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Western Washington University

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology 471, Directed Internship Office: AH 522	Intern Coordinator: Dr. Karen Bradley Office phone: (360) 650-3001
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Email address: Karen.Bradley@wwu.edu

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), and a writing proficiency course; 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.

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. All students are graded on an S/U basis.

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. For example, a student may have assisted in client intake during the first quarter but be responsible for doing this alone second quarter. Or, a student may assist in an instructional session for students in a school 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 or the form provided in this contract.

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. Interns are also required to meet with the intern coordinator biweekly during the quarter. The interns will also meet together as a group prior to submission of the first paper (i.e., during the second week of classes).

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 at least one quarter before the student intends to participate in the program.

Students are responsible for finding their own internship placement. The internship setting should offer the student professional-level work that is 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, non-clerical, and 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 the Directed Internship 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: _____

Students either must submit a one-page description of the internship site that will include the following, or provide that information in the space provided:

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 on your internship. List duties, projects to be completed, deadlines, etc., if relevant. **NOTE:** students who are involved in counseling or direct client contact may be required 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: _____

THE INTERNSHIP CONTRACT

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 would appreciate your evaluation of the student's performance. This evaluation is due no later than Wednesday 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.

Sincerely,

Karen Bradley, Ph.D.
Intern Coordinator

INTERN EVALUATION

Intern's Name: _____ Date: _____

Agency Name: _____

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

	A	B	C	D	F
	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 twice during the quarter: once with the second paper 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 20 points
- internship portfolio 10 points

Students must have a minimum of 75 points accumulated to pass the course, however, no student will pass if they do not submit *all* of the assignments, and meet with the internship coordinator during the two mandatory meetings of the quarter. Assignments turned in after the due date will be penalized 10 points for each day (each 24 hours) that they are late. 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 home page: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~soc/guides.html>. 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

Format issues:

The paper should range from 4-5 pages, not including a one-page organizational chart. It is due on Friday by noon of the third week of the quarter.

In this assignment, you will describe the organizational structure of the agency. Include such information as:

- The number of employees;
- Date of founding;
- Organizational mission;
- Sources of funding (if a public agency);
- 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.
- Other pertinent information might include whether the agency has strong ties to other agencies, and whether they are part of a "system" of agencies -- such as the criminal justice system, or the health care system, etc.
- Did you discover anything surprising?

Paper 2. Thinking about the internship experience

This paper will be approximately 5 pages, due at noon on Friday of the sixth week of the course.

Identify one issue that has intrigued you during your internship experience. Here are some examples:

- 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?
- 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?
- 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, does the client profile in the social service setting correspond to what your coursework in social stratification would predict?

Briefly, in approximately one page, describe how you might follow up on your observation with future research.

Assignment 3. Final paper

This paper will link your experiences on-site with prior relevant coursework in sociology. The paper is due at 5 p.m. on the Monday of finals week. A full draft of the paper is due at 5 p.m. on the Friday before dead week. It is to the student's advantage to also submit partial drafts earlier in the quarter for feedback.

The paper will be approximately 12 pages long (excluding bibliography). 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 sociological literature. You should discuss what sociologists have discovered in their research on this topic, or on a topic analogous to this one. 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. If you are unsure about these sources, please refer to the Sociology Department's web page, where you will find a list of resources. 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 1-3 pages).
- Review of relevant sociological literature (approximately 4-5 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.) 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.

Internship Journal

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.

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.

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 third day. 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. For example, a mere record of the activities is insufficient.

Internship Portfolio

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 should 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;
- 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 for it to be self-explanatory. 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. It is advisable for the intern to discuss this throughout the quarter with the internship coordinator since internships vary considerably from setting to setting.