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# Western Washington University

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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Sociology 371, Directed Internship  
Arntzen 532

Intern Coordinator: Dr. Melissa Osborne

Email address: [Melissa.Osborne@wwu.edu](mailto:Melissa.Osborne@wwu.edu)

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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 for enrollment:

- Successful completion of the Sociology 302 (Classical Sociological Theory) and 306 (Research Methods);
- Earned a grade of B or better in a 300-level sociology course relevant to the substantive area of the internship;
- Been accepted by an agency; and
- Completed the course contract and received the approval of the Sociology Department Internship Supervisor (Prof. Melissa Osborne) [Melissa.Osborne@wwu.edu](mailto:Melissa.Osborne@wwu.edu)

NOTE: This is a five-credit course, repeatable to a maximum of 10 credits. 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 would entail additional responsibilities and/or learning opportunities that do not simply duplicate their first quarter experiences. For example, a student may have assisted in client intake during the first quarter but be responsible for doing this alone second quarter. A student may assist in an instructional session for students in a school but be fully responsible for designing the session 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. If a letter format is utilized (electronic or paper), the letter should reference the same information requested in the form.

There is an essential academic component to the internship experience consistent with its designation as a 300-level undergraduate course. All interns will write three short papers during the quarter, and make weekly entries in a reflection journal (one submission per week). 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 (a minimum of five meetings).

### ***3. HOW TO OBTAIN AN INTERNSHIP***

. Information about the internship program and agencies/organizations where Western sociology students have interned in the past is available by way of the Sociology Department's home page. Follow the link to "Career Options", and then to "Consider Doing an Internship." Students must initiate the process for obtaining the internship at least three weeks before the student intends to participate in the program.

Students are responsible for finding their own internship placement. The work should be varied, involve instruction and learning opportunities, and be relevant to the mission of the agency or organization. The internship setting should offer the student para-professional work that is related to a sub-area within sociology (for example, criminal justice, social inequality, sociology of family, youth, aging, urban studies, education, etc.).

Students who are interested in obtaining an internship should call or email 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 email, 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 required to work in the internship. It is advisable for the intern to bring a copy of the Internship information packet/contract to the interview.

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. 371.

## 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 information or include 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 detail, your role and responsibilities in the internship. For example, list duties, and projects to be completed. **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 detail 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 On-site Intern Supervisor must sign prior to the Faculty Coordinator.***

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

Dear Intern Supervisor:

Thank you for agreeing to supervise a student intern from the Sociology Department at WWU. Please note that a written evaluation of the intern is required at the end of the quarter. The form is included in this booklet. This evaluation is due no later than Wednesday of finals week (by 5 p.m.). Feel free to include additional information of you would like. Please mail or email the evaluation to:

**Dr. Melissa Osborne**  
**Sociology Department WWU**  
**516 High Street Bellingham,**  
**WA 98225-9081**  
[Melissa.Osborne@wwu.edu](mailto:Melissa.Osborne@wwu.edu)

The University and the Department of Sociology appreciate your cooperation in providing the internship experience for our students.

Sincerely,

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Melissa Osborne, Ph.D.  
Sociology Department  
Internship Director

## **INTERN EVALUATION**

Intern's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

|  | <b>A</b>        | <b>B</b>    | <b>C</b>       | <b>D</b>   | <b>F</b>       |
|--|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
|  | <b>Superior</b> | <b>High</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Low</b> | <b>Failure</b> |
| 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 co-workers.              |                 |             |                |            |                |
| Ability to communicate effectively with supervisor.              |                 |             |                |            |                |

*Please attach comments/examples to substantiate your evaluation, above.*

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 at least one day prior to each meeting and with the final paper. Following is a breakdown of the calculation of the course grade:

- 3 papers maximum of 20 points each
- journal maximum of 20 points
- supervisor evaluation maximum of 20 points

Students must have a minimum of 75 points accumulated to pass the course, however, no student will pass if they do not meet with the internship coordinator during the four 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.

Your journal must be submitted a day prior to each meeting and included with the final paper. It can be left in my mailbox or emailed if it is a word file.

The pages must be numbered and no title page is required. . All instances of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. Please consult the Sociology Department's statement on plagiarism: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~soc/guides.html>. Please also familiarize yourself with the University's policy on plagiarism.

NOTE: Students who continue in the same internship setting beyond one quarter will complete assignments established with the internship coordinator at the beginning of the quarter. Students in the same internship setting must demonstrate that their second quarter will entail additional learning opportunities.

## **Paper 1. The organizational setting**

Format issues:

The paper should be approximately 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?

An organizational chart is a diagram of the authority or 'reporting' structure within an organization. At the top of the organizational chart is the position held by the person who is responsible for the organization overall (the director, for example). The boxes below the person in charge (or the second tier) represent the positions of those who report directly to the director. The boxes below those boxes represent those who report to that second tier, and on it goes. The organizational chart may include names of the people in the positions, but must include titles.

## **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 thus far. Specifically discuss the issue in terms of your *own observations and experiences* in the internship setting. For example, Why do you think that the issue is intriguing? What particular experiences or circumstances called your attention to the issue? How is the issue relevant to your coursework in sociology? Be specific.

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? Do people seem to ignore the organizational chart?

- Does there seem to be an exceptionally high level of work commitment among those employed by the agency/organization? Or low? Describe. Why might that be the case?
- Have you noticed patterns in the kinds of services that clients are seeking from your social service setting?

### **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 Wednesday of finals week.

The paper will be approximately 5 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?).

Link this topic to published sociological articles/books. Discuss what sociologists have discovered in their research on this topic, or on a topic similar to this one. Be specific in terms of what the researchers have found and concluded in their research. Include reference to research published in academic journals or books (a minimum of five such sources). Websites may *supplement* but not *substitute* for published academic studies. Conclude with a policy recommendation for the agency that is thoughtful, linked to your experience in the agency, and substantiated by your research.

### **Paper rubric**

- Identification and discussion of the topic/issue with reference to specific situations at the internship site.
  - Clarity in identification of issue
  - Clear links to internship site
  - Justification of why it is important to consider
- Review of relevant sociological literature in relation to the focus of the paper;
  - Accurate summary
  - Literature appropriately relevant to paper topic/focus
- Concluding discussion and policy recommendation.
  - Link literature review with the focus of your paper: how might published research influence the practices of your internship setting?

- Recommendations to the internship site about modifying current practices or introducing new policies or procedures to address the issue(s) that you identified.
  - Make a case for how your suggestions might be effective
  - Identify limitations to implementing your suggestions.
- 
- Bibliography.

Be sure to cite all sources appropriately. Students who submit papers with instances of plagiarism will receive a failing grade for the course.

## *Internship Journal*

All students are required to keep a journal of their internship experiences that will be submitted to the internship coordinator prior to every meeting during the quarter and at the end of the quarter, with the portfolio. 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.