective in terms of reflecting back to you changes in your perceptions and thoughts about the experience as the quarter unfolds. This might be especially useful in preparation for the second short paper, as well as the final paper. The journal must be submitted to the internship coordinator three times during the quarter: during the meetings prior to the submission of the second and third papers, and again with the final paper and internship portfolio. Following is a breakdown of the calculation of the course grade:

- 2 short papers 15 points each
- final paper 30 points
- journal 10 points
- on-site evaluation 15 points
- internship portfolio 10 points

Since this booklet is intended to be a general description of the requirements, students should be sure to get the actual due dates for the papers at the start of the particular quarter in which they are earning internship credit.

All papers should have a cover page with the title of the paper, the student's name, and "Sociology 471". The pages must be numbered (not including the title page). All instances of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. Please consult the Sociology department's statement on plagiarism on our department home page. Please also familiarize yourself with the University's policy on plagiarism, which can be found in the University Bulletin.

NOTE: Students who continue in the same internship setting beyond one quarter will negotiate assignments individually with the internship coordinator. Students in the same internship setting must demonstrate that their second quarter will entail additional and substantively different learning opportunities than those encountered in the previous quarter.

Paper 1. The organizational setting (15% of grade)

This paper is intended to provide you with the opportunity to obtain information about the organizational structure of the agency/organization that is your internship site. The paper should range from 4-5 pages, including charts and/or graphs summarizing the following:

- The number of employees;
- Date of founding;
- Organizational mission;
- Sources of funding (if a public agency) – display this through a graph or chart. Actual numbers are not necessary, but be as specific as possible.
- Reporting/authority structure (most easily displayed through an organizational chart which most organizations have on file). If there is no organizational chart available, you could sketch one based on information that you obtain from interviews of key people within the organization. This is not just a listing of employees or departments. A brief narrative must also accompany the organizational chart explaining the structure, the reporting lines, and the division of responsibilities.
- Does the agency have ties to other agencies? Are they are part of a "system" of agencies -- such as the criminal justice system, or the health care system, etc.? List and describe the connections with other organizations including factors such as the strength and purpose of the connection.
- What did you learn from this report about the organization? Did you discover anything surprising? Did the information raise any concerns for you?

EVALUATION:

Clear and unambiguous answers to the questions: 45%

Thoughtful reflection on the information in terms of their implications for the agency/organization: 35%

Presentation of the material – quality and clarity of charts/diagrams/tables: 10%

Clarity in writing – grammatical conventions as well as clear presentation of information: 10%

Paper 2. Thinking about the internship experience (15% of grade)

Identify one issue that has intrigued you during your internship experience. This focus of this paper often emerges in the internship journal. This paper will be approximately 5 pages.

Here are some examples:

1. The decision-making structure of the organization
 - what form does it take;
 - does any one person seem to have more influence than others?
 - Are decisions top-down or based on consensus?
2. Does there seem to be an exceptionally high level of work commitment among those employed by the agency/organization? Or low? Why might that be the case?
3. Have you noticed patterns in the kinds of services that clients are seeking from your social service setting?

Specifically discuss the issue in terms of your *personal observations and experiences* in the work setting. For example, what particular experiences or circumstances called your attention to the issue? Why do you think that the issue is intriguing? How is the issue relevant to your coursework in sociology? Be specific. For example, do the characteristics of the clients in the social service setting correspond to what your coursework in social stratification would predict?

Briefly, in one to two pages, describe how you might follow up on your observation with future research.

EVALUATION:

Clear presentation of the issue/situation; identify *why* the issue caught your attention: 30%

Thoughtful reflection on how the issue is of sociological interest, *with clear and specific connections to sociological studies/theories or other course material*: 30%

Connection of the issue to potential research plan to test predictions. 25%

Clarity in writing – grammatical conventions as well as clear presentation of information: 15%

Assignment 3. Final paper (35% of grade)

This paper will link your experiences on-site with prior relevant coursework in sociology. A *full draft* is due the week before the final paper is due (specific due dates will vary quarter to quarter). The draft is worth 10 points toward the final grade of 35 points.

The paper will be a minimum of 12 pages and a maximum of 15 pages of text (excluding bibliography and tables). You will first clearly identify the topic of inquiry for the paper, and its relationship to your internship experience. This may be directly related to the issue that you have discussed in Paper 2, or it may be a different issue. You will then identify one particular and specific question associated with this issue. This question may be posed in terms of an explanation of why the phenomenon that you observed may be present (for example, why do so few persons who would benefit from the services provided actually utilize the agency?), or the implications of the issue (what are the implications for the agency if decision-making is handled in a top-down manner with little employee input?).

Regardless of the particular issue/question posed, the intern must link this topic to scholarly literature on the topic. You should prioritize what sociologists have discovered in their research on this topic, or on a topic similar to this one. You may incorporate research from other disciplines as appropriate, for example education research if your topic is focused on schools. Be specific in terms of what the researchers have found and concluded in their studies. You must include reference to academic research published in academic journals or books (a minimum of six such sources). Websites may *supplement* but not *substitute* for published academic studies. In your concluding comments, you will make a policy recommendation for the agency that is thoughtful, linked to your actual experience in the agency, and substantiated by your research. You may choose to share this with the agency at the completion of your internship.

Following is an approximate breakdown of the sections of the paper:

- Discussion of the topic/issue with reference to specific situations at the internship site (approximately 3).
- Review of relevant sociological literature (approximately 5-6 pages); students are expected to include at least six research articles/books in this section.
- Concluding discussion and policy recommendation (approximately 4 pages).
- Bibliography.

Be sure to cite all sources appropriately. Students who submit papers with instances of plagiarism will receive a failing grade for the course. See Sociology Department's Student Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism: <http://www.wvu.edu/soc/docs/plagiarism.pdf> .

Use ASA format for citations and bibliography. Be sure to budget your time appropriately so that you submit a paper that meets the requirements by the deadline. Grading penalties will be assigned to late papers.

Following is the grading rubric for the paper:

1. To what extent is the issue/problem clearly defined in relation to the mission/goal of the organization, its operating or organizational structure, its on-going survivability or efficacy as an organization; or some other issue that you clearly identify? (10 points)
2. To what extent is the topic/issue clearly discussed in reference to *specific* situations or work practices at the internship site? (15 points)
3. To what extent does the paper connect the issue to relevant sociological literature, including the following information: a theoretical framework for understanding the problem; findings from other relevant studies; and connections made between the research findings and the problem identified in this paper (25 points)
4. To what extent does the policy recommendation link directly to the question or observation motivating the paper, research findings, *and* the actual and practical situation of the internship setting? (25 points)
5. To what extent does the text consist of sentences that utilize correct syntax, punctuation and grammatical structure? Do the individual sentences effectively convey their meaning to the reader? (15 points)
6. Is the paper well-organized in terms of section headings, page numbering, and paragraph breaks? Are citations included as needed? Are the appropriate citation and bibliographic formats utilized? (10 points)

Internship Journal (10% of grade)

All students are required to keep a journal of their internship experiences that will be handed in twice to the internship coordinator during the quarter. In this journal, students should record *both their activities and their responses/reflections on the internship*. This is distinctly different from an activity log (Monday, January 3. 9-11 a.m. sat in on staff meeting; Wednesday, January 5 responded to client phone calls.). A journal includes information about activity as well as observations/reflections of the experience. In addition, the journal should incorporate sociological insights.

For example:

Monday, January 3, 9-11 a.m. – sat in on staff meeting where it was announced that there was going to be a major funding cutback to the agency. Everyone in the room became tense as the director began to announce how the individual departments would be affected. At least one staff position will be cut.

I wondered how the decision will be made. I know that it will be difficult since everyone is already overworked and underpaid. It made me wonder if I would be able to work in this kind of unstable environment. Is working in an unstable budgetary climate likely to screen out certain kinds of employees, for instance, those without a partner's income to rely on?

You need not make an entry in the journal every day, although that might be helpful at first. Some entries might be longer than others. At a minimum, however, you should make an entry at least every other day worked in the internship setting. Only the internship coordinator and the student intern will view the journal.

The journals will be evaluated in terms of appropriate number of entries as well as the thoughtfulness of the comments. *A mere record of the activities is insufficient*. This would be a log rather than a journal. The role of the journal in the internship is to link observations on-site and in regard to the internship with sociological insights or questions connected with prior coursework in sociology. Although this may not be true for every entry, it should be true for most.

Internship Portfolio (10% of grade)

Many student interns have had important educational and personal experiences while in an internship setting. It became apparent from many conversations with many interns that it would be helpful for student interns to collect their internship materials in one portfolio that would be available for them at a later date (when they are applying for graduate school or a job, for example).

Here are examples of what is to be included in your internship portfolio:

- All of the papers completed during the internship;
- The journal;
- Copies of agendas, handouts, and notes from workshops or meetings attended; Include clear descriptions of what occurred in the workshop or what you learned in the meeting. *DO NOT* simply 3-hole punch the material and insert it into the binder.
- Any 'products' created by the intern such as instructional materials or program information; If a student is responsible for organizing an informational session for parents at a school, for example, information about that activity, including any promotional materials should be included.
- Other materials as appropriate.

The size of the portfolio will vary depending on the nature of the internship. A three-ring binder is the most logical and convenient tool for organizing the materials. The material should be neatly organized with sufficient descriptive information. *Do not* simply collect all of the material in the binder without description/clarification of the connection between the material in the binder and your educational experience in the internship. This could be accomplished with a cover letter and/or section dividers. The portfolio is the property of the intern following the internship.

The portfolio will be evaluated for clarity and in reference to the specific information/activity described.